



Session One

The Way Out

You're gonna have to serve somebody,
Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.

"You're gonna serve somebody" -- Bob Dylan

Orientation Texts

Exodus 1 – 19 (General overall text)

Exodus 2.23

After a long time the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned under their slavery, and cried out. Out of the slavery their cry for help rose up to God.

Exodus 3.7-10

Then the LORD said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

Exodus 19.8

The people all answered as one: "Everything that the LORD has spoken we will do." Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD.

Active Listening:

Rapacious economics

Blank Check

Overview:

Brueggemann makes four observations about the people vs. the Pharaonic system in Exodus:

1. It is the role of slaves to produce wealth for other people
2. The unbearable reality of the system is obvious to those caught in it
3. Yahweh actively affects the economic system
4. The story ends well: People commit to an anti-Pharaonic system

Questions:

1. Where is the struggle Brueggemann describes being re-enacted today?

2. “Voiced pain becomes a public fact that...” requires what?

3. Brueggemann suggests a three-way relationship that is as significant today as it was in the Exodus story: Pharaoh is the _____, the slaves are the _____, and Yahweh is the great _____.

How has this relationship, central to Biblical faith, been lost to the church in the 21st century?

4. What does Brueggemann say that is so important about the connection between conforming oppression and holy power?

5. In a world of Pharaonic authority, what do the Ten Commandments represent?

Your Personal Strategy to Counter Pharaoh:

Brueggemann suggests several ideas for countering Pharaoh in this session. Name one discipline that you will commit to between now and your next meeting that will counter your Pharaoh.