

THE STORY – DELIVERANCE
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SCRIPTURE ON SCREENS: EXODUS 1:6-14, 6:2-8 (I WILL READ OR TODD – not in bulletin)

(Todd/Betty...transition from 1:14 to 6:2 this way...(They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly...God...said to Moses, “I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac etc. End with...”I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord.”)

God is a God of deliverance (every time this comes up on the screen I want you to say this with me)

This theme of deliverance runs through scripture like a mighty flood

In oppression, in trial, in the wilderness, when our back is against the wall and there seems to be nowhere to turn

Our God is a God of deliverance

It's like a refrain through all scripture

Something that God wants us to recognize about him

Our God is a God who delivers his people – pulls them out of bondage

And sets them free

We come to the part in our series on The Story where Moses enters in as a great leader of his people

Exodus means “a coming out” – an exit

Exodus is the book in the Bible that talks about Moses leading the Hebrews out!

He leads them out of slavery, out of bondage into freedom

But this was not Moses' idea

This was God's idea

Because **God is a God of deliverance**

In fact God had to convince Moses that he, Moses, was the guy he was going to use to bring deliverance

At first Moses resisted God's call

But in the end Moses complied and delivered the Israelites from bondage

Hold up your copy of THE STORY. Open it to page xi and note where we are at now on the Timeline. Joseph lived in 1900BC and now we will turn our attention to God's deliverance of His people out of Egypt which occurred around 1400 BC.

Lets just review what has happened since Joseph and his brothers were reunited in Egypt – that wonderful story of forgiveness that we talked about last time...

Where Joseph forgives his brothers and said "You meant it for evil but God meant it for good."

How did we get from that to Moses?

After Joseph is reunited with his brothers

And as head honcho over all of Egypt – second only to Pharoah Joseph was able to give his brothers land to graze their flocks – His brothers were shepherds so he gave them the best grazing land available

And **For 400 years they (Josephs brothers and their childrens children) lived in Egypt and the Israelites prospered**

Does everyone understand that each of these brothers – and all their kids - these twelve brothers and their families
Became the heads – the beginnings of the twelve tribes of Israel?

That is why Jesus called 12 disciples – a parallel to those 12 sons of Jacob and 12 tribes of Israel
He was reenacting the whole story of the chosen people of God in a different way - but with enough similarity so that we would recognize the comparisons –
but also see a whole new arrangement of the deliverance of bondage from sin....that God was working out over the course of time

And what was Jesus' main focus? **Deliverance...**

Because **God is a God of deliverance**

The purpose of Jesus is summed up in a few words in the gospels where it says,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...

Because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the captives

To set at liberty those who are bruised

the same God in the Old Testament and in the New Testament – setting at liberty, making a way for the captives

Our **God is a God of deliverance**

So the Hebrew people that had all started with Joseph's brothers prospered

I mean they prospered like rabbits...they had kids, and more kids

And then a new Pharaoh came into power – one who knew nothing about Joseph – who felt threatened by the rising numbers of Israelites.

His response to their threat was to enslave them.
But even then the Hebrew people kept multiplying to about 4 million

Finally, Pharaoh reasoned that there were so many of these slaves that if an enemy nation invaded their country he was afraid that the Israelites would side with their enemy and would defeat Egypt just because of sheer numbers.

So Pharaoh instituted a more drastic plan

It was a plan of genocide.

He ordered that all the male Hebrew boys be killed at birth.

He decided that these Hebrew babies were not people.

He decided that they were not deserving of life.

Moses has just been born, as Pharaoh has ordered that all the baby boys born to the Hebrews must be killed

So Moses' mom fashions **a little basket** – **this interestingly is the same Hebrew word as “an ark”**.

Once again God is rescuing, delivering. For Moses he is taken up out of the water, just like Noah

There is a parallel to Christian baptism here.

We too are rescued or pulled up out of the water (immersion) and delivered from our sin.

Our God is a God of deliverance

So Moses is rescued from the genocide, pulled up out of the water...by

Pharaoh's daughter who is bathing by the river...sees and hears the little baby in the basket boat crying– her maternal instincts take over and she takes the baby home

She names him **Moses** which actually **means “out of the water”**

Again...significant for baptism from a New Testament perspective – saved from death for a purpose
Pulled up out of the water

So Moses is raised in Pharaoh's household
He has the man skirt and the eye make-up going
He looks Egyptian as he grows up
By a great grace his own mother becomes his nurse
So Even though he is raised by Pharaoh his Mom is always there reminding Moses who he really is – a Hebrew, an Israelite, belonging to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

One day as a young man Moses sees an Egyptian brutally beating a Hebrew slave
And he gets so angry that he kills the Egyptian
He then flees for his life to the desert of Midian where he becomes a shepherd

Think about this. It is a reversal from the Joseph story.
Joseph began as a shepherd, along with his brothers and ends up in Pharaoh's court as a ruler.
Moses is raised in Pharaoh's court, and then becomes a shepherd. So often God's people and especially his leaders are called to hold their own – stay faithful - in a foreign land...this is another theme in scripture
But how God works us into his story is different for each one of us

Moses hides out in the desert for 40 years! Meets his wife Zipporah...gets married.
40 years....That's a really long time out, isn't it?
When a kid gets a time out, they are supposed to go and think about what they did wrong, right? It is a time to think, maybe apologize, take a deep breath and start over.

40 years is a long time out but,
I do think that God was teaching Moses many things in the
desert during those 40 years

Maybe some of you have felt like you are in a time out
A time in your life when maybe you feel you had your legs
knocked out from under you
Maybe it was a job loss, or a significant death in your family
I know I felt that way when my father died. I was in a time-out
for about a year...I was in grief
Maybe you have bouts of depression (1 out 4 people in our
culture suffer from a mental illness – maybe it was that)
Or divorce...but whatever it was the foundations of your being
were knocked away for an extended period of time

Usually when those times come, our first response is “How do I
get out from under this?”
That of course is a logical response...
But maybe our response really should be, “*Where are you God
in all this? What are you teaching me? Show me yourself...
reveal yourself to me.*”

Moses I am sure prayed this prayer...having been raised by his
Hebrew Mom in Pharoahs court...he knew about the God of
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
And God did reveal himself to Moses..and showed him how real
he was...and that Moses had a purpose...he was alive for a
reason
And God will reveal himself for you too, if you ask him...don't
give up seeking him
Because our **GOD IS A GOD OF DELIVERANCE**

The way God revealed himself to Moses is that Moses is out in
the desert being timed out by God, tending sheep, when he

comes across a bush that is burning but is not consumed by the fire.

And God says Moses...Moses you're the man

I am sending you to Pharoah

To tell him right to his face...**LET MY PEOPLE GO**

That's the mantra of deliverance.

So from now on when you see that on the screen you say it too

LET MY PEOPLE GO

Anyone know that song from back in youth group days

Pharoah...Pharoah! O baby let my people go...

This is God's refrain all through scripture

God is saying...I want to set you free

Whether its from the slavery of sin, or slavery from the lash of the Egyptian whip – *I want to and I will deliver you – whatever it takes*

I don't want you to be enslaved

I don't want you leaning over, toiling under a heavy burden

I want to deliver you – Why does God say this

Because our **God is a God of deliverance**

And this God of deliverance says...Moses you are the one I have chosen to lead my people out of bondage

Now don't forget that Moses has his face plastered all over

Egypt on the post office walls because he murdered a man

And now God is telling him to go back to Egypt and confront Pharoah, the most powerful man on earth and tell him to let his slave labor force of 3 million people (and that's about the size of the Hebrew people at that point) just walk away...

He wants Moses to go eyeball to eyeball with Pharoah and say

LET MY PEOPLE GO!

Moses says to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?"
Do you know what people fear more than death studies show?
PUBLIC SPEAKING...(so scared when I'd get up here...my palms would sweat, my whole body would shake, I'd feel like I wanted to vomit – I've gotten over that but my colleague Walt..sat and got sick every Sunday morning)

There was no toastmasters "learn to speak in public" chapter there in the Midian desert

We also think that Moses may have had a speech impediment which may have made public speaking for him all the more daunting

I don't know if you have ever been in a situation where God has clearly called you to do something and it just seemed outrageous

You were scared, felt unqualified, couldn't imagine it ever working, and you start arguing with God

Look at me today doing this up here. People...I never wanted to do public speaking. I thought our family had too many pastors. I was scared stiff to even speak out in class...this is God's idea that I am a pastor not mine...I am such a reluctant responder.

Moses is reluctant too, as God maps out his plan

And he is scared stiff...

God's response to Moses' fear and trepidation?

I WILL BE WITH YOU

And when Moses asks what he is going to say to people when they ask him who sent him... God response is that he tells Moses his name

God said to Moses, "**(My name is) I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'**" Exodus 3:14

**The name God tells Moses that is his name is I AM.
In Hebrew this name is “Yahweh”**

It means the self-existent One

It is a name that has no beginning and no end

It is a name that is always in the present tense

It is the name of absolute power and yet absolute love.

It is a name that is dependable and faithful

A name that desires the full trust of His people

It is the name Jesus claimed as His own name when he said

“I tell you the truth...before Abraham was born, I am.!”

John 8

If that One is with me, I can go anywhere

I can do anything

I can do the impossible, because nothing is impossible with
God.

Is God calling you to do something today?

If he is truly calling you then know this...if you obey HE WILL
BE WITH YOU and you have nothing to fear

Because Our **God is a God of Deliverance**

So finally Moses goes and confronts Pharoah

And by God’s power 9 plagues are levied against the Egyptians

We don’t have time to go into each one...

But ***each plague was a direct affront to an Egyptian god that
controlled that area of nature***

So the Lord is saying, “I am more powerful than all of your gods
and goddesses”...so you better **“LET MY PEOPLE GO”**

9 plagues

But the tenth plague does it

God kills all the first born Egyptian males and does not touch any of the firstborn Hebrew males

The Hebrews were to slaughter a perfect lamb and put the lambs blood on their door.

The angel of death “passed over” those doors and did not harm the Hebrew children.

Now this incident in scripture is where we get the word and the celebration we call **PASSOVER**

When Jesus had his last supper with his disciples he was celebrating PASSOVER with them

He knew that he was to be that perfect lamb that would be slain, to save us all from death

That’s why it was so important that he celebrate that meal with his disciples right before his death

That’s the connection between the Old Testament Passover and the New Testament “Lord’s Supper”

In both cases we are rescued from death

In the Old Testament it is the Hebrew children

In the New Testament it is for all people in all times and places

Because our **God is a God of Deliverance**

Now, finally, with this last devastating plague, Pharaoh lets the Hebrews go...and they leave Egypt only to get to the RED SEA They stand there with no where to go and they can see Pharaoh coming at them in the distance with his armies because he has changed his mind

He wants those 4 million slaves back under his control!

Who was he going to use to build all those pyramids after all?

So the Red Sea is blocking their path in the front

And the Egyptians are bearing down from behind (picture)

Ever been in a situation where there seemed to be no way out?

Lots of these in the Bible

And lots of these kinds of circumstances in my own life as well

Times when you think...this is it
There can be no deliverance from bondage this time

The people of Israel with Red Sea in front and the Egyptians behind cry out to Moses,
“Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die?...It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!”
They are panic stricken

What does Moses say to his people who are trapped and who need deliverance?
What does Moses say to his people who are scared and confused?

“Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.” Exodus 14:13-14

And Moses lifts his staff and waters part. The Israelites walk through to dry land.

Moses whose name means “lifted from the water” – opens up the water for the people to pass through on dry land

God delivered them out of bondage, out of slavery, out of oppression.

Again, back to the baptism theme, they come out from the water a new people.

God made a way where there seemed to be no way.

There is never a situation that is too difficult for God to deliver us from.

There is never a circumstance that is so dire that we need to be afraid.

Because our **God is a God of Deliverance**

But what did the Israelites have to do? **Be still.**
Now what I am about to say may sound paradoxical to you.
But sometimes, if we want to see God's power in our lives at work, we've got to try to stop fixing it ourselves...
And I am preaching as much to myself as I am to you today
I am a fixer, I am a doer, and I can lay awake at night and worry.
Maybe you do that too.

There's a great scripture from Psalm 46:10 that some of you probably know that I go back to again and again, and it has helped me so much.

The scripture is... "**Be still and know that I am God.**"

Wow. There's that "I am" again, right?
When you are hemmed in
When you are worried about the future
When you feel trapped, alone, with no recourse...
Be still and know that I am God
I AM is with you
I AM has your back
I will make a way....

We saw this with Abraham who trusted God even when he saw no way out from sacrificing his son
We saw it with Joseph, who could see no way out from the pit his brothers threw him into, and from the chains of his imprisonment
And now we see it with Moses, hemmed in before and behind with no way out who lifted his staff and made a way – a path on dry land through God's power working through him

Do you think God is trying to get a message through to us here.
Know that I am is God. I AM will make a way for you.

Whatever it is, nothing is impossible with me.

Finally we see this same theme with Jesus

When Jesus hung on the cross for us it looked like a no win situation

There was no way out – resurrection? No one was thinking about that. What was that anyway?

When Jesus hung on the cross God was looking Satan squarely in the face and demanding “**Let My People Go**”

I am standing in their place, and suffering for them

In order to make a way for you, and you, and you...

A way for all people who receive me to be restored to God

Through my blood I want to free you from the slavery to sin that leads to death...says God our great deliverer

Through my blood I want to forgive those sins – and give you purpose and meaning in this life

And then eternal life forever with me

On the cross God says to the Enemy for all times and for all places for all eternity for all who receive him, God says...“**Let My People Go**”

Because what kind of God do we have folks?

Our **God is a God of Deliverance!** Amen...

(Story)