

Saturday "Sermon"

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Come Nearer!

A New Year has begun, and only God knows what opportunities 2008 will bring. Opportunities, of course, can be seized or squandered, and that causes me to remember the amazing conversation Pharaoh had with Moses in Exodus 8.

Pharaoh had already experienced the first of what would become ten increasingly awful plagues. He'd already seen the Nile and all the water in Egypt turned into blood. Now, God told Pharaoh that if he didn't release the Hebrew people, an awful plague of frogs would overwhelm the land.

But Pharaoh didn't think Moses could make good on this threat, and he hardened his heart a second time. When the frogs showed up as promised, Pharaoh begged Moses to make the frogs go away. Then, in response to Moses' question about when he wanted the frogs gone, Pharaoh amazingly answered, "Tomorrow."

Tomorrow?! If my house, yard, bed, and kitchen were full of frogs, I'd want them gone now! I'd want them gone yesterday! But Pharaoh actually asked Moses for "one more night with the frogs"!

Pharaoh knew what God wanted him to do. He knew how God wanted him to do it. He knew the consequences of failure to obey. But still he asked for one more night with the frogs.

How often do we make the same mistake? We're pretty sure what God wants us to do. We have a pretty good idea about how God wants us to do it. We just want to put it off until "a more convenient time."

In most cases, God lets us do what we want to do. You and I really can say to God, "I don't want to do that," or "I'll think about that later." The chief problem with such responses is that we're trading gold for sawdust. Jeremiah put it well when he wrote, "*My people have done two evil things: They have forsaken me—the fountain of living water. And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all!*" (Jeremiah 2:13).

It's a poor bargain to choose any way but God's way. What does God want to do in and through your life in 2008? How will things look a year from now as you look back? Are you going to choose the living water or the broken cistern? Is 2008 going to be "one more year with the frogs?"

God's invitation to you this year is to "Come up higher! Come in farther! Come nearer!" God wants you to experience His presence, His healing, and His power in 2008 in ways beyond anything that you've ever known before. Will you receive the gift?