



**Series:** Exodus: Out of Egypt

**Date:** April 3, 2022

**Speaker:** Spence Shelton, Lead Pastor

**Text:** Exodus 6:14-27

**Title:** The Story of God Continues Through Us

[Jake Greer](#) announces Pastor Spence's Sabbatical

### Intro

Let me start by saying THANK YOU. Seriously. It is my great joy to serve as your pastor. I do not presume this is a given. In fact, I've been in ministry for 17 years which basically means all of my adult life and all but the first year of our marriage. And this is my first time doing something like this. I don't take it for granted. This is a huge gift for us. And shows your commitment to my ministry here for years to come. I'm eager to do some renewal work. Some renewal work for me and Courtney & our family. And Lord willing some good writing & other things I just don't usually create the space to do because there is so much good happening here that takes up my days.

I want to reiterate what pastor Jake said. I am so thankful that this is not an emergency rest. It's not next week or anything. *Though a couple of our guys are preaching next weekend which has been on the calendar. So don't freak out.*

If you are wondering what THE SHELTONS will do while on sabbatical, that's a great question. We've got a couple of things planned but are still trying to figure everything out. I've got some incredible preachers coming to bring God's word while I'm out and our own pastors will be preaching as well. And look if you have any questions, you can ask me. Happy to answer. The idea of a Healthy pastor Sabbatical practice might be new to you. That's ok. We are happy to talk about it.

If you have your bible, get it out and head over to Exodus 6. Moses our author is going to PAUSE the action for a really simple important message. He pauses before the next wave of action gets going. Think about what has happened

- Saved out of a river
- Hebrew raised by Egyptians
- Murders a guy & flees to Midian
- Meets God in a burning Bush
- Confronts Pharaoh the king of Egypt.
- And then GOD tells him WATCH. I'm gonna do it.



ACTION and then...STOP EVERYTHING. PRESS PAUSE. And instead of the first plague we get...a LIST OF NAMES? A genealogy? Can you imagine that in the new Top Gun Movie coming out?

Music gets going. Maverick does his whole cockpit closing thing and then instead of blasting off into battle...the screen cuts to a list of maverick's ancestors? Feels strange.

This feels a little like that at first. BUT of course...God has a very good purpose in it. Moses put this genealogy here to give the future generations of God's people **confidence** in the faithfulness of God.

He's telling them THE END of the story before it happens.

Genealogy could have ended right there in pharaoh's court.

WHEN YOU STEP OUT AND TRUST HIM...When his people obey him...he is faithful to his fulfill his promise to them!

What this list reminds the reader is that our job is always just taking a next step AND HIS JOB - is PROVISION & BLESSING. And the more steps of obedience we take, the more we see him provide.

So, I want to read you this list of names. These names cover 7 generations That connect the end of the book of Genesis to

the Book of Judges. Aaron and Moses are in the middle. As if Moses is saying listen - the exodus is what God did in our day. But he was faithful LONG before us and even let us see how he was already being faithful to those coming up AFTER us. He is WAY bigger than us! AND so, when we stepped out on this mission, we stepped out in confidence that HE WHO PROMISED IS FAITHFUL!

Ya'll need to get ready because its 14 verses of names. And some of ya'll are going to be tempted to Zone out. But our God sees every single person. He doesn't skip the names because every name is a story of God's faithfulness. SO, remember this is God's inspired word and lock in with me.

14 These are the heads of their fathers' families:

The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel:

Hanoch and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi.

These are the clans of Reuben.

15 The sons of Simeon:

Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin,

Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman.

These are the clans of Simeon.

16 These are the names of the sons of Levi

according to their family records;

Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

Levi lived 137 years.



17 The sons of Gershon:

Libni and Shimei, by their clans.

18 The sons of Kohath:

Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

Kohath lived 133 years.

19 The sons of Merari:

Mahli and Mushi.

These are the clans of the Levites according to their family records.

20 Amram married his father's sister Jochebed, and she bore him Aaron and Moses.

Amram lived 137 years.

21 The sons of Izhar:

Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri.

22 The sons of Uzziel:

Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri.

23 Aaron married Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon.<sup>1</sup>

She bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

24 The sons of Korah:

Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph.

These are the clans of the Korahites.

25 Aaron's son Eleazar married one of the daughters of Putiel,

and she bore him Phinehas.

These are the heads of the Levite families by their clans.

For the sake of clarity, you can summarize the 7 generations like this:

Israel → Levi → Kohath → Amram → Aaron → Eleazar → Phinehas

26 It was this Aaron and Moses whom the Lord told, "Bring the Israelites out of the land of Egypt according to their military divisions." 27 Moses and Aaron were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt in order to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. -- Exodus 6:14-27

HERE's why he says "THIS" Aaron and Moses. He's saying they have legitimate claim to the role of PRIEST. Because the role of priest was given to the LEVITES. And THEY are LEVI's descendants.

SO, they are commissioned by God...it is their birthright to stand in the GAP. Between God and the People. They hear from God and then go tell the people what they hear. THAT'S WHAT A PRIEST DOES. And Moses is saying God spoke to he

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<sup>1</sup> This is in here because of its connection to the line of Judah. Which is the line of Christ. In other words, Aaron's father-in-law & brother-in-law are ancestors of Jesus. See how the whole bible connects.



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and Aaron as he DOES with priests. And he was FAITHFUL as the people obeyed God's word and stepped. Literally WALKED step by step out of Egypt. And God Continued to be faithful as each generation trusted God and took next steps.

This is why it matters. Why the pause is here. To say before you read all this remember - Moses & Aaron are Stand-Ins. God has something to say to his people and to the world and he uses priests to do it. And GOD will BE FAITHFUL!

Here's why WE PAUSE TODAY ON THIS. God has put us, THE CHURCH, HERE and now as a kingdom of *priests*.

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. -- 1 Peter 2:9-10

It's now us, the church, who are STAND INS. It is our job to call people to obey God just like it was the job of the Levites in Moses' day. For us, it is not our Bloodline that gives us this mission, it is CHRIST'S BLOOD that gives it to us. It's God's mercy. That's why we call ourselves MERCY CHURCH. Because the thing that BINDS US TOGETHER is that we who otherwise

have NO CLAIM to know God...now are HIS PRIESTS ONLY because of God's Mercy.

And Just like God gave Jacob a promise & a mission, just like he gave Moses & Aaron a promise & a mission, just like he gave Joshua a promise and a mission, just like he gave the early church a promise and a mission...God has given MERCY CHURCH a promise and a mission. The promise - HE IS FAITHFUL! And the mission: Make disciples of Jesus.

So just as the narrative paused and that generation considered their place in God's story, I want to do the same. I want to show a little of how we, Mercy Church, fit into the story of God's faithfulness just like Moses did with Israel in their day. And then I want to put our MISSION in front of us that God has called us to and invite you to join in.

Let's start with our story.

Now if you were here last summer, I showed you Mercy's genealogy all the way from the first church in Jerusalem until now. I'm not going to do that. So, to model Moses, I'll show you 7 generations.

#### Mercy's Genealogy

#### First Baptist Church of Durham NC (1878)

First Baptist Durham began to plant several churches in the Durham Area. Which is true with each church I'm about to





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share, including ours. So, you'll see our story, but the power of church planting would be to see the stories of all these other churches. You are going to hear "CHURCH PLANTING" in this ALOT. That's because our God is a SENDING GOD. Sending his people with the Gospel. So, we are a SENDING CHURCH. In fact, one of our 5 ministry values is we send God's people to all people. FBC Durham saw a real need in North Durham, so they planted one there in 1907 called North Durham Church

**FBC Durham → North Durham Church (1907)**

In 1962 that church planted a church in a different neighborhood called and called it

**FBC Durham → North Durham Church → Homestead Heights Baptist Church (1962)**

In 2002 That church relaunched and renamed itself

**FBC Durham → North Durham Church → Homestead Heights Baptist Church → The Summit Church (2002)**

The Summit Church and I walked in there as a sophomore attending UNC chapel hill. That church had a vision to plant 1000 churches. It was in that church that the Lord called me into ministry, and I served as a pastor there for 10 years. During that time Summit Church planted churches all across the country and the world. And continues to this day. Well,

In 2015 that church sent me along with 60 others to plant a church in Charlotte NC. Inspired by 1 Peter 2.9-10 we called this new church Mercy Church.

**FBC Durham → North Durham Church → Homestead Heights Baptist Church → The Summit Church → Mercy Church (2015)**

Now, I gotta pause here and show you the **Mercy Church launch team (SHOW PIC)**. 60 people & I was the only one paid. The rest got jobs & moved or joined us to help reach people. And I show you that to remind you ALL of this is just PEOPLE. Ordinary people trying to tell other people about Jesus.

That was 7 years ago. Since then, we've helped launch churches - by sending our people and our money - in L.A., Brooklyn, Nashville, Orlando, & Atlanta. We've also sent 11 people to take the gospel overseas in different areas of need around the world. Now we've reached a moment where we can send out a church plant. After all, we send God's people to all people. So, we've sent our own to plant in Charlotte and this Summer we are sending our own to plant a church in Nairobi. So, let's look at the genealogy and just like Moses & Aaron, it doesn't end with us!

**FBC Durham → North Durham Church → Homestead Heights Baptist Church → The Summit Church → Mercy Church → Mercy Nairobi (2022)**





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Allan and his team will plant a church in the heart of Kenya and here's what is awesome - Kenya borders 3 countries in what missionaries call the 10-40 window. It's latitude longitude language to talk about a region of the world filled with people groups who are unreached. They've never heard the gospel. And now we get to send a church to a strategic location that can mobilize people to these unreached groups! And we will partner with them to do it! Because they say a church is not truly a church planting church until it has grandkids. SO, we are praying for & supporting Mercy Nairobi and excited for the day they add a Phinehas, a 7th generation, to the genealogy.

FBC Durham → North Durham Church → Homestead Heights Baptist Church → The Summit Church → Mercy Church → Mercy Nairobi → TBA

See the story of God is not centered around Mercy Church. We are not the beginning or end of the story. But this IS our time. God has put us here in Charlotte, North Carolina with one simple mission. The mission that God gave the first church. What I want to do is share the mission and vision of Mercy Church with you and then invite you off the sidelines to join what God is doing here. Because we are still just PEOPLE. Yes, we've got a few more paid staff as the church has grown but our mission & vision have stayed exactly the same.

Our Mission as a church is

Mercy Church is here to make disciples who love God, love each other, and love our world.

Jesus gave the church one central task. And if we do that task we succeed, and if we don't...we fail. That task is to make disciples of Jesus. People who Love God, love their fellow believer, and love the Lost world.

19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, -- Matthew 28:19

We make disciples. That's what we do. And there are great things about being an almost 7-year-old church. We've got just a little bit of stability. We've got a little bit of maturity. BUT, with that stability comes a GIANT danger. The danger is we could get distracted from our mission. Ya'll I desperately do not want that for us. Our mission is too urgent. People need Christ.

Success is not how many people come on Sunday, or how many programs we have, how flashy our music is or how great the preaching is or anything else.

The reality is - Charlotte doesn't need the same Christians moving from church to church every 10 years or so. It needs an awakening. Where Christians are TRAINED AND MOBILIZED to make disciples of Jesus among their lost friends. It needs a





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church that believes and is equipped to help an atheist find Jesus and grow all the way into a pastor. Where an unbeliever can discover Jesus and grow all the way into a missionary.

I don't want to be a "better church than the one down the street." I want to be a church full of disciple makers where the lost are saved, the saved are trained, and the trained are sent. Where we measure success by answering the simple question - ARE WE MAKING DISCIPLES OF JESUS?

I told you a few weeks ago. We are NOT building a cruise ship filled with programs to entertain everyone. THAT is the danger for a church as it ages. It slips into maintaining and entertaining. But our mission isn't "ENTERTAIN BORED CHRISTIANS." Our mission is to MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS.

SO, I told you the church we are building is more like an aircraft carrier. Where we train you and equip you to be sent OUT from here to take the gospel to the battlefield. The battle isn't usually here. It's usually out where you work & live. And the question that keeps me up is are our ministries preparing you to make disciples?

Our kids and student ministries - They partner with families to MAKE DISCIPLES of the next generation.

Our Community Groups - Are we making disciples of Jesus who can go make disciples of Jesus?

Community Outreach to our city - are we simply completing projects or are we making disciples of Jesus?

Even my preaching and our Sunday services - Are we just transferring knowledge to you or are we making disciples?

When I think of Catherine Mitchell...who I didn't tell I was going to brag on her, but she will be ok. She was baptized here. Grew as a follower of Jesus here. Quit her job as a lawyer to go be an instructor at an all-girls school just outside of Nairobi in Kenya. She now is the head of school and I've met the women she has discipled who are now discipling the young women at the school.

Ya'll, this is THE THING we gotta be about. And I confess COVID was a massive distraction for us and took us off course a little on our main purpose. And more than anything I want you to grow as a disciple of Jesus. That's why we are here. So, like an aircraft carrier we may never look shiny. But we aren't built for looking good. We are built for mission. For making disciples.

That's mercy's mission. Our thing. Now if we do that, our vision is what we want to see happen. Here it is:



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**Mercy's Vision: We want to see a gospel awakening in Charlotte that is carried to the ends of the earth.**

And I say awakening because there is a dormant Christianity that needs awakening here in our city. Christians need to rise up out of their slumber and recapture a passionate relationship with Jesus and we need to recapture HIS heart for the lost.

The city continues to grow. Last stat I saw showed that still over 100 people are moving into Charlotte each DAY. That means we need a new MEGA CHURCH every month JUST to keep up with population growth. So, we want to see new churches planted and declining churches revitalized. We want to sleepy Christians awakened out of their slumber and on fire for the Lord and his calling on their lives. I believe Charlotte should be one of the great missionary sending hubs in the whole world.

BUT IT STARTS with a gospel awakening in my heart. It starts with me going back and abiding in Jesus. I gotta be reminded that it is not my DOING but HIS DOING. Not my faithfulness but HIS faithfulness that has saved me from my sin and reconciled me to God. He doesn't pile burdens of chores on me called religion, he invites me into his mission. He offers me an in the game role to see people experience the mercy I have

experienced. And the reason many of us aren't excited about the mission of God is because we've forgotten the mercy of God.

This is why one of our values is we keep the gospel at the center of all we do. Because I know the best motivation for you is God's faithfulness TO YOU. So, we sing it, we preach it, we study it, we remember it in communion, we celebrate it in baptism. IT IS OUR THING. When we devote ourselves to the gospel, an awakening will happen one person at a time.

Awakenings are one person at a time, one step at a time. Which is why one of our core values you KEEP hearing me say is "we help people take their next step in following Jesus." Because a church focused on helping one person take one step...that church will change the world.

Jesus left the 99 and went after the 1. So yes, we are about numbers here at mercy. We are about the 1. The one lost sheep, the one prodigal son or daughter. And we will do whatever it takes for that one to be reconciled to God through Christ.

So, let's talk about it. What is your next step? I imagine you have one of 3 next steps. I'm going to tell you all 3







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1. BELIEVE & BE BAPTIZED

2. PRAY & INVITE

Time to see you are not the end of the genealogy of faith. Do you believe somebody is going to find Christ through you? And then THEY are going to lead someone to faith? You aren't the focus, but it is your time. I'm telling you there's nothing like it. 200 lost people to come on easter - that's 200 opportunities for genealogies to be forever changed.

3. JOIN THE MINISTRY - Ya'll look, I'm going to end our time asking everyone to take a next step in ministry. I don't know EXACTLY how God has wired you up to

serve but I do know this. He intentionally gives every Christian a spiritual gift. And then calls them to USE that gift to serve other Christians. And then, as they do that...OTHERS experience God's blessing through their service.

And look. I know you probably don't know how God has gifted you or what his specific calling is on your life. But here's what I do know - HE IS REALLY FAITHFUL. AND you can trust him with one next step. Just a step. So, we are creating that step for you today. That's what the card in your seat is about. In just a minute we are going to hear testimonies of how serving others will change your life.