



God in Every Story

June 15, 2025

Exodus 10:1-20

Clint Pressley

10 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, ² and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, that you may know that I am the LORD."

³ So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me. ⁴ For if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country, ⁵ and they shall cover the face of the land, so that no one can see the land. And they shall eat what is left to you after the hail, and they shall eat every tree of yours that grows in the field, ⁶ and they shall fill your houses and the houses of all your servants and of all the Egyptians, as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day they came on earth to this day.'" Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

⁷ Then Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?" ⁸ So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. And he said to them, "Go, serve the LORD your God. But which ones are to go?" ⁹ Moses said, "We will go with our young and our old. We will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds, for we must hold a feast to the LORD." ¹⁰ But he said to them, "The LORD be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Look, you have some evil purpose in mind. ¹¹ No! Go, the men among you, and serve the LORD, for that is what you are asking." And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

¹² Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, so that they may come upon the land of Egypt and eat every plant in the land, all that the hail has left." ¹³ So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east

wind upon the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind had brought the locusts. ¹⁴ The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before, nor ever will be again. ¹⁵ They covered the face of the whole land, so that the land was darkened, and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Not a green thing remained, neither tree nor plant of the field, through all the land of Egypt. ¹⁶ Then Pharaoh hastily called Moses and Aaron and said, "I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. ¹⁷ Now therefore, forgive my sin, please, only this once, and plead with the LORD your God only to remove this death from me." ¹⁸ So he went out from Pharaoh and pleaded with the LORD. ¹⁹ And the LORD turned the wind into a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea. Not a single locust was left in all the country of Egypt. ²⁰ But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go.

(Pastor Prays)

If you have been coming for some time now, it would be understandable if, to you, it feels like the plague stories are starting to run together because there seems to be a pattern. There seems to be a method to the seemingly destructive madness. There is in these stories an emerging story of God's power and God's holiness, God's love for his people, and God's hatred for sin. And really, honestly, who doesn't love to read a good story?

I'm reading two books right now. I'm trying to get through them. Both of them are longer than I thought they would be. I didn't know they were so long when I ordered them. The first book is on the Titanic, and I'm getting through it. It feels a little bit tedious. I'm reading through that book. The second book is written by Ron Chernow, and it's on Mark Twain. I thought it would be 300 pages or so. It's 1000 pages! That's right. And reading these two stories, and even the one about Mark Twain, the master storyteller, neither book, neither one of them is written by a Christian. Neither one of them is written to be theological. It's not written from some sort of Christian perspective, but each of those stories is chock-full of theology, in God's Providence and in God's timing, and how the fall has affected everything. How creation is broken, how hope can be restored, and what redemption looks like. There is backsliding and, in truth, lots of death. There is a lot of death in the Titanic story. And woven throughout those stories, whether you see him or not, God is there in an explicit way.

In this text before us, God is showing himself in an implicit way in your life. Whether you see him or not, God is there, and he's showing himself. Let's get some context in this story. This is

the 8th plague. Remember the story of the plagues? The first one was the Nile turned to blood. You could dig beside it and get some water, but it was terrible, nasty. All the fish died. After that, the frogs came up, and billions of frogs showed up. They were everywhere. They were in the ovens and bread boxes. They were in your beds. You stepped on them in your closet. It was nasty. Frogs everywhere. After that, the lice crawled on your skin and bit you. Then there were flies, and then all of the livestock died. All of the cows died. All the goats died. All the horses died. That's terrible.

And then the plagues started attacking people. The plagues were boils. They would pop up on your skin. Maybe it was some sort of leprosy. And then after that, the 7th plague, in the last three before you get to the 10th, there's an uptick. The 7th plague was hail. And the hail fell in such a way that it destroyed all of the plants, all of the vegetation. It set up a famine, and what was left from the hail, now there are billions this time, the plague will be billions of brown grasshoppers called locusts. Those locusts will sweep across Egypt and will create the conditions of a famine. This famine is going to bring Egypt to collapse and Pharaoh to his knees, but not to repentance. And the question you have to look at, when you're reading the Bible, you always want to ask a question: What is this teaching me about God? What are we learning about God in this passage? I think we learned that God is in every story. This will be sort of the sermon and the sentence.

God is in Every Story and God is in Your Story

Let's go back and walk through it. I'll make it like a Bible study and just show some things that you may not have seen when I read it. Then I'll try to make an application. What do we learn from the passage? So go with me to chapter ten, verse one. It starts out like it always does. The Lord says to Moses, Go in to Pharaoh. But when you read it, you see, God says, I've hardened his heart. You go there with a message, but it's not going to work. The obedience is not in the results; the obedience is in you doing what I tell you to do. So, Moses went to the Pharaoh, and there was a purpose behind the failed mission. Here comes the purpose. *That I may show these signs of mine among them.* So God's going to display his power and there's another purpose in verse 2 ² *and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them.* So, fathers and grandfathers, you have a purpose for your worship. God is working in your life so that you

might tell those who come after you. It's good that there is this Father's Day connection right there. So you might tell your son and your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done.

Here's a third purpose in verse 2: that you may know that I am the LORD. That is a precursor to the gospel. YHWH is Yeshua. Remember the name of Jesus, Yeshua. Yahweh saves, it points us to the coming Christ. There is a foreshadowing of Jesus there. So the story picked up. Moses went to the Pharaoh, and he did what God told him to do in verse 3. And look at the universal question. I wouldn't do this very often, but from time to time, there are universal verses that you can pick up off the page and put anywhere. Like, I never recommend taking a verse out of context, but if you're going to take one out of context, you could take this question from God, pull it out, and it's universal. How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Then in verses 3 and 4, here comes the warning. There's mercy in God's warning. *⁴For if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country.* It doesn't sound like much. Who's afraid of a grasshopper? But notice the warning in verse 4. I'm telling you today, and I'm giving you 24 hours, tomorrow. It's a warning. There's mercy there in God's warning.

The warning expands in verses 5 and 6. There're going to be so many of them that you've never heard of anything like this. There's never been these many grasshoppers on the face of the earth. There are going to be billions of them. What's interesting to me is that at the end of verse 6 is the only time in all of the Bible that this phrase is seen. So typically, here's what happens. Moses and Aaron go in to Pharaoh, and they say, this is what God says to do. Let my people go. And once they say it, Pharaoh throws them out. This time, Moses and Aaron go in there and look at the end of verse 6. After he had given the message, Moses turned on his heels. It's a little bit of a mic drop there. He turned and went out from Pharaoh. You don't tell me what to do. I'll tell you what to do, so he walked out.

So now in verse 7, Pharaoh has all of his counselors. It's like the President has a cabinet. Here's Pharaoh's cabinet. He's a politician. They are gathering around him in verse 7, and they said, don't you see what's going on here? Pharaohs in political danger here in verse 7. So this hadn't happened before, Pharaoh called them back in. Let's get to the negotiating table. So he brings Moses and Aaron back in verse 8 and now says, you can go serve the Lord. But who do you plan on taking? Pharaohs getting wise to what Moses and Aaron are doing. They keep saying we're

going out to serve the Lord, but Pharaoh has figured it out. They're not just going out, they're going to leave. So he's getting wind of what they're doing, so he says, who's going with you? Moses said in verse 9, we'll go with our young people, our old people, we're going to take our sons and our daughters, our wives, everybody. And all of the livestock that we still have, and you don't. We're all going. Everybody's going out there.

By the way, let me pause and say, here is another reason for Family Worship. Here is a good reason. Once children are able to understand language, we do this together. Here is intergenerational worship together, old and young. Everybody is together. You have a little picture of it here in the Old Testament. And so, he says we're all going to do it, and Pharaoh says no, you are not doing it like that. So, they have this little back and forth, and in fact, Pharaoh gets real sarcastic there in verse 10. ¹⁰ *But he said to them, "The LORD be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Look, you have some evil purpose in mind.*

After that, Moses and Aaron are thrown out. Then comes the description. Moses stands with his hands over Egypt. He's got in his hand, the staff of God, which symbolizes the presence of God and starts the process. Now, what's interesting to me in verse 13 is that Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind. So, the winds start blowing, and they blow all day long. It's a terrible, windy day, but nothing's happening. I don't know where those locusts were, but they were hundreds of miles away, I guess. The wind starts blowing. It blows all day. It blows all night. But when the sun comes up the next day, you're starting to see these grasshoppers, these locusts. When it was morning, the east wind had brought the locusts. ¹⁴ *The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before, nor ever will be again.* They'd never seen anything like this, the swarms of locusts, before. In fact, you could probably find it on YouTube. You can find them in Africa right now, but there's never been anything like this.

Verse 15 is a description of a reversal of creation. In verse 16, Pharaoh is now crying those crocodile tears again. This is a fake repentance, and notice what it says in verse 17. ¹⁷ *Now therefore, forgive my sin, please, only this once, and plead with the LORD your God only to remove this death from me.*" That's interesting language. It is an admission of what Paul says in Romans, that the wages of sin are death. It's a universal truth. It is what we deserve because of

our own sin and death. And the gospel promise is that Jesus Christ lived perfectly, died on the cross in our place, God raised him from the dead, and if you look to Christ, even though you deserve death, Jesus took it for you. There's a little bit of a gospel seed right there in verses 16 and 17.

Moses went out and did what he always does. He prayed and asked God to move. God hears his prayer. In verse 19, instead of an east wind, he took a west wind. So, we live in North Carolina. It's good to be in North Carolina. We have all four seasons in North Carolina. We have the mountains close by. The beach is close. You don't have to go up to New England to see all the leaves. Just stay here. You don't even have to go to the mountains, just stay here. Come to my yard. You'll see it in my yard. The leaves don't just turn; the leaves fall to the ground and cover the grass. And you put on a backpack blower and something to cover your ears if you care about that sort of thing, and you start blowing those leaves. And for some reason, that's the visual I had, the west wind started blowing, picking up all those locusts. And for the very first time, we see the Red Sea. We are told that the locusts are blown into the Red Sea. It's a foreshadowing of something that is coming down the road. And then in verse 20, the Lord hardened his heart.

And there we see that God is in every story. Now, how does this tell us about God in your story? What do we actually learn? Let's start simple in verse one. Let me give you a couple of things you might have learned. Here's the first one, number one.

Obedience is hard

It is hard to obey. You see what's going on in verse one. The Lord said to Moses, go to Pharaoh. I've hardened his heart. He's not going to listen to you. Like it's not going to be successful. You go into there, I've hardened his heart and the heart of his servants. I'm sending you on a mission that will not work. Moses didn't go in and tell Pharaoh, Hey, look, it's going to be bad if you don't turn and Pharaoh said, You know what, I don't want it to be bad. I want it to be good. I repent. I believe in the God of the Bible, and a national revival broke out. That's not what happened. What happened was that he went into a hard heart, and Pharaoh didn't listen.

Be careful how you judge. Be careful how you judge, whether it worked or not. Don't forget that obedience is up to us, but the results are up to God. And it's hard, in 2025, to live your life

for Christ and to do so in a way that is honoring to God. It's hard if you're a Christian couple and God has given you a child or a couple of children and you're raising them up in the fear and the admonition of the Lord, you take them to church every Sunday and you pray with them, you tell them you love them over and over again, and once they're able to think for themselves, they go off in a different direction. It's hard when you see that. Obedience is hard. It's hard to stand in a certain way on the truths of the Bible when someone close to you is rebelling against that. So you have to get that first step right. Once you have the gospel, once you've trusted that God made you in his image, but the image of God in you is disfigured by sin, that sin is not just that you made bad decisions, that sin is an affront against God. It's a breaking of the Justice of God, and God would be right in condemning you. And yet in his goodness, he has given us Christ. Jesus, who is fully God and fully man. It's important that you get the fully man part. Think of Adam, Adam and Eve in the garden. They fell into sin, and all of humankind since then have been sinners. Then here comes the one perfect one, in our place. He kept all of God's law. And what he does after doing that is go to the cross. At the cross, Jesus is our substitute and takes our place. We deserve condemnation. Jesus took it. The wrath of God is poured out on Jesus. He dies in our place; the wages of sin is death, Jesus took it. They buried him, and God raised him from the dead as a sign to say that it has worked. Victory is yours. Your call is not to try to be religious. Your call is looked to Christ, and trust he did that for you once you get that right. Once you have the gospel planted deep into your soul, now it's time to obey, and the hard work starts. Being obedient affects who our friends are. It affects how we live our lifestyle. It affects what we do with work. Obedience is hard. Let me give you a second lesson to learn about God and about living for him, number two.

Success is in the eye of the beholder

If you're taking notes, success is in the eye of the beholder, and God is the beholder. You learn this when you read the Bible. I'm very thankful for the Bible. One of the benefits of reading the Bible, I hope you're doing this a couple of chapters a day, it will take you 15 to 20 minutes, read it slowly, mark some things, ask God to help you, and that'll feed your soul. One of the benefits of reading the Bible is that you get to places like Isaiah, and you hear God say, Who will go for me, and Isaiah says, Here am I, send me. And if you listen to the rest of the story, he is sent into a world that will not believe.

I mean, Jeremiah, right now in my Bible reading, Jeremiah's got a terrible ministry. Ezekiel was told to go and preach, but look, they're not going to listen to you. They'll just know that the Prophet has been among them.

Stephen, the first martyr, stood up and preached and was killed. Paul died in Rome. Be careful how you measure success. Moses went in to preach to the Pharaoh, but the Pharaoh rejected his message. Please don't be tempted by pragmatism. Pragmatism. Please don't be tempted to just do something because it works.

Several years ago, I was approached by a middle-aged couple. When I say middle age, I mean 55 or 60, which really would be if you live to be 120. That makes you middle-aged. I was approached by this couple; they both had been married before, long-term marriages, and both of them had lost their spouses, and they wanted to get married to one another, but they had been living together for years as a married couple, even though they were not married. And the guy told me the reason they were doing that was because, financially, it makes more sense for them just to live together and not get married, although they had a previous lifestyle of living for Christ, committed to their church. Pragmatically, it made sense to do that. And my plea to you is, don't do things just because they work. We want to live our lives to honor God. So, you asked the question, Is it honoring to the Lord? Is it true to the Bible? Is it faithful to the gospel? Then, in the end, be careful how you measure success. Success is in the eye of the beholder. The Egyptians would have considered Moses a failure. We see him as a success. Here's a third thing you might learn, number three.

We need to get legacy right

We need to get legacy right. What kind of legacy are you leaving? You'll hear that asked a lot. What kind of legacy are you leaving? Let me show where I get that. One of the purposes that God is doing when he hardened Pharaoh's heart and brought these signs, is down there in verse 2, *2 and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them*. So one of the purposes of Moses and Aaron was to have a story. They're in their 80s, so I guess they're telling their sons, who are in their 60s, who will pass it down to their children's sons and grandsons? You see the idea of having a legacy of the story of the gospel. This is a good sort of caveat for Father's Day. I

thank God for every dad and man here. It's encouraging to me to be at Hickory Grove and to have so many men who are going to sing in the Father's Day choir. It is a real encouragement to see men actually showing up to church. That is a tangible, visible example of seeking to honor God.

There ought to be things that we are leaving behind. Even if you're not a man, get a high-quality Bible that's going to last. A Bible made of leather with good paper, read it through, and mark it. If you have children, read it through and mark it, and then on the front, write a note to your child and give that to them. That will be a legacy. My dad went through this Bible. You established that your legacy is godliness. There's a pattern of godliness. When you go home, if you're married and your child sees you talk to your wife and to their mother, there is a legacy of faithfulness, of treating her like Christ does the church, to provide for your family. And not only that, what you find here is, God tells Moses, I'm giving you a story so that you might keep telling the story; that we take the faith once and for all, delivered to the Saints, and we keep passing it down to the next generation. One of the things you learned here is that we need to get legacy right. Let me give you a fourth thing, number four.

Knowing God is the purpose

Knowing God is the purpose. I'm still in verse two. Let me show it to you. *²and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them,* What for? Here it is. *That you may know that I am the LORD."* The whole purpose was that they might know, the people of God might know, the God of the Bible. You might put this over in the category of evangelism. We need to be able to tell the story of God, and the story of God is just what you hear every Sunday. God is holy, man is a sinner, Christ saves, and it takes faith and repentance to get there. God, man, Christ, and your response is believing. So we want to get evangelism right. We want to tell the story. But that's not the only thing that evangelism leads to: discipleship, to worship.

We want to grow in grace. We want to know more about who this God is. We want to give ourselves to the Christian disciplines of showing up at church, being accountable, being in a small group, reading the Bible, and praying for our family. Not only that, not just the Gospel and growth, but also for the third category out there, sanctification. It's how you walk through

difficulty. It's how you lead through tragedy, how you wade through sorrow. It is a display of how the Gospel has worked in your life. And knowing God is the purpose. The original statement of this church is to know Christ and to make him known. Knowing God is the purpose. Let me give you a fifth lesson we learned here, number five.

Lordship is always the issue

That lesson is that Lordship is always the issue. Always. Now, in verse 3, ³*So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me?' How long will you refuse to humble yourself before God? It's always the question. There is no salvation without submission. When I say submission, what I mean is to submit yourselves to the grace of God, given to us in Christ, to see yourself as a sinner, condemned, going to hell, in need of God to reach you and save you, and to confess that your only hope is Christ, his life, death and resurrection. To submit yourself to his word, to give yourself to God's will, to find yourself living in his ways, to establish a deep joy in Christ. You know it's going to help you keep from sinning. One of the greatest ways to combat sin is when you have a deep contentment in Christ. That ground becomes solid under your feet. But to get there, Lordship is always the issue. Let me give you a 6th lesson you might learn, number six.*

God's warnings are merciful

God's warnings are merciful. I won't read it all, but you can go back to verses 4-6, and there you find the warning. That warning is merciful. It's today, and if you don't change, tomorrow judgment comes. Here's the whole picture of the gospel, honestly. God gives us what? When you read the Bible, if you're outside of Christ and you're outside the church and you come in and you think that there is judgment there, let me just tell you, in the Bible, the judgment is there as a warning, and it is merciful. Why does God warn us about adultery? Is it there to keep us from having fun? No, he keeps us in human flourishing. Why does the Bible warn against drunkenness? God doesn't want you to have fun. No. It was for you to flourish. Why is there a warning against racism or favoritism? Why is that there? Because racism or favoritism prevents human flourishing.

Okay, so in our country, it's Pride Month. So when the Bible speaks in Romans chapter one against the abomination, it's called homosexuality, why is that there? It is there to condemn that and to show you God's good design for human flourishing. So-called gay marriage is not human flourishing. God is being judgmental; yes, he's judging in order for you to see the goodness that he gives us.

And I came up from the airport on Friday, and coming from the airport, coming up I-277, you come up to the city on a hill, and you see all the buildings with their pride flags lit up. And I thought that was an absolute misuse of the rainbow. In Genesis Chapter 9, it is God's good covenant with his humanity and his love for his people. And it's given as a warning. God's warnings are merciful. Here's the 7th lesson, number seven.

Compromise is disobedience

Compromise with God and His word is disobedience. You'll notice in verses 7-11, when Moses and Aaron are brought back in to Pharaoh, they're brought to the bargaining table, and Pharaoh starts to try to deal with them. And he says, look, don't take everybody, just send the men out. That would have been partial obedience. Partial obedience is a dangerous game. To compromise, it sounds reasonable. And if you're an Orthodox Christian, if you believe what the Bible has said, if you are a Bible believing Christian, you come off as a radical because of your belief in worship on Sunday. That it's set aside, you want to be at church on Sunday. Or your views on sexuality that come from the Bible, or how you handle money, or what you will allow with your humor, or the music you listen to, or your faithfulness to the people you love, or how you raise your children. I'm just making a point here. Compromise. If you compromise, that is disobedience. Maybe one last one, last lesson, number eight.

We are salt and light

When you read this story, you find out that we, as God's people, are salt and light. In verses 14-16, what you have there is a description of something terrible. All of these locusts are going to come, and they will bring a famine to the land of Egypt. There is a great reversal. Do you remember the first time God's people were in Egypt? Remember back to Joseph in Genesis chapter 40 and following. Joseph is in Egypt, and he is brought up to second in command under

the Pharaoh. He's brought there because he interpreted a dream that a famine was coming, and God used that man in Egypt to make sure Egypt did not go into a famine. He did that for the glory of God. There's a great reversal here. God has now brought another man to Egypt. This man will be part of bringing a famine to Egypt. And it will happen for the glory of God. Now God may be using you for something on the way up. He may be doing something in your life on the way down. Whatever he's doing in your life, he's doing it so that God gets the glory. God is in every story, and he has already written your story. And I'm asking you today to surrender. Surrender to the good Lordship of Christ. Let me give you just three words. Here's the first one. Trust. Trust in your all-wise God. Here's the second one, rejoice. Rejoice that he has delivered you from the domain of darkness and transferred you to the Kingdom of his beloved Son. Surrender is the third word. Surrender to the saving Lordship of Jesus.

(Pastor prays)