



Called Out of Sin

EXODUS

Called Into His Presence

A Devotional Guide Through the Book of
Exodus

Setting the Stage

The Bible opens with the book of Genesis, which opens with the description of how God created the universe. Every aspect of the Lord's creation, from the light to the darkness and the plants to the animals, was described as good in the eyes of the Lord. Then, the Lord created man and woman to serve in dominion over His creation. After creating mankind, God stated that they were very good in His sight. Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden and worked daily to care for and cultivate the land. Every aspect of their existence was perfect, and they enjoyed perfect communion with God. This would all change with a momentary decision.

Sin entered the world and marred every aspect of creation in its wake. The consequences of sin would separate mankind from God and drive a wedge between the perfect relationship that was shared. Man was cast out of the garden, and they began to fill and corrupt the whole earth. Genesis continue to chronicle the story of man's folly in chasing after themselves instead of the Lord, and the Lord's pursuit of His creation in the hopes of providing a means of redemption.

After many generations had passed since Adam and Eve, God chose a man named Abraham to fulfill His promise of redemption through. The promise began with a new promise to Abraham, to make him and his offspring into a mighty nation and to give them a land in which to dwell, the Promised Land. This was truly a great promise of God since Abraham had no descendants at the time, and he and his wife were beyond the child bearing years.

God was faithful to give Abraham a son, Isaac. Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Through Jacob, the Lord would fulfill His promise to Abraham as Jacob had 12 sons. One son, Joseph, was sold into slavery by his brothers and taken to Egypt. In Egypt, Joseph believed and followed the Lord. God gave Joseph favor, and Joseph rose to power in pharaoh's palace. When a famine ravaged the land of Joseph's family, they found refuge in Egypt and Joseph forgave his brothers and welcomed them.

So, Jacob, his sons, and their families made their home in Egypt. Joseph continued to be given favor by God and the people of Egypt found favor in the deeds of Joseph. Joseph lived 110 years providing a place of prosperity for his family for generations to come in the land of Egypt. But before Joseph breathed his final breath, Joseph reminded the people of God's promise to call them out of Egypt and into the land that He had promised Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. God would lead His people into the Promised Land.

Week 3:1 • Exodus 2:1-10

To Be Drawn Out

As you sit down for today's devotion, pause for a moment and begin to reflect upon who God is in your life. How has your view of yourself changed since knowing God? Are their new words that you use to describe yourself as a result of your relationship with God? Thank God for these truths that now describe you because of who He is. Take time to read Exodus 2:1-10. Do you see correlations to how God has impacted your life and how He impacts the life of Moses?

At the heart of the gospel message is this central truth, we are no longer aliens and strangers, but rather we are citizens of heaven, children of God. When Jesus Christ laid down His life on our behalf, He removed the obstacles that stood between us and the Lord. In doing so, Jesus drew us out of death and sin and into glorious life. He drew us out of separation with God and into a perfectly restored relationship where we are called family and co-heirs. It is truly a remarkable gift that has been bestowed on us as we place our trust and hope in Christ.

The story in Exodus is truly a retelling of this same central truth, God has drawn us out for the sake of uniting with us and calling us His children. Exodus tells us this story from multiple perspectives. It begins with the story of God calling Jacob and his family out of Canaan and into Egypt to fulfill His promise to Abraham to make them into a mighty nation. He drew His people out of the Land of Promise that He might provide the perfect circumstances in a foreign nation to provide for the growth of His people into the nation of promise.

This theme of being drawn out is further seen in the passage today. Moses was drawn out of his family to be placed in a position of protection in the palace. In the palace, Moses grew in wisdom, leadership and stature. In fact Moses' very name is a reminder of God's plan for his life, to draw him out (Exodus 2:10).

The telling of Moses' story in this passage points us to the truth in Scripture that the Lord draws us out to place us into circumstances and situations that bring about our growth and maturity for His glory. God had carefully orchestrated a long series of event to place Moses in the prefect position to receive the training, prestige, and perspective that would be used some 80 years later when the Lord would once again draw Moses out.

What Moses gained from being drawn out of the waters of the river would be instrumental in the fulfillment of God's plan to draw all of His people our of slavery in Egypt.

The message of the gospel shows that the Lord is continuing in this same process of drawing people out for His glory. God has drawn you and I out of our sinfulness and into His glorious light. He did this that we might become the ambassadors of light to others who are still caught up in darkness.

So let us try to move this from the lofty theological conversation to the reality of our everyday lives. Have you ever experienced the Lord drawing you out to draw you in? Being drawn out does not necessarily mean that you are being drawn out of a painful or difficult situation. Moses was drawn out of his quiet life as a shepherd in the fields to be drawn into facing Pharaoh. Pause. Has the Lord ever led you out of one situation that resulted in a meaningful time of growth or maturity? Is there a pivotal moment in your life that today you point to as the moment where God equipped you for what you are facing today? Take some time to record your thoughts below.

Week 3:2 • Exodus 2:1-10

Being Drawn In

Before you begin today, take a moment to prepare your heart to hear from the Lord. Take some time to pray to the Lord asking for Him to open your heart and reveal what He desires for you to see in the passage today. Now, reread Exodus 2:1-10. Re-read the passage a few times desiring to see every nuance of the picture the Lord is painting through the passage. Write any new observation in the space at the end of this devotion.

As a culture, we often times become laser focused on being drawn out of things. Take a look at the prayer requests that we make each day. The subject matter of many of our prayer requests convey a desire to be drawn out of our trials and tribulations. We want the Lord to remove the hardships from our lives and restore our comfort and peace. These things are not inherently wrong to be praying for. We have been designed to desire and long for the peace that comes from the Lord.

Scripture speaks to this in 2 Corinthians 1:3-6:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.

God is always faithful to give us what we need to face every moment in front us, but often what we need is not deliverance but perseverance. Paul writes to the church in Corinth, who were undergoing persecution in the midst of a city that flourished under the worship of false gods, instructing their hearts to see that God is working in every situation that we face and is working in every outcome from our situations.

One of the things that life teaches us is growth happens effectively in times of stress and trial. When life is full of comfort and peace, we tend to make decisions based upon preserving the peace of the status quo instead of seeking dependance upon the Lord and what He might be desiring to do through our trials. Trials and struggles serve as a powerful reminder that we are limited and finite beings. We truly do have little control, but we have been given direct access to the One who is in control. Our trial and tribulation are opportunities to actively live out the relationship that we have with the Lord by trusting and leaning on Him through our struggles. How would the way that you face your trial be different if you prayed for God to mold and mature you through this trial instead of taking it away? How would your relationship with God change as you began to actively look for how He was working in your heart and life to grow you through the hardest seasons of trial?

God uses trials and tribulation to draw us into a deeper relationship with Him where our hearts seeks to trust and grow as He sees fit for what He has planned ahead of us. Will we trust Him in His plan that He can work all things, even our trials and tribulations for His glory and for our good? Take some time to pray and write down what obstacles or thoughts keep you from trusting that God is going to work every situation, trial and tribulation out for His glory and your ultimate good. Write down the things that challenge your confidence in the plan of the Lord.

Week 3:3 • Exodus 2:1-10

Trust

As you prepare to spend some time today with the Lord, pause and pray. Pray a prayer of trust to the Lord. Pray for His will to be done today. Pray that you will surrender to His will and not your own. Take time to re-read the passage before you begin today's devotional.

Being a youth pastor for twenty years, I have done almost every activity and ice breaker to open an event that has ever been through up. I have had large masses of students entangle their arms and feet together to form a massive amoeba formation and had other students come and pry their entangled appendages apart in order to shrink the amoeba to just one single individual. The excessive quantities of every kind of food and drink imaginable have been consumed before me for no other reason other than to say welcome to youth group. With all of these activities though, the one activity that always sticks out is the simple trust fall.

A trust fall is done with two people. One individual stands behind the other at a distance of a little less than the one in front's height. The person in front stretches their arms out parallel to the floor, locks their knees and then proceeds to fall backwards as rigid as a board. The person falls back trusting that the person behind them will catch them before they hit the ground. This seems simple enough, but there is this moment that occurs as you fall backwards. It is the moment that body weight has shifted beyond your heels and you feel the full effect of gravity taking over. It becomes very clear that you can no longer change your mind and stand back up. You are going to fall back and if the person behind you does not catch you, it is going to hurt. It is in this moment where our trust in the other person is truly put to the test. Do I trust that person to follow through and catch me as they said they would, or do I bend my knees and try to protect myself from being injured in the fall that I am convinced will happen because the other person will not catch me?

We experience this exercise in real life in our walk with God everyday. God has called us to trust in Him with every aspect of our lives. He teaches us that in all things and in all situations, He is actively working for the good of those who love Him. So our response in these moments becomes a tangible representation of our trust in the Lord. In the passage, God had called the nation of Israel to Egypt. He had promised them that He would make them into a great nation and that the people of that nation would outnumber the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the beach. As the nation faced oppression and even legalized genocide at the hands of the Egyptians, it would have been justified in the eyes of history had the people sought to escape from their oppression and turn away from the Lord. God, though, was and continues to be ever faithful and true. Moses' mother trusted in the Lord and continued to be faithful. She had the baby boy that the Lord had given to her and she watched over and protected him just as the Lord desired. When her ability to protect Moses was challenged, she trusted in the Lord and placed Moses in a basket in the Nile. Do you see the irony in how the Lord works? Pharaoh commanded that the babies be thrown into the Nile to kill them, but the Lord has Moses cast into the Nile to save him. Not only is Moses saved, but his mother is given the responsibility to care for the very child that she had given up. This is the Lord working all things out for the good of those who love Him. Do you believe that the Lord will work things out for the good of those who love Him? What keeps you from believing and responding in faith to this truth? Record your thoughts below.

Week 3:4 • Exodus 2:1-10

God Works Good From the Bad

As you prepare for your time with the Lord today, begin once again by reading Exodus 2:1-10. This time as you read, track the movement of the Lord in the words. Where do you see God's hand working?

The Scriptures are full of stories filled with hopeless and broken situations that beat down and stole the very spirit of the people of God. I think of the Israelites during the time of Gideon. Judges 6 opens with the nation being oppressed by the Midianites. Every year, the Midianites would invade a squat on the land of the tribe of Manasseh, and they would consume every resource the people had. When all of the consumable resource was gone, the Midianites would move on as well only to return the following year. The Israelites try to scrape enough together to survive only to repeat the same vicious cycle a year later. It is so bad, the “hero” of the story is introduced threshing grain in an olive press to escape the view of those who might want to take the little bit that he has.

When we face times of great trial and tribulation in our lives, our natural response is to become focused on the moment and be overwhelmed by the desperation and hopelessness that we are currently facing. As the Lord approaches Gideon in Judges 6, Gideon's response to the Lord is focused on his current trials. Gideon tells the Lord that he is the smallest in his family, the smallest family in the tribe of Manasseh, the smallest tribe in the tribes of Israel (Judges 6:15). What could Gideon do against such overwhelming odds and such a mighty enemy?

Gideon though makes a profound statement a few verses earlier. In Judges 6:13, Gideon responds to the Lord by asking that if He is with the people of Israel then why is this happening to them? He brought them out of Egypt, why would He allow them to suffer here in the Promised Land today. Gideon knew and believed that the Lord could do something about his very present danger, but he failed to see and believe that God was doing something about it already.

In the story in the opening of Exodus 2, it would be easy to see and believe that the Lord had abandoned the people of Israel as they suffered under Egyptian rule. God though was already working on behalf of His people. He was orchestrating every detail of His plan to redeem and restore His people. It would seem in the moment like the edict to kill all the male babies of Israel would have led to the destruction of the people, but the Lord used that very edict to put into motion a plan that would place an Israelite in the house of Pharaoh. Moses would grow in stature and skill under the tutoring of the very man who had ordered his death.

Throughout Scripture and even in the testimony of faithful servants today, the Lord works through the very circumstances and decisions that should lead to our destruction to make known His glory and His faithfulness. How many testimonies have you heard from individuals who had hit rock bottom, and it was their in the lowest point of their despair that the Lord met them and turned their life around? How many times have God used the most painful and difficult moments of your life to minister to other people who are going through similar circumstances and experiencing similar pain? This is how the Lord continually works good from the bad. God does not work good by taking away our pain, sorrow and struggle. Instead, the Lord takes our brokenness and suffering, and He transforms our hurt, pain and sorrow into means by which the message of the gospel is tangibly shared through our lives. Are you currently walking through a tough or dark season? How might the Lord work good from what you are going through to share the hope of the gospel?

Week 4:1 • Exodus 2:11-25

Escaping Sin

As you prepare to sit this week with the Lord, it may be beneficial to listen to the sermon that corresponds with this week's passage. If you were unable to hear the sermon live, a recording of the message is available on our website, www.newhopenorth.org, by clicking on Sermons under the Resource tab at the top of the webpage. Before you begin reading the devotion for today, take some time to read Exodus 2:11-25. As you read, take time to put yourself in Moses' shoes. Feel and experience the emotions that he was likely experiencing as the decisions in front of him unfold.

Did you ever have those friends where every time that you got together trouble was not far behind? Aaron Greene was one of those friends in my life. The Greene family lived across the street from me and behind their house was a vast forest that consumed most of our summer days. We would get up first thing in the morning, grab a quick bite and head off for a day of climbing trees, playing guns, and exploring deeper and deeper into the forest. As long as we could be outside and running free, everything worked out perfectly.

But the weather did not always permit our normal routine to take place. One July day, the rain came pouring from the clouds and our day of running and exploring turned into a day of boredom and aimlessly gazing out of the window. I gazed across the street in the direction of Aaron's house when I noticed Aaron in the second floor window waving and beckoning me to come over. I quickly flew out of the house and dodge the raindrops as I made my way to his front door. Oh the fun we would have that day as his parents were gone to work and we had the whole house to ourselves.

As the day passed by, our day had been consumed with board games and building forts, but now, we were restless and needed to move around. So, we did what any child left in a home alone would do, we set up a soccer goal between the doorposts of a room, and we started taking turns shooting on goal. It was my first shot and as my foot made contact with the ball, the ball began to spin wildly. As Aaron tried to catch my shot, it spun out of his hands and began to ricochet all around the room. The ball's final resting place came as it made contact with a vase on the shelf of a nearby bookcase. The vase shattered into a million pieces. I looked at Aaron. He looked at me. We both turned and ran.

The natural response of man when faced with the consequences of our sin is to want to run and put some physical distance between ourselves and our sin. In our minds, we believe that if we put physical distance between us and the problem somehow we can escape the consequences of our sin. The truth though is exactly the opposite. As we run from our sin, we only compound the consequences that will result. For example if you accidentally hit a vehicle with your car, you only compound the consequences if you run from the scene of the accident. When we run from sin, we only compound the consequences as we will still have to deal with the consequences of the original sin, and now we will have to deal with the consequences of running from our sin. Instead of running, the Lord desires for us to meet Him at the point of our sin and to surrender our sin and its consequences over to Him. When an individual struggling with substance abuse meets the Lord in their addiction and admits they have a problem that they need help in, it is in this space and moment that the Lord begins the process of redeeming them and turning the consequences of sin from those of destruction to those of His glory and our good. Are you in the midst of sin and running from its consequences? What needs to happen to turn you back toward Him? Record your thoughts in the space provided.

Week 4:2 • Exodus 2:11-25

Defined By Sin

Today, take some time to read Exodus 2:11-25. After you complete the Exodus reading, take some time to read Acts 7:20-28. How does the account in Acts impact your understanding of the Exodus account?

Record your thoughts in the space provided at the conclusion of today's devotion.

Identity is defined by Webster's Dictionary as the characteristics that determine who or what a person or thing is. In the social sciences, identity is the characteristic that determine how an individual sees themselves and the world around them. In other words, the old saying that who we are is defined by our actions and circumstances holds a lot of truth. While Scripture teaches us that who we really are is defined by the One who created, God Almighty, how we view ourselves and the way we believe that other's see us is impacted greatly by the events of our life.

Look at how Moses view himself in the passage that we read above. In the opening story, Moses defends one of his people who is being beaten by an Egyptian. According to Stephen in the book of Acts, Moses saw himself as the deliverer of God's people. Moses responded to the world around him as the one who would deliver.

The next day though, as Moses confronts two Israelites fighting one another, he is confronted with the truth that these men who saw him yesterday did not see his actions as those of a deliverer but rather the actions of a murderer. This drastically impacted Moses' identity. He saw himself as the deliverer that the people would herald for the greatness of his deeds. When this was challenged, Moses knew not what to do other than to run and try to find an escape to start fresh.

Even though Moses is successful in running and finding a place to get a fresh start, his identity did not change. He was still marked and scarred by his sin and the impact that his sin had on how he viewed himself. In Exodus 2:22, we are given a glimpse into just how haunted Moses was by his past mistakes.

Moses names his son after the consequences of sin, "I have become a foreigner in a foreign land."

Moses saw everything around him through the tainted lens of his sin. He saw that the only reason that he was in this land was as a consequence of his sin in Egypt. Every blessing that he experienced in the land of Midian was marred by his identity because it was defined by his sin.

Sin continues to lie to our hearts long after the act has been done. We allow our sins and past mistakes to define who we are. Our sin warps and twists how we see ourselves in the mirror. We see ourselves as tainted, broken, used and worthless. We see our mistakes and failures, and we adhere them to our definition of who we are. Before long, the only thing that defines us is our mistakes and sin.

This is not the definition of ourselves given to us by our Creator. When the Lord formed us in our mother's womb, He was pleased. When Jesus died on the cross for our sins, He saw us as worthwhile and someone that He would willingly die for. When the Holy Spirit spoke to our hearts, He did so because He saw us as children of God, coheirs with Christ and holy, blameless keepers of the gospel. God's view of His creation is that of a Father who carefully poured the best of Himself into His creation. Through Christ, our sin, mistakes and failures have been washed away. It is time to stop allowing that which has been washed away to continue to define our lives and how we see ourselves.

In the space below, write a new definition for yourself based on the Lord's definition and not your mistakes and sin. Pray that the Lord writes this new definition clearly on your heart.

Week 4:3 • Exodus 2:11-25

God in Our Sin

Today as you sit with the Lord, go back to the last devotional. Talk with God about how sin has been allowed to define you. Ask the Holy Spirit to preach to your heart the picture of how the Lord views you. Sit and just listen to the voice of the Lord speaking to your heart. When you are ready, take some time to re-read Exodus 2:11-25.

One of my greatest joys as a parent is to be there for my kids when they need it most but expect it least. I am not sure what it is that happens as a parent, but parents just seem to be more aware and in tune to the needs of our children. In my household, it is often called “mommy radar,” but I have been known to tap into it as well from time to time. There is just a special moment that is shared between a child and their parent when the parent meets their child in that moment of despair or even that moment of triumph and the child’s very soul knows that everything is right with the world because you are there.

I remember when my oldest was running cross country. He had an out of town meet that was unplanned. While we had made an effort to go to all of his other meets that season, this one was going to be a stretch because of previously planned commitments. My wife and I sat down with our son the day before the meet and let him know that we would likely not make it. He was understanding and let us know that he would tell us how the race went when he was all done.

The next day, I had two appointments cancel and suddenly my schedule was wide open. My wife and I immediately got in the car and drove to my son’s meet. We arrived right as the race was beginning. We ran to different spots on the course trying to cheer for our son, but it seems like at every spot, we had just missed him. Finally, we gave up and just ran over to the finish line. What a joyous surprise it was when my son crossed the finish line with his best time all season.

There was this moment about 100 yards from the finish line where my wife and I were cheering at the top of our lungs and my son’s eyes caught our gaze. His eyes instantly beamed and he suddenly had a little pick me up in his step. After the race, he told us that seeing our faces just made him want to run faster. In the passage, the nation of Israel must have felt in some ways abandoned by the Lord. The one who had taken the title of redeemer or deliverer of Israel had fled and abandoned his people. Now, as their labor and oppression continued, the nation of Israel continued to cry out and groan. Even the death of the Pharaoh brought no relief to their suffering (v. 23). And yet, the Scripture concludes this section by reminding us that nothing has fallen on deaf ears. “God heard their groaning and he remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” (Ex. 2:24).

God is always faithful to hear our cries. In every occasion and in every circumstance, God is not only aware of what takes place, but He has positioned Himself to be intimately involved. Often, we struggle to see the nearness of the Lord in our despair because we are looking for His actions to deliver us from our circumstances to show us His presence. God though is patient and is continually working out every aspect of His plan to redeem our circumstances for His glory so His perceived inactivity does not properly reflect His presence. Instead of seeking the actions of the Lord, let us just seek Him. If we do this, we will see Him in the middle of every moment. This is the God that we serve and love, the God who cares for His people and is continually concerned with what we face. Just let that sink in for a moment. God cares about what you are facing right in this moment. Write down how this makes you feel? Do you see your circumstances different knowing that the Lord cares about what you face?

Week 4:4 • Exodus 2:11-25

Surrendering Sin

As we close out these devotions on Exodus 2:11-25, we have spoken on the impact of sin in our lives. Sin seeks to lie to our hearts and promise things that can not be delivered. Sin leads to our destruction. Take some time before you start today's devotion to just spend time talking with the Lord about the struggle with sin in your life. Be honest. Have a real and full conversation. If needed, set up an empty chair to talk to. Speak openly and pause to listen as well to the Lord's response. Close your time by rereading Exodus 2:11-25.

It feels like the need to be perfect and the best is just in my blood. I have felt the weight of this perceived need to be perfect all my life. When I fail, it just seems to knock me down harder than I think it should. I could readily tell you in detail my last five mistakes, but I would be hard pressed to tell you about my last success. This is especially true when we talk about sin in my life and my relationship with God. If you could hear my prayers, you would hear long and deep times of confession tend to overwhelm my time in conversation with God.

Our sin should move us to repentance and seeking the Lord, but we can do damage to our relationship with the Lord when we focus so intently on our sin and failures. We can make our hearts believe that the Lord requirement of us is perfection, and we can begin to see the Lord as the unjust judge as opposed to the loving Father that He is. My father had some pretty high expectations for me when I was younger, especially academically. I remember bringing home my report card in high school. I have received A's and B's as my marks for the semester. When I gave the report card to my father, his eyes turned to a scowl as he looked over the report. Oh no, A's and B's would not be enough to meet his impossible standards of perfection. My palms began to sweat as he opened his mouth. "Son, did you do your best?"

I did not know how to answer this question. Did not the grades speak for themselves? A's and B's showed that I have done adequately or better than my classmates. I began to puff out my chest ready to tell my father that if my grades were not good enough for him, nothing ever would be, but the next words out of his mouth deflated my position. "I ask if you did your best because according to this report card, you have ten missing assignments in math." It was in that moment that I realized what my father desired from me. He wanted my best and no matter what the outcome was, good or bad, the effort that I put in was what determined success or failure.

This is the same attitude that our Heavenly Father takes with us and our sin. He desires our best. Are we seeking to flee from temptation? Are we groaning and complaining or are we seeking Him and His Spirit to guide us away from our sin? Have we surrendered our sin over to Him? This last one is where we begin to see our best being done when it comes to our battle with sin. Let me lift a burden off your shoulders:

You are going to sin. You are going to fail to meet God's perfect standard. The beauty of it all is that the Lord does not expect your perfection. If He did, He would not have sent Jesus. Jesus is the tangible picture of God recognizing that we are imperfect and in need of a Savior. God's desire for us is to grow and effort in turning from our sinful nature and to the Lord. This is the process of sanctification, being holy as the Lord is holy, that we engage in from the moment that we said "Yes" to Jesus until He calls us home to be with Him. So I guess the question that should be asked is, "Am I doing my best to turn from sin and surrender to the Lord?" God is concerned with the effort. As we ask our selves this question and adjust what we do to strive to answer this question more confidently, God promises to work in and through our sin to work good from the bad. Today, as you close out your time with the Lord, talk to Him about what you are struggling with. Surrender to do your best to turn towards Him and surrender the situation into His hands. Record that commitment in the space below.

Week 5:1 • Exodus 3:1-22

God Pursues Us

This week, we will be reading a passage of Scripture that is likely very familiar if you have a background in the church. I want to challenge you to seek to read this story as if you had never heard it before. Hang on every word and listen diligently to the movement of the story. Everyday, as you read, write down a new observation from the passage that you had not noticed before. Pray that the Holy Spirit will open your eyes to the fullness of this passage.

After 15 years of marriage, I wanted to do something extra special for my wife to celebrate this momentous occasion. Truthfully, there were many moments in those fifteen years where I did not believe that we would make it. God had been so gracious with us as we matured in Him and in our relationship with one another.

I am a pretty savvy individual when it comes to traveling and thinking through all of the accommodations that might be needed. After booking everything: flights, hotel, subway passes, Broadway tickets and meal reservations, I began to get very excited about the trip. That evening, I came home and sprung the surprise on my spouse. She was so excited. She wanted to know what each day looked like and what experiences we had to look forward to. I did not even make it through the first day before a glimmer of worry could be seen in the corner of your eye. As I asked her what was bothering her, she reluctantly shared that she was concerned about the trip from the airport to the hotel.

When you fly into Lagaardia, there is no subway station connected to the airport so you have to get on a city bus that takes you several blocks to the nearest subway station. This just filled my wife with anxiety because she instantly remembered how hectic I described this tradition the last time I was in NYC.

After searching the internet for the next few days seeking a solution to reduce the anxiety of this first leg of the trip, I received a phone call from a representative at Expedia. The woman on the line wanted to make sure I was ready for my trip. After explaining to her the situation, she told me she had just the solution.

When my wife and I landed in Lagaardia, we were met at the gate by a person holding a sign bearing our names. The woman from Expedia had arranged a private town car to get us to and from airport during our stay. The town car was absolutely perfect. As we arrived and checked into our room, my wife told me that was exactly what she was hoping for to start this trip, a carefree ride from the airport.

I had no idea what I needed until this representative from Expedia pursued me and showed me what I had been looking for. In the story of Moses, Moses had relegated himself to this broken life filled with disappointment and failure. He had not been the deliverer that he had hoped. He was forced to abandon his people and all that he knew. It is in this relegation to a life without that we see the Lord pursue Moses. God met Moses out in the fields where Moses had been wandering with his father-in-laws sheep. God reinstalled in Moses his true calling, the very calling that Moses had been drawn out of the waters of the Nile to fulfill. God restored Moses to who he was called to be by pursuing him out in the middle of nowhere.

Is God pursuing you? Have you relegated yourself to the brokenness of sin's impact on your life? Are you seeing your life as Moses did, defined by your past sins? God is faithful to pursue His people. He has written life and the gospel on our hearts and pursues our very souls. He has a greater plan and purpose for our lives, and He meets us where we are to move us from our settling to His glorious plan. Record your thoughts on God's pursuit of you in the space below.

Week 5:2 • Exodus 3:1-22

God is Holy

Take some time today to really focus in on Exodus 3:1-22. Maybe even read it twice. Take special notice of how Moses' demeanor changes as he recognizes who he is in the presence of. How does knowing that the Lord is holy effect the way that you stand in His presence? Should it have an impact at all? Record your thought below.

Throughout the Old Testament, the kings, the prophets, and the people of God have all voiced this same fear that to stand in the presence of God would result in your death. Even the high priest, who after the sacrificial giving of blood by many animals, would be afraid to fulfill his duty of offering up the sacrifice to the Lord and enter into the Holy of Holies. In fact, according to tradition, the high priest would enter into the Holy of Holies, the inner room of the temple where the Ark of the Covenant resided, with a rope tied around his waist. If the high priest took longer than expected to offer up the atoning blood of the sacrifice before the Lord, the other priests would grab the rope and pull the high priest out assuming that he had fallen down dead before the Lord.

In the book of Leviticus, Moses shares the word of the Lord that speaks of the separation between man and the Lord that led the priests to tie ropes around their waists. Leviticus 11:44-45 states:

I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves along the ground. I am the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy because I am holy.

In this passage, the Lord clearly states that holiness is what separates man and the Lord. We are called to be holy because He is holy and to keep ourselves from becoming unholy for in doing so, we are no longer following in God's design or expectation for us. Did you notice that the Lord stated that His drawing out of the people of Israel from the land of Egypt was done as a demonstration of the power of His holiness and as a picture of how they should respond to His holiness. We should be holy because the God who called us out of Egypt is holy.

As Moses comes before the Lord at the burning bush, the Lord tells Moses to remove his shoes and hide his face for he was in the presence of the One who is holy. So often we equate holiness as an adjective giving special significance to an item. The Scriptures though equate holiness to be a characteristic of God. This characteristic does not merely describe the Lord, but rather it is an attribute by which the Lord functions in every moment. Because the Lord is holy, He appalls sin and destroys in. Because the Lord is holy, we who are in sin are found unworthy in his presence and will fall down dead at the mere sight of Him. Did you read that? We will fall down dead as a result of the holiness of God in light of our unholiness.

Does this change your view of God's holiness? His holiness is the benchmark that our lives are judged by. We are to be holy as the Lord is holy. Praise the Lord that in this impossible standard, He did not leave us to our judgment. He sent Jesus to be our substitute or as John puts in in 1 John 2:2, the propitiation for our sin. In other words when God sees us, He sees the holiness of Christ standing on our behalf. This is the gospel and it finds its roots in the burning bush as the Lord revealed to Moses that He is holy. How will you approach the Lord in light of His holiness? Record your thoughts of the Holiness of the Lord below.

Week 5:3 • Exodus 3:1-22

The Great I Am

Today as you prepare your heart to hear from the Lord, take some time to just talk with God. Instead of talking with the Lord about what is happening in your life, just spend the next several minutes talking about Him. Do not talk about what He has done for you. Just talk about Him. As you close this time of prayer with God, take a few moments to reread Exodus 3:1-22.

In Exodus 3, there is this pivotal moment that takes place. The Lord has met Moses out in the middle of the wilderness through the miracle of a burning bush. He informs Moses that He has heard the cry of the Israel. He is going to rescue His people, and He is going to use Moses to be their deliverer. Through Moses, God would draw His people out of Egypt and lead them to the land of milk and honey promised to the forefathers of Israel.

Moses has been given purpose and meaning once again. He believed that he was to be Israel's deliverer and now the Lord has once again placed Moses in that position.

Moses' response to the Lord's calling though does not fit that of the once assured deliverer of Israel who killed an Egyptian with his bare hands. Instead, Moses' response is one of fear and excuse. Moses immediately with "Who am I?" How often is this our response when we are faced with the calling of the Lord to engage with our neighbors in the midst of crisis or to reach out to our co-worker with the hope of the gospel? Moses hears the calling of God, and his first reaction is to look inward and to all of the ways that he could fail in fulfilling the calling. Moses saw his failure to be the deliverer of Israel before. He saw his shortcomings and his guilt and responded out of these things. Who was he that there could be any hope of good resulting from his sin and failure?

God though reminds Moses of His most basic truth in regards to His creation. Creations worth and value is not defined by creation but rather by the Creator. Did you hear that? Your worth and value is not defined by your actions, deeds or even your own view of yourself. Your worth and value is defined by the Creator. He gives you purpose and meaning. It is His definition of you that determines your worth. He is the One who calls you His own. This was true for Moses as well. In response to Moses' low view of himself, God responds to Moses by saying to him, "I will be with you." As Moses continues to make excuses as to why he could not fulfill God's calling, the Lord again responds with, "I Am Who I Am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I Am' has sent me to you." God's response to man's low view of himself is to point him back to the One who created him. God is the definer of all things. He is the great I Am who put the universe into motion. He is all things, more than sufficient, perfect in every way. This is who it is who is calling you and He will go with you to fulfill His calling in your life.

Pause. When you look in the mirror, how do you see yourself? Do you see the flaws and the wrinkles? Do you see the pain and the sorrow? Do you see all the things you are not? Now pause and try to step behind your physical self looking into the mirror. This is the place where the Lord stands as you stare at your reflection. What do you think the Lord sees as He gazes upon your reflection? Scripture states the Lord sees you as His child. David writes in Psalm 139 that the Lord sees you as perfectly and wonderfully made. Paul writes in Ephesians that the Lord sees you through Christ as perfect and holy, without blemish or wrinkle. Paul also writes in Ephesians that the Lord sees us as His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works. God sees you as his beloved child in whom He has placed the hope of eternity. Every good work that the Lord puts before you will be seen to completion in Him. Today, in the space provided write down how you see yourself as you look into the mirror.

Week 5:4 · Exodus 3:1-22

A New View

As you close out this week in Exodus 3:1-22, begin by rereading the passage and rereading your response from the previous devotion. How has your view of yourself been impacted by the hand of God in your life? What areas of how you view yourself still need to be surrendered to God. Today's devotion is a little different. I want to challenge you to just sit with God and talk at length about how you see yourself and how He sees you. Talk to Him honestly and spend time just sitting and listening to Him speak. Hear that still small voice teach your heart the truth of God. As you engage with the Lord, record the things that stick out to you during your time of conversation here. I pray that this will be a powerful time spent with the Lord.

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