



Series: Exodus: Out of Egypt

Date: February 21, 2022

Speaker: Spence Shelton, Lead Pastor

Text: Exodus 2

Title: A Faithful God in a Foreign Land

Introduction

Exodus chapter 2. We are walking through the book of Exodus this spring where we are seeing God deliver his people from slavery in Egypt. Our hope is to see God rightly. Because there is nothing more important in your life than what you think about God. I believe too many Christians are walking around with a weak abstract faith because they've been trained to believe in a weak abstract God. The God of the bible is neither weak nor abstract. He's unrivaled in power, holiness, and in goodness. He's going to be a pillar of FIRE taller and wider than the bank of America tower in uptown. There is nothing abstract about that. And that pillar of Fire is RIGHT IN FRONT of his people. What you are going to see is this MIGHTY HOLY God is extremely personal and present

with his people.

Now today we are going to meet our main character, Moses. Remember Moses is our author of this book. And Moses chooses to take a chapter to tell us about where he came from. Because knowing where he came from is going to be important to fully understanding the purpose God calls him to fulfill. Standing in the present and now seeing his past through the lens of the faithfulness of God. That is not an easy thing to do, but a very important one to see God rightly and to be able to trust him as we walk forward following Jesus.

When I was on a 6-week mission trip during a summer in college, our team leader made us write out our life maps. Telling the major milestones of our lives and with each milestone we had to try to say how we NOW see the faithfulness of God. If we do at all. It was really powerful. and Courtney and I have done this exercise many times with folks we are walking through life with. Some powerful things come out. Pain from early life that now we can see God's faithfulness. Blessings that were God's faithfulness. And sometimes people are just like...I know God is faithful but I'm not really sure where I see him in that. Or maybe in the moment I'm in. BTW - homework for this week - Write down a quick sketch of a life map. 3 milestones and how you can now see the faithfulness of God in them. I think



our community groups are going to be doing that and it will be awesome.

Anyways this is Moses' life map for his first 80 years. Maybe you didn't know that. When Moses STARTS his ministry - He's 80.¹ Some of you think life has passed you by at 40 and this guy GETS STARTED at 80. Oh, we gonna talk about that in a minute. And for Moses, he's going to connect the faithfulness of God at the end of our chapter. So, our outline really is Moses' life map - 3 scenes. I'll pause along the way to show you what I think he wants us to see. And then, our last stop is him zooming out and seeing how his life was an act of the faithfulness of God intended to bless many others. Man, I hope this helps you see the faithfulness of God in your life.

1 Now a man from the family of Levi married a Levite woman.

- This is big because in the years ahead the Levites would be assigned the role of PRIEST in the worship of the people. The Priests were the ones who went to God on behalf of the people and went to the people on behalf of God. They were in between. Or mediators between God and the

people. Make sense? That's WHY Moses wants you to know which tribe he is from. He's connecting it to God's purpose for him. To be a mediator between God & people.

2 The woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son; when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months. 3 But when she could no longer hide him, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with asphalt and pitch.

- Papyrus basket - Hebrew word is "ARK." Only other time this was used...was a little bit bigger ark. Why this word choice? Moses is signaling to his Hebrew reader...who knew the story of Noah... that GOD was ALREADY WORKING a plan of SALVATION. You see that? God was working when they couldn't see it. How? Through the faith of Moses' parents
- **3 By faith Moses, after he was born, was hidden by his parents for three months, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they didn't fear the king's edict. -- Hebrews 11:23**
- Just like the Hebrew midwives, they chose to let the boy live. That's because their fear of God...the

¹ Amy L. Balogh, "[Moses](#)," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).



reverential awe of the God of Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob...it surpassed the fear of Pharaoh. So, at risk to their own lives, they let the boy live. And in an act of desperation, they took a big step of faith...

She placed the child in it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile. 4 Then his sister stood at a distance in order to see what would happen to him. 5 Pharaoh's daughter went down to bathe at the Nile while her servant girls walked along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds, sent her slave girl, took it, 6 opened it, and saw him, the child — and there he was, a little boy, crying. She felt sorry for him and said, "This is one of the Hebrew boys."

- Ok not only did Moses' parents let him live, one of Pharaoh's OWN DAUGHTERS let him live! What should she have done? Well, if you were here last week, you know that she like all of Egypt was under orders to toss all Hebrew baby boys into the Nile. She should have picked him up and thrown him into the river to drown. But instead, she had compassion on him.

7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Should I go and call a Hebrew woman who is nursing to nurse the boy for you?"

- Another step of faith - Hebrew girl talking to a daughter of Pharaoh. BTW this is most likely Miriam who we will see show up later as an important figure AGAIN in Moses' life.

8 "Go," Pharaoh's daughter told her. So, the girl went and called the boy's mother. 9 Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse him for me, and I will pay your wages." So, the woman took the boy and nursed him.

- How gracious is God through the faithful WITS of Moses' sister? The mom who sent him away is now holding her son again! And being paid to do so. And in this nursing process could be up anywhere from 3 to 4 years. In that time, they would have worked hard to teach their son all they could about the God of Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob.

10 When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

- Moses is now Hebrew ethnically but being adopted into Egyptian culture. One man from two peoples. Named Moses because she brought him up out of the water. Even his name is a foreshadow of his



purpose. For it would be God that would draw Moses and the Israelites up out of the Red Sea.

Ok First milestone is his early years and here's how we are going to mark it.

Milestone 1: Moses is delivered by a faithful God

I think the biggest thing here to see is that Moses...who would be God's deliverer...was first DELIVERED by God himself. Moses was delivered through the faithfulness of his parents & through the protection of this ark & through the disobedience of Pharaoh's daughter and the cleverness of his sister & through the provision of adoption. Moses is looking back & recognizing that he had nothing to do with being BORN Hebrew slave and Raised as Egyptian Royalty. And yet that is EXACTLY the kind of deliverer God built to Free the Hebrews from their bondage to the Egyptians.

And I say that to say you may want to look back and look at the faithfulness of God in your childhood.

I even think specifically how Our church has several families who have adopted and are adopting & fostering. I know several of you who are now grown children of adoption. And with that as a part of your story you can go through all kinds of identity crises. And I think there is a

unique grace the Lord offers children of adoption to say The Lord has been faithful to you and your adoption is a milestone that marks the faithfulness of God. He has a work that he has built you uniquely for and it will display his glory in a way no one else could. That's beautiful. It's true for those of you who have tough childhood memories and those of you who have wonderful ones. What they meant for good or for evil, **through the redemption & healing you find in Christ God means to use it for good.**

God is faithful before we are ever even able. That's Moses' childhood. That's all he wants us to know. He's raised as a Hebrew royal Egyptian. Living as a member of one people but all the while feeling the identity of belonging to another. And that sets us up for the next milestone he tells us about.

11 Years later, after Moses had grown up, he went out to his own people and observed their forced labor.

His own people. He knew who his people were. He was around them every day. And they were enslaved by the people he now lived among. Lots of emotional confusion there.



He saw an Egyptian striking a Hebrew, one of his people.
12 Looking all around and seeing no one, he struck the Egyptian dead and hid him in the sand.

OK can we pause right here. This is a pretty big moment. Moses just murdered somebody. In case you have found yourself concerned that you will never be able to be like those great heroes of the Old Testament...can I just say...that's a good thing. We are 12 verses into Moses' story and this guy already has a body count. This is premeditated murder PLUS cover-up. Don't be like Moses. I mean can you imagine being Moses and God is writing the 10 commandments right in front of you. And he's Moses. No other Gods...BINGO that's why we are out here. Sabbath - YES got that. He's like Honor father & mother - YES, I chose them as my people. I'm crushing this. What's next? Do not murder. Eeesh. Moses knew even as HE received the 10 commandments, he wasn't able to uphold them. He was going to need the grace of God. SOOOO important. But back to the milestone moment:

13 The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, "Why are you attacking your neighbor?" 14 "Who made you a commander and judge over us?" the man replied. "Are you planning to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?"

So, wherever he looked around & saw no one, didn't mean no one was looking. Clearly somebody was looking! And the story spread QUICK. Here is one of Pharaoh's sons KILLING an Egyptian to spare a Hebrew? Crazy. But clearly the Hebrews didn't know what to do with him just yet. Maybe he's a mad man and they are next on his list.

Then Moses became afraid and thought, "What I did is certainly known."

Meaning - uh oh, Pharaoh is going to kill me for this.

15 When Pharaoh heard about this, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in the land of Midian and sat down by a well.

Milestone 2: Moses the murderer & fugitive

Obviously, this is a big milestone. In this moment he chooses to be Hebrew over being Egyptian. But he doesn't do it in a great way.

Should Moses have murdered the Egyptian? NO. Did God work through it? yes. Do I understand how those two things go together? NO. I can only say this: much like what happened with Joseph's brothers - what they meant for evil...God meant for good. To bring about the salvation of his people.



Here's what you need to know: Moses was most likely 40-ish years old when he did this. And at this milestone he's on the run with his life seemingly over. He's got no one. He's a man from 2 people who now has NO people. But GOD IS NOT THROUGH WITH HIM. The very place he flees to...becomes the land of his preparation.

And I say that because some of you have sinned and some of you have been running. Maybe you've been running from the law, maybe you've been running from consequences, maybe you've been running from God. Well, I promise you cannot outrun God. And I promise that if you have air in your lungs GOD is not through with you!

Your first step is going to be to turn back to God. Before God uses Moses in Egypt, God humbles Moses in the wilderness. Before he is used by God he is humbled by God. We'll see that next week. Some of you have reached a milestone of running and I believe God wants you to STOP. And instead of the well in Midian he offers you the well of living water. That's what Christ says.

37 On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 The one who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him." -- John 7:37-38 (CSB)

See the wages of your sin is death. Just like it was for Moses. BUT, instead of ending your story there, God sent his son to pay for your sin. So instead of dying in the wilderness you are offered Forgiveness for your sin and new life in Christ! Because God is not the angry tyrant of Egypt. He is the loving, redeeming, rescuing God of Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob. He sent the PERFECT Messiah who didn't kill to protect his people, he allowed himself to be killed as a ransom for his people. Stop Running! And turn to him today.

16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came to draw water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. 17 Then some shepherds arrived and drove them away, but Moses came to their rescue and watered their flock. 18 When they returned to their father Reuel, he asked, "Why have you come back so quickly today?"

19 They answered, "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock." 20 "So where is he?" he asked his daughters. "Why then did you leave the man behind? Invite him to eat dinner."

21 Moses agreed to stay with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage. 22 She gave



birth to a son whom he named Gershom, for he said, “I have been a resident alien in a foreign land.”

Moses recognizes this isn't his home either. He's now established a life, but it is a life unfulfilled. Think about this guy. He's now a washed-up old exile. It's like Obi-Wan-Kenobi with a family. And by naming his son this, and by recording it here in scripture...Moses is saying it's going to take some kind of divine intervention for Moses' life to change. All prospects for a sense of purpose seem lost. BUT God. See this last milestone:

Milestone 3: Moses waits in exile

Is this all there is God? Is this all you have for me? Moses is stuck. And life is passing him by. Something about the arrival of his son is further solidifying he isn't where he's made to be. And the only hope he really has is for God to do something. He can't put his resume out there or move to a new city and make his own fresh start. He's just stuck. And he will be stuck. Until he is 80 years old. And I think the big point here is that God brought him to a place where ONLY GOD could get credit for what he was about to do. That's because Moses is not the center of God's story. God is the center of Moses' story. Moses is a small temporary piece. And that's good for him... Only God can get the credit.

Is that where you are? I think I can count on one hand the members of Mercy Church who are older than Moses was when he met God at the burning bush. I'm not saying he makes all people wait that long. But I'm saying that if you are waiting on God, you are not the first person to feel that way.

And the scripture is FILLED with promises for those who will wait on the Lord.

13 I am certain that I will see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living.

14 Wait for the Lord.

be strong, and let your heart be courageous.

Wait for the Lord. -- Psalms 27:13-14

34 Wait for the Lord and keep his way,

and he will exalt you to inherit the land. -- Psalms 37:34

25 The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the person who seeks him.

26 It is good to wait quietly

for salvation from the Lord. -- Lamentations 3:25-26



31 but those who wait on² the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not become weary, they will walk and not faint. -- Isaiah 40:31

God is not SLOW. 2 Peter 3 says that. He is not slow, he is patient. And he is working. Some of you are frustrated right now because God isn't answering a prayer or giving you the next thing and everything in you wants to take matters into your own hands and MAYBE you need to **stop** and go before the Lord and thank him for the waiting. And ask him to draw you close to HIM in the waiting. The waiting is a powerful place. He uses those he humbles. Instead of letting the waiting frustrate you, let God refine you through it. Draw near to him and wait on the Lord.

Ok now after these 3 milestones Moses zooms out to show the connection between his life map and the big picture work of God. and in here is some POWERFUL stuff for those of you waiting.

² My own translation choice based on Motyer & Hebrew word study. *Hope* (with, of course, its biblical component of certainty) is one meaning of *qāwā*, which also means 'wait' (patiently) and 'rest' (trustfully)

23 After a long time, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned because of their difficult labor, and they cried out, and their cry for help because of the difficult labor ascended to God. 24 God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 God saw the Israelites, and God knew. -- Exodus 2:1-25

See what God did? GOD HEARD, GOD REMEMBERED, GOD SAW, GOD KNEW.

This is a very present and active God. Listen, this is roughly 400 years after Pharaoh enslaved them. 400 years. That "after a long time" is yes after 40 years of Moses' life. But it's also acknowledging that a much longer time has passed. Generations had been born, lived, and died all in slavery. ALL crying out to God to deliver them and he didn't. And despite GENERATIONS not seeing deliverance, they held fast to the hope passed down to them. That's powerful. That is hope based in WHO GOD IS, not just in what he does for you.

J. Alec Motyer, [*Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 20, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 283.



Now let me say something very important: When Moses says God remembered his covenant...it's not that he had forgotten it and now it popped into his head. By saying "remembered" he's saying God is now going to bring to fulfillment his promise to deliver them from Egypt. Basically, he's saying the time is now.

And Moses writes this looking back saying ALL that I went through...God was doing something not for me, BUT FOR HIS PEOPLE. Because God LOVES his people. While they were crying out, God was actively answering them they just couldn't see it yet. Their deliverance was already in motion. When Moses murdered the Egyptian and fled...their one hope for a deliverer now GONE.... when it looked like God was gonna do something, but he didn't...And 4 weeks went by...4 years...39 years...when they thought he had forgotten them THAT WHOLE TIME...GOD KNEW. GOD WAS LISTENING. GOD WAS SEEING THEM. AND GOD WAS PREPARING THEIR DELIVERANCE.

Man, before you see him working, HE IS WORKING. He has NOT forgotten you. And as long as you have breath in your lungs, he STILL has a purpose for you.

And now here is what is so awesome for those in Christ. See Moses was a Levite. A priest who stood between God

and man. He's a foreshadow of Christ. Look what the New Testament says about how we wait on the Lord:

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens — Jesus the Son of God — let us hold fast to our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need. -- Hebrews 4:14-16 (CSB)

He hears, He remembers, he sees, and he knows. You and I can actually cry out...we can pray...and if we are in Christ, we have access directly to the throne of Grace. And we can receive mercy and help. He's sent his son to set you free from sin. He's sent his Holy Spirit to strengthen you and encourage you and convict you in order to protect you from the enemy and his ways. And the craziest thing of all...if you are in Christ God is WITH YOU. Where is the throne of grace? It's wherever you bow down and cry out. Because God is with you listening and seeing and remembering and KNOWING what you are going through. **You may be waiting on his work, but you don't have to wait on his presence.** He's with you.



And 1 John 4.4 greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.

So, what do you do with all this? Soul Work - go home and write your life map. 3 milestones of the faithfulness of God. Then look at where you are waiting on God now. And let his past faithfulness stir you to believe he will be faithful in THIS that you are waiting on.

GOSPEL - the promise he is for you. Rom 8.32

32 He did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything? -
- Romans 8:32

The gospel is your hope that God hears, remembers, sees, and knows you. He has met your deepest need. If he's done that...you can trust him. If he did not abandon you in HIS darkest hour, he will certainly not abandon you in yours.