

Exodus 006
Family Matters
Exodus 2:18-25
June 22, 2025
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Let us take our Bibles this morning and open them to Exodus 2:18. The title of our message this morning is "Family Matters."

We are in the Book of Exodus where God is going to do a national work. He is going to take His people, the Nation of Israel, roughly 1500 years before the time of Christ and after they have been subjugated into slavery for over 400 years. He is going to bring them out of that bondage with many possessions. We are continuing our verse-by-verse study of the Book of Exodus, looking at the redemption of a nation.

Before God does a work, typically what He will do is select a person that He wants to work through. God wants to do the work of deliverance, but He uses a deliverer that He is going to work through—a man named Moses. Moses is a very interesting character. Exodus 1 has told us about the bondage of Israel as there arose a Pharaoh that did not know Joseph. God begins this work of wanting to take His people out of bondage, and He is raising up Moses.

Moses' Birth, Rearing, Marriage, and Training (Exodus 2:1-25)

- I. Moses' birth (1-4)
- II. Moses' rearing (5-10)
- III. Moses' flight (11-15)
- IV. Moses' marriage (16-22)
 - A. Moses assists Midianite girls (16-20)
 - 1. Moses' actions (16-17)
 - 2. Family report (18-20)
 - B. Moses marries a Midianite girl (21-22)
 - 1. Moses' wife (21)
 - 2. Moses' son (22)
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We have seen Moses' birth (Exodus 2:1-4); both of his parents were Levites. We have seen Moses' rearing in Egypt (Exodus 2:5-10), as he was set adrift on the Nile. Coincidentally, his little basket was picked up by Pharaoh's daughter. She brought him into the household of Pharaoh, and there Moses was given the greatest education that a human being of that time could receive. Had Moses stayed a slave amongst the Hebrews, he probably would have been illiterate, and he would not have been qualified to write the first five books of Hebrew Bible that we call Torah or Pentateuch. His rearing is very, very significant.

Then you hit Exodus 2:11-15 where he is at the age of 40. He sees an Egyptian abusing a Hebrew, and he takes matters into his own hands, and he murders the Egyptian. You are dealing with somebody at this point in his life that had natural education, natural talent—he probably sensed his calling as the deliverer of Israel—but he tries to fix the problem in his own power. So, God says, "You need the next phase of your education, something I call the BD degree—the backside of the desert degree."

It is during that second 40 years of his life that Moses is no longer a prince, but he is an obscure shepherd. What God is doing during that second phase of his education—and this will go from age 40 to age 80—is emptying Moses of Moses, and creating that humble, pliable, usable vessel that God can now use to perform the work He has always wanted to do through His own power, not Moses' power, and deliver the Nation of Israel out of Egypt.

Then we move into Exodus 2:16-22, where he is there in Midian as an obscure shepherd, a fugitive of justice, having murdered somebody, fleeing. Now little things lead to bigger things, because we have a record of his marriage, and hence we have entitled this message "Family Matters." He has assisted some Midianite girls, and you come now to Exodus 2:18. It says,

"When they came to Reuel their father, he said, 'Why have you come back so soon today?'" (Exodus 2:18)

Now who is Reuel? His name also is going to be called Jethro. In fact, if you look at Exodus 3:1 you will see the name Jethro. In Exodus 18:1 it will describe Jethro as the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law. This is the man that Moses is about to be connected to, family wise. This man Reuel—also called Jethro, priest of Midian—is about to become his father-in-law, and to the best of my ability, Jethro is going to become a believer in Yahweh.

We are not told that here, but by the time we get to Exodus 18:10-11, this is what we will read:

"So Jethro said, 'Blessed be the Lord who delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, and who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods; indeed, it was proven when they dealt proudly against the people.'" (Exodus 18:10-11)

So it seems to me, as the story progresses, that Moses' father-in-law is going to exercise faith in the true God—the God of the the Israelis, the Hebrews, Yahweh, and someone that is going to be identified as the great I AM in Exodus 3:14-15. Jethro, to use modern-day vernacular, will get saved.

Here is Moses helping these seven Midianite girls, and they come back to Jethro, and he wants to know what transpired today. This is when they begin to tell him that there

was this Egyptian (speaking of Moses) that helped them. So with that being said, look at Exodus 2:19-20. It says,

"So they said, 'An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and what is more, he even drew the water for us and watered the flock.' He said to his daughters, 'Where is he then? Why is it that you have left the man behind? Invite him to have something to eat.'" (Exodus 2:19-20)

"Hey girls, where are your manners? Where is your hospitality? If this guy helped you, if he drove away some enemy shepherds, if he watered your flock, how come you have not brought him in for something to eat?" Basic hospitality.

You will notice what is happening in Moses' life: a little thing is leading to bigger things. He protects these girls, and this is going to lead to a dinner invitation. From the whole thing, he is going to get a wife and a father-in-law. This reveals something in the way God works that is contrary to the world system—God blesses people who do the little things.

In the last sermon, we talked a little bit about this. The sermon was entitled "Little Things Matter." The Bible, in Zechariah 4:10 says not to despise the day of small beginnings. Jesus Himself said that he who is faithful with something small can be trusted with something big; conversely, he who is unfaithful with something small will be unfaithful with something big (Luke 16:10).

God typically advances people. This is leading to Moses' family, but the advancement is not going to stop there. He is going to become the deliverer; he is going to become the lawgiver; and he is going to become the author of the first five books of the Bible. He did not start there overnight. He was simply faithful in what God put in front of him. If you see great things in your future, that is a nice thing to think about, but the issue is, are you being faithful with what God has already deposited in front of you? That is what we see happening in Moses' life.

This is a lesson of character that goes far beyond natural education. I call this the spiritual education—that middle phase of Moses' life that he needed to learn—because this man is destined for big things. The reason he is destined for big things is because he is faithful with the little things.

They give this family report concerning how Moses helped them. "Where is your hospitality? Bring him on over." This is where Moses meets his wife. He has helped some Midianite girls, and now he marries a Midianite woman named Zipporah (Exodus 2:21-22).

Notice Exodus 2:21, where we learn of Moses' wife:

"Moses was willing to dwell with the man [Jethro, his future father-in-law], and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses." (Exodus 2:21)

Here you see happening in the Bible one of the great things that can happen to a human being, which is marriage—family matters. We are living in a culture today where the whole institution of the family and marriage, a man and a woman in monogamous marriage, heterosexual marriage, man and woman bringing forth children is under attack. What the Bible teaches is that this arrangement is of God, and it is a good thing.

Proverbs 18:22 says,

*"He who finds a wife finds a good thing
And obtains favor from the Lord."*

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 says,

"Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is no another to lift him up. Furthermore, if two lie down together and two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart."

I understand the three strands are God (strand one), and the partners in the marriage (strands two and three).

God said to Adam in Genesis 2:18, before the Fall:

"Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him.'" (Genesis 2:18)

These are bread and butter issues concerning family and marriage that our culture used to take for granted, but now the whole institution of marriage and the family is under perpetual attack. Let me give you this recent podcast interview, and this was Michelle Obama. I am not trying to be political when I put this up; I just want to show you the perpetual attacks that the institution of family and marriage are regularly under in the culture. This is from a podcast back in May. My wife showed me this in the form of a newspaper clipping and I could not believe what I was hearing. Here is the quote:

"But Barack and I have talked about this because he sent us an article. It talked about how unusual the concept of the nuclear family is...The concept of two parents and children building their lives together is a relatively new concept to this generation. That isn't really how we were designed to be because we're kind of pack animals."¹

¹ Paul Batura, "No, Michelle Obama, the Nuclear Family is Not a New Idea," <https://dailycitizen.focusonthefamily.com/no-michelle-obama-the-nuclear-family-is-not-a-new-idea/>.

In other words, the concept of marriage is looked at by many people, even people at the highest levels of political leadership, as a new social construction that we came up with. It is novel, it is new; but it really has not been practiced since the dawn of time.

I am here to tell you folks that that is completely and totally false. Marriage is a divine institution of God. It is something that God Himself ordained even before the Fall of man. It is to be venerated and respected; and to the extent that a culture will venerate it and respect it, is the degree to which a culture can be sustained. The moment that institution is looked at as just an arrangement that we came up with—something that is really not of God at all—is the moment that culture will unravel.

Marriage and family are one of the great divine institutions. The divine institutions are those structures that God Himself has set up, which give mankind, even in their fallen state, the ability to be perpetuated and sustained, even in spite of their fallenness.

Those institutions can be found in early Genesis. Number one is conscience; number two, the institution of divine labor; number three, the institution of human government; number four, the institution of nationalism—that would be patriotism, national borders, and national boundaries contrary to globalism; and number four, the institution of marriage and the family—a man and a woman come together in heterosexual monogamy in a lifelong commitment, and from that union come children.

God says, "I am happy about that. I blessed that. I created that." This is not something that man came up with. The Supreme Court has no right to rewrite this because the Supreme Court did not create this right. You cannot rewrite something someone else created. This comes from God.

I understand that there are people within the sound of my voice that have had an upbringing, or a life which violates the standard, or goes against the standard, or deviates from the standard. I am not here to heap condemnation on people. I am just here to tell you that there is a standard. This is God's standard; this is not my standard; this is not your standard. This is God's standard.

I find it interesting that in John's Gospel, Jesus performs seven signs, the first of which was the sign of changing the water to wine in Cana of Galilee, at a wedding of all places. Jesus Himself hung out at a wedding. Why would He do that? Because it is an institution of God. Here you see Moses experiencing that. Moses is faithful with something little, and God starts to march him on to greater things.

The first order of business is, "Let us get this man a wife." That is how he met his wife in Midian, taking care of these Midianite girls. That is how he got his father-in-law, Jethro, who, by the way, is going to give Moses some great advice. When we get to Exodus 18, you will see that Moses is on the verge of burning himself out. He does not know how to delegate authority, and his father-in-law is going to instruct him on how to do that.

I am here to tell you, as God is my witness, that marriage can be a wonderful, beautiful thing. Some of the best advice you will ever get in your life can come from your father-in-law. That has happened in my life. I realize that some are dealing with circumstances that are less than perfect, but marriage is of God, it is not a creation of man; it is not recent; and it is not new. It is a pre-Fall institution that is to be perpetuated today.

Woe to the civilization or the society that looks at it as just a casual institution that we can take or leave. That is the type of society that will quickly begin to disintegrate. When you study Edward Gibbon in his famous classical historical book, "The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire," this is what he talks about in that work. He talks about how Rome, long before it was conquered politically, began to disintegrate culturally. One of the things that started to happen is the nuclear family began to be spat upon, looked down upon, made fun of; and as Solomon said, "there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

It is the same kind of thing that is happening in our country right now. It does not matter how effective our precision military attacks are. If we are not taking care of business at home by respecting and maintaining the divine standard of the institution of marriage and the family, then that country will disintegrate as well. Moses is walking out divine principles and he gets married, which, as far as God is concerned, is a good thing.

In Genesis 2:18, for example, as God is describing the woman who is about to marry Adam, it says,

"Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.'" (Genesis 2:18)

This is where He puts the man to sleep in the garden of Eden, and He creates woman from Adam's side. In the process He calls the woman a helper. Now we are living in a culture and a society today that would say something like this: "What a putdown. What kind of dark ages are you living in? How dare you refer to a woman as a helper or a helpmate?" My wife has a pretty good answer to that, by the way. She says, "You know why the woman is called the helper and the helpmate? Because men need a lot of help." I would concur with that.

We are living in a culture today where that is looked at as a putdown—"How dare you refer to a woman as a helper"—not understanding that the Hebrew word for "helper" in Genesis 2:18 is "ezer," which is used to describe God Himself. Did you know that calling a woman a helper is not a putdown? It is not a demotion—it is a promotion.

In fact, in John 16:7, Jesus called the Holy Spirit a helper.

"But I tell you the truth, it is your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper [the Spirit] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." (John 16:7)

The Holy Spirit, the eternally existent third member of the Godhead, is called a Paraclete or a helper in John 16:7-11. No, a helper is not a demotion; a helper is not a put down. A proper understanding of "helper" is actually an elevation of women.

The truth of the matter is, everywhere where Christianity has flourished, women's lives have always improved. If you want to see a part of the world where women are treated like dirt, visit any Islamic country you want. Look at what happened to women in Iran after the Shah was deposed and replaced by the Ayatollah in 1979.

Prior to that, women could drive cars; they could go out of their house without their husband's permission. A man was not allowed to beat up a wife; they were not forced into the hot Middle-Eastern sun wearing burkas. They could pursue education; they could dress any way they wanted. Look at how everything changed in 1979 with the burkas head to toe, no education, no ability to drive a car, and the only thing you can see out of when you are outside is that little slit, which allows you to see outside of that burka. Even here in the Sugar Land area, with a growing Islamic population, we see that happening constantly with women. We see a woman walking six feet or so behind her husband because she has no right to be next to him, let alone in front of him.

I am so tired of hearing feminists complain about the Bible and how the Bible destroys women's lives, when in reality it is the exact opposite. Jesus Christ has done more for women than any other figure in human history. If you want to see women treated very, very poorly, look at pre-Christian civilization, or look at a civilization where the gospel is illegal, and you will see how women are treated very, very badly.

Moses gets a wife, Moses gets a helper. That is not a bad thing—that is a good thing. Now that he has a wife and a father-in-law, from this arrangement comes forth a child, and that child is described in Exodus 2:22. It says,

"Then she gave birth to a son, and he named him Gershom..."

This is interesting because there is going to be another son. They are described in Exodus 18:3. Gershom is described, and there is going to be a second son from this union named Eliezer.

Why give this child the name Gershom? It is explained in the second part of Exodus 2:22:

"...for he [Moses] said, 'I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.'"

Gershom gets the name because Moses saw himself as a sojourner, a pilgrim, in a foreign land. Why did he see himself this way? He is a fugitive of justice; he has fled from Goshen to Midian. It is in Midian, where all of these events that we are reading about transpire, as God is now preparing Moses. Moses is a fugitive from justice. He is living in a foreign land. He is there for about 40 years, far from the royalty that he once enjoyed in Egypt, and that is how Gershom gets his name.

I think there is more of a meaning to it, because it is not just Moses living in a foreign land outside of Egypt, it is the whole Nation of Israel living outside the Promised Land in this area in Egypt. It is not just Moses who is a foreigner in a foreign land, but it is also the entire Nation of Israel. God, all the way back in the Book of Genesis, promised the Nation of Israel that He would bring them into the land of Canaan, the Promised Land, their land from the Euphrates to the Tigris, from modern-day Egypt to modern-day Iraq. It is a chunk of real estate that the Nation of Israel, even to this day in its current form, has never completely and fully gained jurisdiction over.

Obviously, the Nation of Israel living in Egypt would be considered sojourners or foreigners, just like Moses individually living in Midian, outside of Egypt, outside of Goshen, outside of royalty, looked at himself as a sojourner and a foreigner. That is how Gershom gets this particular name. The Nation of Israel and Moses are a long way from home.

Is that not a good analogy for us as members of the church? Did you know that the Bible, spiritually speaking, calls you a foreigner and an alien living in this world? We do not really fit here. Have you noticed that? It just seems like our values are so different from everything that this world is espousing. That should not surprise us, because the Bible is very clear from cover to cover, that Satan is the prince and power of the air (Ephesians 2:2); he is the god of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11); the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4). It has been this way ever since the Fall of man in Eden. We are living in hostile territory.

This is why the Bible, in 2 Corinthians 5:20 calls us ambassadors. What is an ambassador, exactly? If I am America's ambassador to Venezuela, Colombia, or some of these other countries, I am not really in that country to promote regime change. What I am there to do is to represent American values on foreign soil. That is the Christian's posture in this present age, which is under the sway of the wicked one.

That will not change until Jesus brings His regime change with the Second Advent. In the meantime, I am an alien, I am a foreigner, and I am representing Kingdom values in a time period and in an era before the Kingdom is manifested on planet Earth, which will happen at the Second Advent.

That is how we look at our lives here. We do not look at our lives in the sense that we let our roots sink too deep. We are just pilgrims; we are passing through. What is a pilgrim? A pilgrim is someone that is passing through a temporary space, a temporary time, before he or she reaches his final destination. That is to be our mindset as we live in this world. That is what the New Testament says about us constantly.

If you find that you really do not fit in and everybody laughs at the jokes that you do not want to laugh at, for example, around the water cooler, or you are watching things on TV and it just seems like the world values things that you do not value, then praise the Lord. That means you are walking out your heavenly destiny and your heavenly calling.

Woe to the person who becomes comfortable in this world and wants to accommodate to the value system of this world. You do not do that as an ambassador.

First Peter 1:17 puts it this way:

"If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth." (1 Peter 1:17)

Did you catch that? What are we experiencing right now? It is just our stay on earth. Our citizenship is in heaven; we are ultimately headed to a heavenly city. I do not want to become too comfortable here. If I am too comfortable here, that may mean that I have moved too far into worldliness, because now I am cooperating with God's archenemy, Satan, who illegitimately orchestrates the values of this world.

First John 2:15-17 says,

"Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever."

Living for the values of this world is like rearranging the deckchairs on the Titanic. It is like my parents taking me to a nice restaurant when I was young. I remember someone at the front of the restaurant was sculpting something out of a giant block of ice. Sometimes we would get a table really close to where this man was working, and you could see the sweat pouring off of his face, and he was chiseling and he was working, and he would actually make something very beautiful.

If it was around Easter, he would make an Easter basket out of a block of ice. At Christmas time he would create a Santa Claus or a Christmas tree or something like that out of a block of ice. I remember being very, very young and sitting towards the front watching this man work. I just felt internally a sense of frustration. The reason I was frustrated was because this man was working and slaving, and I knew intellectually that his work would not last long because it was just a matter of time before the sun melted everything that he was working so hard to create.

If you can lock that image in your mind, you will see what most people's lives are like. They are invested into things that are not going to stand the test of time—careers (there is nothing wrong with a career); a reputation; financial security. There is nothing wrong with those things in and of themselves, but God help us not to let those become the focus of our lives, because they will not last. "The world and its lusts are passing away."

In fact, today everybody is looking for safe investments. There are only two. An investment is energy that you pour into something—that is what I mean by an

investment, energy or resources. The first safe investment is people, because *"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever"* (Isaiah 40:8), and *"[God] has also set eternity into [the hearts of men]"* (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

The more you pour yourself into a person—discipleship, parenting, evangelism—the more you are investing into something that is going to last, because that soul that you are dealing with is going to be alive somewhere a hundred years from now, a thousand years from now, a million years from now, a billion years from now, a trillion years from now. You are investing into something that will last.

There is only one other thing that will stand the test of time, that will last once the fire finishes consuming. We know that this "cosmos" that we are in is marked for destruction; it is going to be destroyed by fire. Everybody today is talking about global warming. I believe in it, because God is going to take this world and destroy it by fire (2 Peter 3:10). The only two things that are going to stand the test of the fire are the souls of people, and number two, the Word of God.

*"The grass withers, the flower fades,
But the word of our God stands forever"* (Isaiah 40:8).

Jesus, in Matthew 24:35 says,

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."

The more time you spend in this book trying to understand it, trying to wrestle with it, trying to teach it, trying to communicate it, trying to live by it—that takes work to rightly divide God's Word. It is work, and the one that seeks to do this is called a workman for a reason. In 2 Timothy 2:15 you will see that designation. You are pouring yourself into something that will last.

Here is Moses' understanding that he is passing through foreign terrain. He is outside of Egypt, number one; and number two, his people are outside of their ultimate destination, which is the Promised Land. That is where his firstborn gets his name, Gershom. It is a great mentality that we should adopt as we pass through this terrain that we are living in now.

The chapter ends with Exodus 2:23-25, after this marriage, with a divine observation. Notice first of all, Exodus 2:23, which says,

"Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died." (Exodus 2:23)

"Many days." What does that mean? It means 40 years. Forty years had elapsed. In the first 40 years of his life Moses thought he was a somebody. In the second 40 years of his life he learned he was a nobody. After his character is shaped in such a way that he can now become this useful and pliable vessel in the hands of God, and is not going to

try to execute the will of God through human power, Moses learned what God can do with a somebody that learned he was a nobody.

Moses had a productive influence in the last 40 years of his ministry, because he went through that barren place from age 40 to age 80, that middle tier of his life. Forty years have passed, and I teach this over and over again to encourage you, because some of you are in that barren place. You are at some job that is way beneath you; the pay is not what you had hoped. You are toiling away at menial labor and you think, "I must have missed God."

I am here to tell you folks that every child of God that wants to be used by God walks through that middle phase. You have to, because if you do not walk through it, you are full of yourself. You are just like Moses, and you get out to do God's will and you will try to execute it through human power. We have to learn character dependency upon God—prayer, waiting upon God. These are things that you cannot learn in a classroom; they are learned through experience. Moses learned them not as a prince; he learned them as an obscure shepherd.

But God's hand continues to be on Moses. The 40-year clock is over, and the king that had subjugated the Nation of Israel and Egypt passed on. Charles Ryrie said,

"The king would be Thutmose III (1482-1450), the predecessor to the pharaoh of the Exodus, Amenhotep II."²

If we take the numbers in the Book of Exodus literally, we can date the Exodus to the year of 1446 BC. We walked through that when we introduced the Book of Exodus. That means the Pharaoh of the oppression would be Thutmose III. That is the one who has just died; that is the Pharaoh that did not know Joseph initially. The next one, the Pharaoh of the Exodus, would be Amenhotep II.

"Why are you boring us with all this history, archeology, geography, geology, and Egyptian chronology?" The reason I do it is because I want you to understand that the Bible took place in a real historical setting. This is not VeggieTales, these are not tall tales. These are actually real people historically that can be documented. The whole Bible reads this way.

We are now away from Thutmose III, and we are into the reign of Amenhotep II. His policies and his mindset did not change from his predecessor in terms of subjugating the Israelis and the Hebrews. As you look at Exodus 2:23, it says,

*"Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage."
(Exodus 2:23)*

² Charles Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible*, page 93.

The bondage started under the first ruler and continued on into the second ruler. One of the things that is interesting as you study the Book of Exodus is how Egypt is used as a type of the sin nature. Just as God is taking His people out of Egyptian bondage, in the exact same way He seeks to take us out of the bondage of the sin nature.

I am here to tell you that the sin nature brings bondage. In Romans 6:23, Paul the apostle says,

"For the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)

Think about that word "wage" for a minute. That is a price; that is a cost. This is so interesting to me because the world system says, "Follow the sin nature and you will be free." In fact, it is a lie—it is a satanic lie. The only thing the sin nature will lead you into is wages and bondage.

By contrast, the world looks at Christianity as if it is an enslavement—bondage. Nothing could be further from the truth. You become a Christian by receiving the free grace of God by faith alone, by grace alone, by Christ alone. The Holy Spirit enters you, and with that stage of your salvation now executed, God calls you into discipleship and you start walking the life of a disciple. The world says you are putting yourself into bondage, but it is the opposite. You are liberating yourself. You are becoming you as you were supposed to be you, by the divine plan of God before sin ever entered the picture. That is not bondage—that is freedom.

Second Corinthians 3:17 says,

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Jesus said in John 8:32,

"And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

John 8:36:

"So if the son makes you free, you will be free indeed."

Let freedom reign, let freedom ring—that is what Christianity is all about. The world system is the bondage. Yet the world system is so good at marketing itself as freedom and Christianity as bondage. You start yielding to the sin nature—which you do not have to as a Christian, you can. Here is a saying that has always helped me with this. It says,

"Sin will take you further than you want to go; it will keep you longer than you want to stay; and it will cost you more than you are willing to pay."

That is the bondage of the sin nature, and that is why God is all about freedom. This is why He is working in history to liberate His people from Egyptian bondage. He works that identical way in our lives to lead us into the glorious freedom of the Son of God.

Pharaoh's death, Israel's bondage, and notice that God listens to prayer. Did you know God listens to your prayer requests? Sometimes prayer is so frustrating because we do not get an answer when we want it, but I am here to tell you that God hears every single prayer. He may not answer it on our timetable, but He hears. It says in Exodus 2:23:.

"They [the Hebrews] cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God."

Deuteronomy 26:7 says,

""Then we cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toil and our oppression.""

One of the great books of the Bible that you can ever study is the Book of Revelation. Revelation 1:3 promises a blessing to the one who reads and heeds the book. One of the ways the Book of Revelation has blessed me is because when I started to read the Book of Revelation, I discovered Revelation 5:8 which says,

"When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints."
(Revelation 5:8)

Isn't that great? How does God look at the prayers of His people? They are like golden bowls of incense being brought before His throne. I would encourage you this week to pray in that vein, understanding that our prayers—regardless of the circumstances in which particular prayer requests are answered—are very valuable to God. Here God's people are in this state of bondage. They are crying out to God. God listens, and God hears.

Then we will conclude with Exodus 2:24-25 where God contemplates something. It says,

"So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them." (Exodus 2:24-25)

If you can understand Exodus 2:24 you will understand the Bible, because the whole Bible is about this. God makes a covenant (Genesis 15) and then He spends the rest of the Bible fulfilling what He said He would do in the covenant. Exodus 2:24 once again says,

"So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." (Exodus 2:24)

That is the covenant that God entered into with Abraham, called the Abrahamic Covenant, back in Genesis 15:18, which says,

*"To your descendants I have given this land,
From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates."
(Genesis 15:18)*

Built into the structure of the Abrahamic Covenant is the following promise from Genesis 15:13 and 16:

"God said to Abraham, 'Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years...Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.'" (Genesis 15:13, 16)

Why did God liberate His people from Egyptian bondage? What is the Exodus? The Exodus is the greatest work of redemption by God in all of human history, second only to the cross of Jesus Christ. You look at the cross of Jesus Christ and the redemption that it brought to humanity, the ultimate act of redemption, and right there in second place is the Exodus. This is the height of redemption, taking His people out of bondage.

I want you to understand why He did it. He did it because of the covenant; He did it because He remembered the Abrahamic Covenant that He entered into. He remembered that, built into the structure of the Abrahamic Covenant are four generations, or 400 years, of enslavement. God says, "Time's up. Moses, you are the deliverer. You have reached the ripe old age of 80." Most people are ready to retire at age 80; Moses is just getting started at age 80, and God is working the way that He is working because of His covenant, and the whole rest of the Bible unfolds like this.

If you can understand the Abrahamic Covenant, you can understand basically everything and anything that happens in Scripture. God told the nation, "You will be in Babylon for 70 years and I will take you out." Why? Because God made a promise. It is found in Jeremiah 25:11.

Did you know that right now God is doing a miracle through Israel? That is why I was, from a personal level, so content and happy that our president took the side of Israel from an Iranian Islamic regime, a Nazi regime. I am not condemning the Persian people who are beautiful people; I am talking about the regime that says over and over again, "We want to wipe Israel off the map."

"I wish our president would not get involved in all these foreign wars." Are you kidding me? Once they get rid of Israel, you know who they are going to turn on? They are

going to turn on the United States. They say it over and over again in their leadership: Israel is the little Satan, and the United States is the big Satan.

God, in the midst of this, is protecting His people, Israel. He is regathering them from the four corners of the earth. Why is God doing this? It is in Ezekiel 36:22, which says,

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went."'"
(Ezekiel 36:22)

It is not because your Hebrews have been so well behaved that I am doing this regathering. I am doing it because I made a promise in the Abrahamic Covenant. You see that? It is not because of you, Israel, that I am about to act in terms of my redemptive purpose through the Exodus. I am doing it because I made a promise in the Abrahamic covenant, which is unconditional and unfulfilled and cannot be erased. If I do not do what I said I would do, I am the one at the end of the day that is going to have egg on my face. You understand Genesis 15, you will understand the whole Bible. You will understand why the Exodus happened. You will understand why the current climate in the Middle East is what it is. A promise is a promise as far as God is concerned. God's promises and covenant to Israel remain literal, reliable, unconditional, and unfulfilled. That then becomes the basis of his intervention in history. God must once again move his hand in history to fulfill his word. Of course, if all of this is true. That is why we believe in a coming earthly kingdom. God to Abraham unconditionally promised his people three things: land, seed, and blessing. Those components are filled out in latter scripture, in the covenants that God entered into with the Nation of Israel.

The Abrahamic Covenant is the spine of the whole thing. This covenant is unconditional, it rests on God completely. Since it is unfulfilled—and God cannot lie—there has to be a time in history for this specific covenant language to be fulfilled. That is why we believe in a thousand-year Kingdom. I do not believe in a thousand-year Kingdom because it is in Revelation 20. Revelation 20 is wonderful, but it is just icing on the cake—it just adds some details.

I believe in a coming Kingdom on this earth because of the Abrahamic Covenant. Why am I even bringing this up? Because you have voices now, in the conservative world, in the political climate that we are in (I do not mind naming names—Candace Owens, Tucker Carlson, Stu Peters and I could go on and on), who say we need to dump Israel in our thinking because Israel is behaving badly. "Israel did this. Israel did that. How can you? Christian Zionists support the Nation of Israel?"

My reaction to that is that I cannot help but support Israel. I do not have to agree with every little jot and tittle that the Nation of Israel does—God did not throughout the Old Testament, you will see that pretty clearly—but I am ironclad in my belief for Israel, through Israel. I pray for the sustaining of Israel. I believe in a coming Kingdom to the earth. I believe in all of that stuff because I read Genesis 15.

If I did not believe Genesis 15, this ironclad covenant, I would not believe the stuff that I regularly teach from this pulpit. Dwight Pentecost, my professor at Dallas Seminary, asked us, "What is the most important chapter of the Bible?" Of course, we all gave wrong answers. I said, "John 3:16 is the most important." He said, "No. If you understand Genesis 15, you will understand John 3:16. If you understand Genesis 15, you will understand the Middle East. If you understand Genesis 15, you will understand the Exodus. If you understand Genesis 15, you will understand the turmoil in the Middle East and how God has preserved the Nation of Israel." That is why the exodus is transpiring here: God remembered His covenant with the Nation of Israel.

I would encourage you next week to read Exodus 3:1-10, as we now leave chapter two, where we have talked about Moses' birth, Moses' rearing, Moses' marriage, God's observation, and now Moses getting called into the ministry. What gets his attention is a bush that was burning that never got consumed—the burning bush. This is where God discloses to Moses his calling. He discloses to Moses His great name: "I AM"—the "ego eimi" in Greek—the self-existent one.

Father, we are grateful for Your work in our world. We are grateful that You cannot lie. We are grateful for Your ironclad promises. Lord, You have given us ironclad promises in our age. If we will trust in the work of the Savior, we can receive the gift of life; we can have a guarantee that if we were to die this afternoon or this week, *"absent from the body [is] to be at home with the Lord"* (2 Corinthians 5:8).

I pray, Lord, that many, many people within the sound of my voice would be exercising faith to their own free will in the finished work of the Savior, and be enjoined to Your ironclad promises. I pray that if anyone is confused about this, how to get saved, how to become a Christian, how to be born again, that they would seek me out afterwards. Help us to understand, Lord, that we are not dealing with a 12-step issue here—we are dealing with one step where we hear the proclaimed gospel and we trust in it.

You make certain commitments and guarantees to us, not the least of which is the safe arrival of our soul one day in heaven itself, in the Father's house. We thank You for that; we praise You for that. We pray many, many people are trusting in that. Thank You, Lord, that You are a promise-keeping, covenant-keeping God. Help us to walk these things out this week. We will be careful to give You all the praise and the glory. We ask these things in Jesus' name, and God's people said, Amen.