



the rescue.

stories from Exodus

January 26-

Read

Exodus 8

It happens to the best of us. We reach the end of a busy day, and someone asks for help with a simple task. Instead of responding with a simple yes or no, we snap. We say or do things that eight hours earlier we would have sworn would never happen. In that moment, we experience regret, but if nothing changes, we find ourselves repeating that moment over and over again.

In Exodus 8, Pharaoh goes through a similar cycle, relenting for a moment, then returning to the way things were. After each plague God sends on Egypt, Pharaoh has a moment of regret where he asks Moses to make the destruction stop. But then he goes right back to the way things were, and the cycle continues.

We all have those “throw our hands up, make it stop” moments. But regret and repentance are two different things. Regret is wishing something had never happened. Repentance is taking action to prevent something from happening again. Regret says, “Make it stop.” Repentance says, “Make me different.” Regret leads to remorse, but only repentance leads to change.

Pharaoh wanted God to fix his nation’s troubles, but he was not willing to change his heart or his mind on freeing God’s people. Too often, we do the same thing. We ask for relief from what ails us without any desire to change our thoughts or actions.

Breaking the cycle starts with a breaking point. We have to want to follow Jesus more than we want to be right in our own eyes. This change of heart leads to a change in behavior. 2 Corinthians 7:10 describes it this way, “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.”

God sent Pharaoh a way out of regret in the form of Moses’ constant invitation to repent, and He extends the same invitation to each of us through Jesus’ death on the cross. Saying yes to Jesus’ invitation gives us the power to change, but it’s only when we acknowledge our brokenness that we’re motivated to make a change.



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Reflect:

Is there any area of your life where you find yourself in a constant cycle of regret? If so, what is it?

Why is it so important that our hearts change before our behavior changes?

What step can you take this week to move from regret to repentance? Maybe it's a grudge you need to forgive or an unrealistic schedule you need to let go of.

January 27-

Read today's scripture and pray through the following prayer points.

1. Thank God for His great power and for fighting on your behalf.
2. Ask God to use you as a conduit for the signs and wonders He wants to perform so that others might know Him.
3. Ask God to soften the hearts of your family and friends so that they will respond to the grace that is available to them.

January 28-

Read Exodus 9

How many times have you asked yourself, "What am I here for? What is my purpose in life?" There are hundreds, if not millions, of jobs in the world, but finding a purpose is not the same as finding a career.

In Exodus 9:16, God declares that He has a purpose for each of us, telling Pharaoh through Moses, "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."

God could have wiped Pharaoh and the nation of Egypt off the face of the earth in one breath. After all, this is the same God who spoke the world into existence. But He didn't.



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From the beginning until now, God has been working through people to make Himself known on earth. God doesn't have to work through us; He chooses to.

God sent Moses as a messenger then followed Moses' words with a series of plagues that could only be described as other worldly. The plague on the livestock, the boils that broke out on everyone, the hailstorms that destroyed crops and animals — these were the fifth, sixth and seventh warnings God sent to Pharaoh.

God went to great lengths to make Himself known to Pharaoh, to Egypt and to the Israelites who were enslaved there. And just like God was working through Moses, He wants to work through each of us to declare His glory and power on earth.

When we submit our lives to God's plans, He works through us in ways we never thought possible. And as a result, God's glory is declared in the most significant and mundane moments of our lives — when we forgive those deemed unforgivable, when we're generous without expecting anything in return, when we do what's right even if when it's not easy. Every interaction in every day is an opportunity to show God's power in our lives.

Reflect:

What's one way God has gone to great lengths to make Himself known to you?

Why do you think God didn't simply wipe out Pharaoh and the Egyptian army?

What's one opportunity you have today to allow others to see God's power and glory through your life?

January 29-

Reflect on Exodus 9 and take a few minutes to write out your own prayer.



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January 30-

Read

Exodus 10

How many times do you have to hear something before you realize it's true?

Pharaoh had a hard time listening to the words God spoke through Moses and Aaron. Time after time, they explained God's desire for the Israelites to be freed from slavery. Pharaoh repeatedly responded with pride and rebellion against God. Because of his disobedience, plagues hit the land of Egypt and caused people around Pharaoh to suffer.

Pharaoh didn't want to admit it, but even his advisers urged him, "Let the people go, so that they may worship the Lord their God. Do you not yet realize that Egypt is ruined?" (Exodus 10:7).

Sometimes we're blind to how things really are, even when the people around us can see it clearly. Our foolish choices often hurt the people we love. Maybe our unforgiving relationship with our parents unintentionally causes us to be harsh with our own children. Perhaps our frustration at work is spilling over into frustration in our marriage.

When we fail to deal with the circumstances that challenge our faith, it gets easier and easier to say "no" to the better ways God has for us. But no matter how we've rebelled against God in the past, He gives us new chances to say "yes" to Him.

Sometimes it takes the people around us to point something out so we can get back on track.

We don't have to make all the decisions of life alone. By humbly trusting the perspective of people who care about us, we take a step closer to being who God's made us to be.

Reflect:

When was one time you realized how your actions impacted people around you?

What's the most valuable piece of advice or wisdom you gained from a friend?

Who has God placed in your life who can help you make the best decisions?



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January 31-

Reflect on Exodus 10 and pray this prayer.

O Lord, there is no God like You performing miracles, signs and wonders. As You kept Israel safe during the plagues of Egypt, Lord, I trust You to be my refuge and strength. Thank you for Your provision, protection and your safety.

February 1-

Read Exodus 11

Blood. Frogs. Gnats. Flies. Disease. Boils. Hail. Locusts. Darkness. Nine destructive plagues and still Pharaoh refuses to free the Hebrews from slavery. Now God will unleash the crushing blow: death to all Egyptian firstborns. Pharaoh's power as master over God's people will end, and the slaves will walk away with the riches of their captors.

Like the Hebrews, we are born into slavery — not to an earthly kingdom, but to the kingdom of darkness (Colossians 1:13). Our master isn't human. Our master is sin, but our freedom will also come through the death of a firstborn.

When Jesus left heaven and was born as a human He became God's firstborn son (Hebrews 1:6). He came to reveal the kingdom of God. He died to destroy the kingdom of darkness (Colossians 2:15). All who call on Jesus for salvation are set free from slavery to sin and empowered by the Holy Spirit to live a new life (John 8:34-36). Unfortunately, sometimes we still yield to sin even though we've been set free.

God brought the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt to show Himself to the world as a bondage breaker. Jesus rescued us from slavery to sin for the same purpose. Is there any area of your life that does not reflect the freedom Jesus provided for you?

Reflect:

Imagine you are locked in chains in a dark, dirty dungeon. How would you respond to the person who rescued you?



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Remember where you were when you asked Jesus into your life? When is the last time you thanked Jesus for rescuing you? Will you take a few minutes now to thank Him for how your life has changed since He saved you?

As a Christian, is there a sin you feel has you captive? Confession is a powerful weapon in overcoming sin. Who can you confess it to this week?