

# Drawn Out of the Water

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Date: 15 January 2023

Preacher: Alan Stirling

[ 0 : 0 0 ] It is really lovely to be back with you again. Thank you to Stephen for the warm welcome. Thanks to Kyle for speaking to the kids.

My girls are always really excited when they see that Kyle is doing a kids talk. Because anything can happen. It's certainly been the pattern over the last few years. But no, thank you for that.

If you have your Bibles, it would be great if you could turn to Exodus chapter 2. And we're continuing our series where David left off last week.

So we're in Exodus chapter 2, the first 10 verses. And Moses writes this, he says, Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman.

The woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. And when she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes.

[ 1 : 1 1 ] And daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the riverbank. And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him.

Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And while her young women walked beside the river, she saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman and she took it.

When she opened it, she saw the child. And behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?

And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. So the girl went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Take this child away and nurse him for me.

And I will give you your wages. So the woman took the child and nursed him. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son.

[ 2 : 1 9 ] She named him Moses because she said, I drew him out of the water. Let's pray. Father, as we come now to look at your word, we just pray that you would be speaking into our hearts by your spirit, Lord, that you would apply your word to us in a way which would transform us and fulfill your plan and purpose in our lives for us to become more like Jesus.

We pray this in his name. Amen. Some of you might be familiar with the story of Corrie ten Boom.

Corrie ten Boom, the young woman growing up in the Netherlands during World War II, and her and her father and much of her family hid Jewish refugees.

And she wrote a book about it called The Hiding Place. And one of the things they had in their house, they had a secret room constructed.

And Jewish refugees who were fleeing from the Nazis would come to their house and they'd hide in this room because the houses would be raided and searched.

[ 3 : 45 ] And they'd have to sit in this little room behind a hidden panel and be absolutely silent just in case they got caught.

If you know the story, eventually they do get, they are betrayed, and her and her sister end up spending a good bit of time in a concentration camp where sadly her sister dies and Corrie herself is released.

By accident, an administrative error led to her release when in fact she should have been, she was destined for a sign for execution.

And she went on to have a wonderful ministry to a lot of people who'd been afflicted during the war. But The Hiding Place, it's a story of great tension and great drama.

And it's been made into a movie, and there's actually a little drama series, an animated series that our kids have watched, and it's fantastic. But here we have a story in Exodus chapter 2 which contains just as much drama, just as much high tension.

[ 5 : 04 ] It's a familiar story to us. It's a classic Sunday school story. It's a story that so much of our culture even vaguely refers to.

Like, it's called a Moses basket. I bet if you went into, well, Mother Care doesn't exist anymore, does it? But if you could go into Mother Care or one of these places where they sell these and you ask people buying them, why is it called a Moses basket?

I suspect most wouldn't know. Unless they'd been to Sunday school as a child. And then perhaps they would know. And they would know this story, a story of tension and drama and rescue.

And one of the things I want us to see this morning, that there is also a bucket load of irony and humor tied into this story. And the story really sets some of the major themes of the book of Exodus.

We've got rescue from death and tyranny and slavery. We've got an unusual means of rescue. And we have the centrality of faith in a God who is always faithful and always keeps his promises.

[ 6 : 20 ] And this morning, I want us to see this story in two ways, or two parts. The first thing I want us to see this morning are the visible parts. The people, the context, the actions of the characters, and the outcome of the events.

And while Moses is the baby in the basket, what we see is that this story is not actually really about Moses.

Moses contributes very little to the plot, apart from looking cute. He was a fine-looking baby. And he cries.

Two fairly essential ingredients for being a fine-looking baby. They look good and they cry. But there's also the invisible part of this story.

It's the realm where the invisible hand of God is acting to fulfill his purposes and his plan. And what we see is that God's plan and purposes are just continuing from Genesis.

[ 7 : 34 ] There isn't really a break between Genesis and Exodus. There's continuity. David talked about this last week. The story flows from Genesis, and then we're into Exodus and the continuation of what's happening to God's people.

So in Exodus, what we see is God is moving initially, in these first few chapters, he's moving invisibly. We don't really see him as obviously as we do later, whenever we have the plagues, and we have the pillar of fire, and the cloud, and all the events on Mount Sinai.

So we have both the invisible God, and what will then become the visible God? And we know that God is moving, because that's what he does.

Joseph, when speaking to his brothers, in Genesis 50, verse 20 says this, As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today.

God is at work in our circumstances, in our events, and in the events and lives of his people. So let's have a look at the visible part of this story this morning.

[ 9 : 01 ] So the very first verse, we're introduced to Moses' parents. Now, here in Exodus, it doesn't tell us their name, but we find out later on that they are Amran and Jochebed, and both are from the tribe of Levi.

A strange detail, or an odd detail to include here in the story, but if you remember that the people first hearing this story, or hearing it, having Moses written it down, they would have known what this reference meant.

And the author is reminding the first hearers about, well, who are the tribe of Levi? And we'll know later on from Exodus and Leviticus, they get a whole book to themselves, that God will set aside the tribe of Levites to serve in the tabernacle.

And it's from this particular family of Levi where it will come the priests, those who would serve as intercessors between God and his people.

So this is like a little origin story for where the priests are going to come from. So Jochebed, the mother, has a son, and it's not her first.

[ 10 : 19 ] Okay, there's also another son and a sister, which we will encounter later, so Aaron and Miriam. And as we read, Moses is a bonny baby.

Now, we don't know, did his parents see something in Moses other than the fact he was just good looking? It doesn't say.

But for some reason, they go to extraordinary lengths to save his life. They reach a decision point.

There is a great threat. Stephen, in his sermon in Acts 7, 19, says this of Pharaoh, he dealt shrewdly with our race and forced our fathers to expose their infants so they would not be kept alive.

Can you imagine being a parent in that day? You have a son.

[ 11 : 25 ] You perhaps, like Moses' parents, you do your best to try and conceal them. But they get found. And you have to look on as your child is tossed into the River Nile.

And perhaps the parents themselves who tried to deceive the government, tried to hide, themselves would be punished or executed. Pharaoh is quite trigger-happy when it comes to throwing weight around and bringing around execution.

So what will Moses' parents do? Will they obey the law of the land? Will they lose their son? Or will they disobey the law and run the risk of possible even greater loss?

Their own lives, the lives of their other children. They are facing a genuine threat. There is a threat. There is a clear and present danger. But we read, they hide their son.

They disobey the law of the land. And Cal referenced this, Hebrews chapter 11, 23, says this of Moses' parents. He says, by faith, Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents because they saw that the child was beautiful and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

[ 12 : 56 ] I think that's a general rule for us as Christians, as believers. We are to obey the law and those in authority over us. But there are times when disobedience is the only option.

You know, around the world, in places where Christians are persecuted, many of our brothers and sisters this morning will break the law at great risk to themselves so that they can gather the way that we are gathering this morning.

They will run the risk of imprisonment, loss of property, separation of family. Yet they will still insist on meeting.

And they go to huge lengths. They have lots of birthday parties, partly, in the underground church in China. Someone raids the house. What's this? Birthday party.

It's his birthday. It's her birthday. And I hope nobody clocks on that it was also his birthday three weeks ago. But they go to huge lengths because they value obedience to God as higher than obedience to the law of the land.

[ 14 : 17 ] Faith overrules fear. But can you imagine, can you imagine the stress and tension in that house?

How do you stop an infant from crying? How do you stop an infant from doing what infants do? They're noisy. You know, for those of you parents or you ever looked after children, if you've ever been in a situation where you really needed the child to be quiet, you can almost guarantee what's going to happen.

Okay? There will be an eruption, an explosion of tears. And nothing can console the child. Just imagine the stress.

Guards all around the place. Someone might tell on them. But after three months, they can hide him no longer. He's maybe becoming a little bit more mobile.

So, they put together a careful plan. A basket is made from bull rushes. Waterproofed. The baby's placed inside.

[ 15 : 33 ] The lid's secured. The basket's set amongst the reeds. I think so that the current wouldn't wash it away. And there's a little bit of an irony here because Moses is hidden in plain sight in the very place where he was supposed to be executed.

In plain sight. The place of his death is ultimately going to become the place of his rescue. And Kyle mentioned this already. The Hebrew word here, which is used for basket, is the same word that's used in Genesis for ark.

And that symbolism would not have been lost on the very first hearers of this story. And we are also to see this symbolism. We're to see the invisible hand of God at work.

Just as Noah was rescued from a watery grave by an ark, allowing humanity to be saved. Here we have Moses is saved from a watery grave by an ark which will allow the people of Israel to be rescued.

So here's the situation. Moses is now in his basket. He's in amongst the reeds. Is it, have they put the basket in just any old random place?

[ 17 : 04 ] Well, read on. I think not. What happens next? Sisters standing by ready. It says, now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe.

I think Moses' parents and sisters knew exactly what they were doing. But what's she going to do? What's Pharaoh's daughter going to do?

is, is she going to open the basket and look at it and go, oh, it's a Hebrew.

Toss it in the river. After all, she's, she's Pharaoh's daughter. She should be obedient to her father. Her father, the Pharaoh, has said, drown the baby boys.

I think it's one thing for, it's one thing for Moses' parents to disobey, but for a daughter to disobey her father? What's she going to do?

[ 18 : 13 ] She opens the basket, she sees the crying child, and she has pity on him. Even though she recognizes that he is a Hebrew.

It's a beautiful moment. But quick as a flash, Miriam jumps in, Moses' sister, with a great idea. She says, shall I fetch you a nurse from among the Hebrew to nurse him?

Knowing fine well that she's going to go and fetch Moses' own mother. And here we have this situation where Pharaoh's daughter is, I think, unwittingly going to pay Moses' mother to do the very thing that every mother wants to do.

Look after her own child. It's brilliant. I think the first hearers of this would have been having a quiet chuckle to themselves as to how God is moving in this.

And there's a little bit of a theme running through Exodus at this point involving Pharaoh and women. Pharaoh is constantly being undermined by women in this story.

[ 19 : 32 ] If you remember back in the very end of chapter one, he says, every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.

Drown the boys, don't worry about the girls, what harm can they do? What harm can girls do? They can't fight, they're not going to be any threat to Pharaoh, they don't hold any political office, they're probably not even particularly educated, no harm to me, the boys will sort them out, just leave the girls alone, I don't fear the girls.

Well, perhaps he should. Because last week we seen, it was the midwives who undermined Pharaoh, these brave women.

But this week what we see is we have three women, we've got Moses' mother, we've got Moses' sister, and Pharaoh's own daughter are going to undermine him.

And the irony is that God is using those who are considered to be the least threatening to the authorities to be the ones who are going to undermine the entire system.

[ 20 : 46 ] And not only does Pharaoh's daughter disobey her father, but she is going to ensure that the crown of Egypt is not only going to pay for the raising of Moses as a boy, but also Pharaoh himself is going to pay for the education and the training of the man who will be used by God to bring about the judgment and destruction of Egypt and rescue God's people.

It's such delicious irony. And a source, I think, of great amusement and humor to the first hearers. God is at whack in this story.

Now for us, who do we look to in this story to learn from? Who's modeling faith? Who's pointing us to the invisible God?

Well, as we said, it's not Moses. He's cute and crying. Certainly not Pharaoh. He's the picture of evil.

He is the destroyer. He is the representative of the enemies of God. It's not even Pharaoh's daughter. She seems nice, but she's not our example.

[ 22 : 14 ] Now here, we look to this Levite family. And that's certainly what the writer of Hebrews would have us look. Let me read it again.

By faith. Whose faith? Well, it's the faith of Moses' parents. When he was born, Moses was hidden for three months by his parents because they saw that the child was beautiful and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

Here is a family, an ordinary family, who made God-centered choices in the moment. They chose goodness and life over evil and death despite the cost.

And their actions were informed by their faith, not by their fear. And they did something very, very difficult.

They did something which is a great challenge, I think, to all parents. They trusted God with the life of their child even though they had no idea what was going to happen when the ark went in the river.

[ 23 : 25 ] God hadn't told them, but we have no indication of that. They prepare as best as they possibly can. I can imagine Moses' mother painting on the pitch and the bitumen with absolute care, layer upon layer, making sure this little basket, this little ark would be as absolutely watertight and secure as she could possibly make it.

But ultimately, no idea. They don't know what's going to happen. They just simply are trusting God with the life of their child. And it is the challenge that all parents will face at some point.

Our children, Cal, our children are quite young, but there is a day coming. There are those here, and you've been there already, where at some point your children will go off into the world, and we are trusting God.

You've trusted God for their provision and their safety, even though we have no idea what's coming around the corner.

We prepare as well as we can. We try and give them as best education, as best much training and preparation as we possibly can, but ultimately, it comes down to faith.

[ 24 : 58 ] And that's what Moses' parents do. their faith points us to the actual main character in the story, the invisible God. I want you to see three things about God from this story, which I think Moses' parents point to.

Number one is this, God has a plan for his people. Now, this particular plan, on this particular plan, the clock is running. If you remember Genesis 15, God speaks to Abraham, and he says, know for certain that your offspring will be foreigners in a land that is not theirs, and they will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for 400 years.

This plan, particular part of the plan, has got a time running. Stopwatch has started. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterwards they shall come out with great possession.

So we can look at this story, and we can see this privilege of knowing some of God's timings.

But that's not always the case. 400 years is a long time. It's generations. But whether we know the timings or not, we can be confident that the God who sees all and knows all and is all-powerful has a plan.

[ 26 : 32 ] He has a plan for his people. He also has a plan for Moses. Moses is going to now spend the first few years of his life at his mother's side, hearing the stories about the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

Hearing about the promises of God, they would have had an oral tradition. They would have told the stories, the stories passed down.

I suspect in your family, there are stories which have been passed down about great uncle Tommy or whoever. People in your family's history that gets passed on to children, gets passed on to the next generation.

Well, Moses' parents would have done the same thing. They would have passed on the stories. So when God appears to Moses in the burning bush, as we'll get to in a few weeks, Moses knows who it is talking to him.

He's heard of this God. It's the God of his ancestors. But God also has a plan for the training of Moses.

[ 28 : 01 ] We know that Moses is trained in all the ways of Egypt in order to prepare him for leadership, diplomacy, military strategy.

He was also trained to write, for which we should be really grateful. Because he wrote stuff down. And we were able to read it. And we can see the impact of this.

If we think about it from the point of view of the first hearers. Moses, we think, had probably wrote these words at some point between the receiving of the law on Mount Sinai, and the people entering into the promised land just after Moses' death.

The people have been wandering in the wilderness for 40 years. And to get into the promised land, they're going to have to cross the Jordan River, and then they're going to have to face the people of Canaan, and all their military might.

There they are, facing the unknown. And for them to read these words, to be reminded that God has a plan, surely must have been a huge comfort and an assurance to the people.

[ 29 : 27 ] Moses himself, their leader, would have just been a symbol of that. He's a symbol of the plan and purpose of God. And I think for us, we need to know that God still has a plan.

He still has a plan for his people, and he still has a plan for you. We don't have all the details, but we know at least, at least three things, there are more, but there's at least three things that are true, regardless of the situation you find yourself in.

Number one, God has said his plan is to build his church. Jesus says he will build his church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

Number two, God is transforming you into the likeness of his son. Now, he never tells us that that transformation process is going to be easy.

In fact, he seems to choose difficult things to transform us into the likeness of his son. But that is his plan, that is his purpose. Thirdly, Christ will return to bring judgment and to make all things new.

[ 30 : 53 ] God has a plan. The missionary, Andrew Murray, South African missionary, wrote these words.

he says, in time of trouble, say, first, he brought me here. It is by his will I am in this troubled place.

In that fact, I will rest. Next, he will keep me here in his love and give me grace to behave as his child.

then, he will make the trial a blessing, teaching me the lessons he intended me to learn, and working in me the grace he means to bestow.

Last, in his good time, he can bring me out again, how and when he knows. let me say, I am here, one, by God's appointment, two, in his keeping, three, under his training, four, for his time.

[ 32 : 11 ] Andrew Murray wrote those over 100 years ago. But it just speaks the plan, the purpose of God for his people.

Now, the thing about a plan, it's only as good as your ability to make it happen.

We all make plans. We do it all the time. But here's the thing, there are stuff that happens that upsets our plans.

happens every day. We get sick, we get stuck in traffic, there's bad weather, we break down, there's a tragedy that impacts on our life.

But here's the thing about God, God never has his plans upset. Because God's in control of his plans. God never sits in a chair in the corner wringing his hands, wondering what he's going to do because of the actions of a government or the outbreak of disease or a traffic jam.

[ 33 : 26 ] He sees all, he knows all, and has all power, then he never gets caught out. Every day, we step into the unknown.

Life can sometimes feel a bit like a game of chance. Random coincidence. But one of the things we can see so clearly in our passage is that God is a God who is at work in the detail.

There's no such thing as chance. There's no such thing as mere coincidence. Right from the very tribe that Moses is going to be born into, right down to the fact that the princess took pity on him.

even that was not left to chance. Proverbs 21 says this, the king's heart, we could easily say the pharaoh's daughter's heart, is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord.

He turns it wherever he wills. The very heart of people is not even left to chance. even the force of evil cannot thwart God's plan.

[ 34 : 48 ] You know, the people of Israel as they stared across the river into Canaan, they might have looked at the Canaanites, they've seen their might, their evil, and they might have been terrified.

But God is not terrified of evil. God in his divine sovereign power and providence is able to take evil and intentionally use it for good, to bring about his plan of rescue and redemption.

It was an evil thing for Pharaoh to demand that boys would be thrown in the river. What's the outcome? Moses, who will destroy or be used by God to destroy Pharaoh.

God is a God who executes his plan of rescue and redemption. Because, thirdly, we're going to see God is a rescuer.

the multitude sing in Revelation, salvation belongs to our God.

[ 36 : 12 ] Listen to what they say after this, Revelation 7, I looked and behold a great multitude that no one could number from every nation, from all tribes and people and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands and crying out with a loud voice, salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and onto the Lamb.

Genesis to Malachi, the Old Testament, is the unfolding of the plan of God to bring about rescue. There is just a thread, it runs right the whole way from when Adam and Eve fail and fall the whole way to the beginning of, end of Malachi or the beginning of Matthew, it is a thread of rescue.

It is a thread of salvation. And the ultimate rescue of God is, as we see, is rescue from impossible situations.

Situations that we are in ourselves powerless to save ourselves from. We cannot save ourselves from our sin, we cannot save ourselves from death, but God is the one who can.

We see it in the story, Moses is brought through death, being placed in the river as death, death. And then he is lifted up out of the rivers where his name comes from.

[ 37 : 45 ] He is drawn out of the water. It is symbolic, it is our idea of baptism. We passing through the waters is symbolic of passing through death and coming in to new life.

In Exodus, it is a little signpost for us. It is going to be repeated again when the Israelites pass through the Red Sea. And then later again they are going to pass through the River Jordan.

It is how God rescues. And in our story, Moses is God's chosen instrument of salvation and rescue for some people at a certain time in history.

But know this, Moses cannot rescue me or you because Moses is dead. He is in glory. But again, Moses is also one who points.



Moses' life points to the one who can rescue us. The one who fulfills the plan of God. The one who died, who entered the grave but did not stay there but was raised on the third day conquering death and evil.

[ 39 : 01 ] He is Jesus Christ. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and it is to Him that we look for salvation because He alone can rescue us and save us.

And it's in Him that we pass through death into life to receive new life.

It's His plan, His plan for this church and for His people is certain. He will bring it about.

So to those who are called by God who know His salvation, who love His Son, have faith. Do not fear.

God sees your circumstances. He knows your troubles. But know this, your life is secure.

[ 40 : 10 ] You are as secure in His invisible hand as Moses was in that basket, in that ark. You are living in a place of refuge because you are in the hands of God.

Let me pray for us. Father, we turn to You as our source of salvation.

Through Jesus Christ, Your Son, You have brought about rescue. You. You have saved us from death and from evil.

You've saved us from ourselves. And we thank You, Lord, that You have a perfect plan. Would You give us the faith, the faith to see, the faith to step out into the unknown, trusting in Your goodness, for us.

Help us not to fear, but to know the peace and the security which comes from being in Your hands. We ask this in Jesus' name.

[ 41 : 34 ] Amen.