

November 25/26, 2023

**The God Who Delivers**  
*Exodus: The God Who Delivers Series*  
**Exodus 1 – 15 Recap**  
Pastor Bryan Clark

I don't know where life finds you this Thanksgiving weekend, but this I do know, we need to be a people who remember. Maybe for you this Thanksgiving weekend, all is well. You're in a wonderful season of life. And if that's true for you, I'm happy for you. But you better remember, for tomorrow that may change. Some of you here this weekend maybe for you—you or a family member—are battling a very difficult disease. Maybe for some of you this is the year you've lost someone you deeply love—it's been a very difficult year. Maybe some of you as you sit here this morning are in bondage to an addiction that just won't go away. Or maybe you've committed some sin, and you have just made a mess out of everything. Maybe for some of you your days are filled with fear and anxiety and most days you feel paralyzed or this relentless loneliness or depression. Wherever you find yourself this weekend, this I do know, we have a God who delivers, and this we must remember.

The story of the Bible is the story of mankind. It is the story of all of us. It begins in Genesis Chapters 1 and 2, where we are introduced to the Creator God of the universe. The eternal God is loving, He's gracious, and He's good. We learn that what God has always wanted for people made in His image is to dwell in relationship with Him in a place called Paradise. It is beautiful. But in Genesis chapter 3, we're introduced to the great temptation for people made in the image of God, and that is to believe that we can be God and that life would be better with me in charge. Adam and Eve believed this lie, and it leads to what we would call the great rebellion, the fall. And Adam and Eve, the first couple, are evicted from the garden Paradise, and will live out the remainder of their days in the wilderness. But literally, before we can turn the page of the story God has already made a promise that somehow through the seed of a woman, he would send a Deliverer who would make a way back. It would be right to say from that moment on we have all lived our lives in the wilderness, evicted from the very world we were created for. And we are in the process of an exodus back to the land flowing with milk and honey.

The story moves on in Genesis—stories like Noah and the great flood. And we're reminded when God told Noah to build an ark, it was a picture of the salvation of the deliverance to come. Deliverance from the watery judgment of God. We get to Genesis chapter 12. It's the story of a man by the name of Abram who was called out to father a nation. They would be God's people and he would be their God. He promised them a land flowing with milk and honey. Abram was told that it would be his descendant who would be the seed of the woman. Who would be the great Deliverer through whom all the nations of the world would be blessed. But strangely enough in that conversation God also tells Abram that at some point your descendants are going to live in a foreign land and oppression and bondage, and there they will remain for 400 years before God raises up a deliverer to set them free. So, the story goes from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to Joseph. And it's in the Joseph story that Jacob, the nation of Israel, some 70 strong are brought into Egypt. Brought into Egypt to survive a famine under the favor and the privilege of the Pharaoh who gives

them the finest land in all of Egypt, and there they would remain and flourish. They would be fruitful and multiply. One pharaoh after another would come and go until after 400 years, over a million strong.

The Pharaoh was threatened by this new nation within their borders, that they might take over. So, he institute's a policy of genocide that every Hebrew baby boy that is born should be put to death. It is into that context that the book of Exodus opens, and we are introduced to a nameless young couple who have a little baby boy. They defy the orders of the Pharaoh. They refuse to kill their baby boy. Instead, they put him in a small basket—an ark really—and place him in the reeds on the edge of the river Nile. And there they wait. Who would happen to find this baby boy? None other than the very daughter of the Pharaoh himself. And we wonder, will she obey her father's orders to kill this baby? But with kindness and compassion, rather than killing this Hebrew baby boy, she actually takes him into her family, she adopts him, and he becomes her son. And she names him Moses. You can't miss the sovereign hand of God that the great deliverer of Israel out of Egypt would actually grow up right under the very nose of Pharaoh as a member of his family. It feels like all the pieces of the deliverance are coming together. So we wait and we wait and we wait. For 40 years we wait. Until one day Moses comes strolling along, he sees in an Egyptian mercilessly beating one of the Hebrew slaves, and he erupts in anger and he kills the Egyptian. He buries him in the sand hoping no one will find out. But soon word gets to the Pharaoh. And Moses' grandfather—the Pharaoh—is outraged and he wants to kill Moses. So Moses must flee as a fugitive from Egypt and ends up in the Sinai wilderness. There he meets Zipporah, who will become his wife. And there he has two sons. And there he begins a new life tending sheep in the Sinai desert.

Meanwhile, back in Egypt, the people are in agony. They cry out to God. They're oppressed, they're abused, they're enslaved. “God, can't you hear our voice? Won't you do something?” But they must wait and wait and wait. For 40 more years they must wait while Moses tends to the sheep in the desert. Until one seemingly ordinary day, Moses comes across a bush that is burning in the desert. Even today in the Sinai Desert it is possible that a bush erupts into flames because of the rocks and the stones in the sand; the sun heats the bush, and the bush ignites into flames. But what was unusual about this burning bush is it was not consumed. Moses then moved closer, and there he hears the voice of the God of the universe coming from that bush. He is introduced to the God, Yahweh, the God of the Hebrew people, the great I AM. And there he calls Moses. Yahweh has an assignment. “I want you to be the man who is going to lead the deliverance of my people.” Moses is struggling with his own inadequacies, his own failures, his own limitations. He is thinking, “God, you must be kidding! You need to find somebody else.” God says, “Moses, what's that in your hand?” It was just an ordinary shepherd's staff. God does a couple miracles to that staff, and then reminds Moses, “You hold on to that staff because that's going to be your reminder that the Hebrew people will not be delivered by the hand of Moses, but by the hand of God. Moses, your job is to listen to Me. It's to obey Me, it's to trust Me.” Moses reluctantly agrees. And soon Moses and his brother Aaron, are headed back to Egypt.

By this time, Moses' grandfather has died, and there is a new sheriff in town. And Moses and Aaron appear before the Pharaoh, and they tell him that the Hebrew people are God's firstborn son. “They belong to God. They are God's people. They don't belong to you. You can't keep them. You can't enslave them. You can't oppress them. You must let my people go.” But Pharaoh's not so

impressed by all this. He says to Moses, “I don't even know who this Yahweh is. Never heard of Him, and I'm tired of talking to you. You need to go.” But he's so annoyed by what Moses and Aaron said that he turns up the heat to oppress the Hebrew people—the Hebrew slaves—even more, for which they blame Moses, and Moses blames God. And it seems like the great deliverance isn't going so well. God doesn't really respond to Moses other than to tell him, “Moses, I am going to unleash 10 strikes against Pharaoh and the Egyptians. And by the time I am done, I will bring Pharaoh to his knees, and he and the Egyptians and the Hebrew people will know that I am the one true God.”

So again and again and again, God obviously reveals His power and His presence to the Pharaoh and to the Egyptians. But Pharaoh won't acknowledge that Yahweh is God. And each time his heart gets harder and harder and harder. Moses tells Pharaoh, “Don't mess with this God. Don't trifle with Him. You better pay attention.” But Pharaoh won't pay attention, so God tells Moses that the 10th and final strike will be the strike that will bring Pharaoh and all of Egypt to their knees. The Hebrew people are God's firstborn son. And because Pharaoh is determined to oppress them, to abuse them, to enslave them, in return, Pharaoh and all of Egypt will have to give up their firstborn sons and they will die.

But strangely, in this moment of the story the storyteller interrupts the storyline with a great concern. The concern is that the people of God will forget God. That the future generations will forget who God is and what God had done for them. There's a great concern that when the future generations enter into the land of promise, having never been enslaved, having not had to fight for the land, that they would forget God, who He is and what He has done. And they will chase after the pagan gods of the nations around them. So God would institute a remembrance once a year, a week long. Designed to remind the people of who God is, and what God has done for them.

On the night of the final strike, God told the Hebrew people to, “Stay in your homes, to gather as families, to sacrifice the lamb, to take the blood of the lamb and to wipe the blood on the doorframe of your house. And when the angel of death comes over, the angel will see the blood on the doorframe and will pass over and your child will be spared the judgment of God.” So that night, Pharaoh and all of the families of Egypt experienced the death of their firstborn sons. It was a strike that brought Pharaoh to his knees, and he finally relented and released the Hebrew people to leave the land. The Hebrew people plunder the land and march triumphantly out of Egypt. God could have taken them by the Via Maris, the way of the sea. It was the shortest route to the land of promise, but He didn't. He took them to the south and to the east, for the people were not yet ready. They did not understand yet what it meant to be the people of God. There were lessons they needed to learn that could only be learned in the wilderness. So it was through the wilderness that they must travel. But God would not send them alone. He manifested His visible presence to them through this magnificent pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. One can only imagine how awesome that was. You literally could see the very presence of God among them and know that our God, Yahweh, is with us every step of the way to the land of promise. It's hard to imagine what could be better than that.

But then the unimaginable happens. Pharaoh changed his mind and rallied the troops and is now coming after the Israelites. They see Pharaoh and his troops coming. Before them they are trapped on the banks of the sea. Behind them is Pharaoh and his army. But having witnessed the 10

powerful strikes on Egypt, and the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night, certainly they would know that their God is a God who delivers. They just need to trust him. But it was as if none of that had happened. Immediately they go into panic mode, and they cry out to Moses, “Were there no graves in Egypt that you brought us out to the wilderness to die?” They said to Moses, “This is why we said to you, leave us alone. We would rather be slaves in Egypt than to die in the wilderness.”

It’s always interesting to see that when the people of God lose sight of the promises and the power of God, we convince ourselves that slavery in Egypt is a viable option. **But Moses**—I love that line—**but Moses** rises up like some comic book superhero. One of the great leadership moments in all of the Old Testament. And he stands before the people. He gathers them together and he tells them to be quiet. “Silence and witness the salvation of Yahweh our God!” Moses takes his staff; he turns and faces the sea. He raises the staff, and the waters divide. Walls of water with a road leading between that the nation of Israel, over a million strong, can pass through the sea to safety. In the meantime, God takes the pillar of cloud and puts it between the Israelites and the Egyptian army to hold them at bay while the Israelites pass through the sea.

Once all the Israelites had passed through the sea, God lifts the cloud and Pharaoh and his army continue to pursue into the sea. Once all the Egyptian army was in the sea, once again Moses raises his staff and the waters come crashing down on them. And the horse and the rider were hurled into the sea, never, never to be seen again. It was a moment so fantastic that the nation wrote a song that would be their remembrance of who God is and what God has done for us. It's one of the most remembered and celebrated and repeated stories in all of the Old Testament—into the Psalms, into the prophets for the future generations. They would have to fight their battles. Future generations would struggle with their trials and pain. They would have to endure their confusions. And they would need to keep looking back in order to move forward. They would need to remember we have a God who delivers.

But it's more than that. The story of the great exodus connects with the larger narrative of the story of the Bible. Moses is what we call a type of Christ. He is a foreshadowing of the great Deliverer to come. He's the seed of the woman. He's the descendant of Abraham. He is the long-awaited Deliverer, the Savior of the world. So, the people would have to wait. And so they waited, and they waited, and they waited. **Oh, come, O come Immanuel, and ransom captive Israel.** Until some 2000 years ago on that glorious night, Yahweh, the Creator of the universe, took on human flesh as the seed of a woman, was born in a stable in a sleepy little town called Bethlehem. God had kept His promise to send a Deliverer to set His people free. He would be the Lamb of God. It would be God Himself whose blood would be shed on a Roman cross. That those who take the blood of the Lamb and paint it on the doorframe of their heart, would experience God's forgiveness rather than judgment and would become God's children.

But here we are some 2000 years later and the story's not over. We're still living in the wilderness. The Deliverer has come, and we have begun the exodus, but we are not home yet. We have not yet reached the land flowing with milk and honey. We have not yet arrived at the world we were created for, a city whose builder and architect is God, and we feel it deeply every day. We are in an exodus, and we are headed home to a place with no more tears, no more pain, no more sorrow, no more goodbyes. But we are not there yet and we long to be finally home. So today we remember.

We must remember that we have a God who delivers. The same God that delivered the Hebrew people from bondage in Egypt is the same God who's here to deliver you this weekend from whatever it is that's heavy on your heart. The same God that has a track record of faithfulness through the generations is the same God who will be faithful to you. We have a God who delivers. This we can never forget. This we must remember.

*Our Father, we celebrate this weekend that we do have a God who delivers. We long for the day when we will be finally home. Until that day, help us to remember. Help us to believe that we have a God who delivers. In Jesus name, Amen.*

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