

My God is Mighty to Save - Exodus 3

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[0 : 0 0] because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the home of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and Jebusites.

And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.

But Moses said to God, Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt? And God said, I will be with you, and this will be a sign to you that it is I who have sent you.

When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain. Moses said to God, Suppose I go to the Israelites and they say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, What is his name?

Then what shall I tell them? God said to Moses, I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites.

[1 : 2 5] I am has sent me to you. God also said to Moses, Say to the Israelites, The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has sent me to you.

This is my name forever. The name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation. Go, assemble the elders of Israel, and say to them, The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob appeared to me and said, I have watched over you, and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt.

And I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt, into the land of the Canaanites, the Hivites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.

The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt and say to him, The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has sent, has met with us.

Let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the Lord our God. But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him.

[2 : 4 5] So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go.

And I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed towards his people, so that when you leave, you will not go empty-handed. Every woman is to ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which you will put on your sons and daughters, and so you will plunder the Egyptians.

Jonathan. Jonathan. Thank you.

Let's just bow ahead and pray just as we come to God's word. Father, we do thank you for your word, for that living and active word. I pray indeed as we hear the words from Scripture that indeed our hearts will be changed, that our desire will be to know you more, to live out our lives in service to you.

Help us, Lord, to concentrate, to focus on you, and to be enthralled once again at how mighty, and what a great God you are. Amen. I'd like to ask you a question.

[4 : 08] Do you like rescue stories? You do? You might remember a number of years ago, there was these miners in Chile got caught in a mine deep underground.

Do you remember that? There was 33 men were stuck over 2,000 feet down, and for a few days, nobody even knew they were alive.

Once they knew they were alive, people made huge efforts to save them. In fact, for nearly 70 days, they made efforts.

They were sending down food and water, coming up with ways to save them. By the 69th day, when the first miners were coming up from the ground, one billion people, it was estimated, were watching it live.

So if you can imagine that, all these people all around the world, with all that was going on in their lives, were tuning in to see 33 people in a small part of Chile being raised to the ground.

[5 : 12] Why were people so interested in that? Why was it the focus of so many conversations, the focus of so many news reports? Is it because we like to see people rescued?

We don't want people to suffer. After all, these were real men who were down underground in a desperate situation, couldn't save themselves.

Maybe that's why we were so interested in them. Our movies. We do like rescue movies as well, don't we? Movies like Spartacus or Braveheart.

And often in these movies, there's a hero. And we like heroes, don't we? We want to know what the hero is like. If we think of Braveheart, you think of William Wallace. He was raised up to try to save, to rescue his people, the Scottish people, from being under the British.

And he said to them, Scotland needs to be free. And people were excited about that. But William Wallace, who was he? After all, is he going to be able to help them?

[6 : 15] Because if it's going to be a rescue, and there's going to be a hero to do the rescue, we actually want to know what they're like, don't we? Because a hero needs to be able to complete what he's doing.

There's no point in giving false hope to somebody if he's not going to be able to do it. In our reading this morning, it's from Exodus chapter 3, and we're going to see a great rescue.

Now, if we're familiar with Exodus, different things will come to our minds. For example, we might think of the Ten Commandments, or we might think of the plagues in Egypt, or we might think of Moses in a basket, going back to perhaps if you've heard the stories or seen pictures in Sunday school or something of the Moses in a basket, and being saved.

Well, if you have your Bibles open, turn back to chapter 1 of Exodus. Our passage is right at the start of Exodus, and we see the context for our passage. chapter 1, it speaks of the sons of Israel who went from their land of Canaan down into Egypt.

And when they arrived, they started to have children and more children and children until the generations passed. And for a long time, everything went well. Look at verse 7 of chapter 1.

[7 : 35] But the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous. They were prospering. But in their prospering, they came to notice of the king.

Look at verse 9. Look, the king said, the Israelites have become too numerous for us. Come, we must deal with them shrewdly or they will become even more numerous.

And here was the main worry he had. And if war breaks out, they will join our enemies, fight against us, and leave the country. So he came up with a solution. I'll make them slaves.

And that's exactly what he did. Look down in verse 11. He put slave masters over them. Verse 12. He oppressed them and he treated them ruthlessly.

In verse 14, it tells us that their lives were bitter and they had hard labor. They weren't very happy about this, were they? How could this actually happen?

[8 : 36] Because back in Genesis, we're told when Israel and all his sons came down into Egypt, the king actually welcomed them. This was good. This was a good thing to happen. Yet, all these years later, they were being treated as slaves.

And if that wasn't bad enough, look at verse 22. Because the slavery wasn't working and the Israelites were still growing in number, Pharaoh had another idea.

And this time he said, let's kill every boy that is born and throw them into the Nile. This was going to be a solution to the growing number of the Israelites.

Now, if this happened nowadays, there'd be an international outcry. We'd hear about it on the UN. It'd be all over social media. There might even be military intervention from a neighboring country.

But for the Israelites, they were stuck. They were in their slavery. There was nothing they could do except groan out and cry.

[9 : 38] Look at verse 23 of chapter 2. It says, the Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out because they were powerless.

There was absolutely no one was going to help them. All they could do was cry and groan. Now, just pause for a moment. You've got these people in Egypt. They were slaves.

They were no power, no freedom. They were fearing for their children. They basically had no life. They were in a desperate situation. We see something like that even in modern days when we see the migrants trying to flee North Africa, trying to get to Europe.

They were desperate. They couldn't do anything themselves. They were hopping on boats to go across. In one interview, one man was interviewed and he said, I didn't know whether I was going to live or die.

And I wondered how the Israelites felt. After all, they didn't know whether they were going to live or die. I mean, did no one care about their circumstances? Now, bear in mind, these are the children of Israel.

[10 : 47] I wonder, did it come to their mind, where was God in all this? Here they were, slaves, powerless, they couldn't do anything. Is it right to ask, where is God? Why isn't God doing anything about this?

After all, was a promise not made to their forefather Abraham? Do you remember back in Genesis, in Genesis chapter 12 and 17, God made promises to Abraham.

He said, I will bless you. You will be the father of many nations. I will be your God and you will be my people. And not only that, but I'm going to give you this great land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

But what were they looking around at now? They were looking at half-built cities that they were supposed to be building or fields that they're supposed to work in that never seem to be finished. How could that happen? Had God forgotten them?

Had God broken his promise? Maybe God wasn't able to fulfill his promise. After all, he said, I'll bring you into this land, but they weren't there. Or maybe God had chosen someone else.

- [11 : 52] Maybe he'd chosen another people group in the world and said, I'll forget about these guys. I wonder if that goes through the minds of the Israelites. And so often for us, when we're going through different circumstances, we too might think these things.

Where is God? We might say it out loud, but do we often find ourselves in a situation where we're thinking, life isn't great at the moment. It had so much promise. I had ideas. I was going to do this, this, this, this, and it's working out badly.

And to actually ask ourselves, where is God in all this? Did God forget about us? I cry out. I don't need to hear anything. Is God concerned? Well, the Israelites were about to find out.

Look in our passage in verse 7, what God had to say about their crying out. Verse 7 of chapter 3, the Lord said, I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt.

I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers. And I am concerned about their suffering. Think about the words that were used.

- [13 : 02] The Lord says, I have seen them. So he's able to see what was going on in Egypt. But not only did he see it, but he also heard it. He knew exactly what was going on.

He could see the misery they were in, the hopeless situation. But at the end of the verse, it also says, I am concerned. In some verses it says, I knew God had full knowledge of what was going on in Egypt.

But not only that, he was willing to do something about it. Look at verse 8. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians.

Isn't that going to be wonderful news for the Israelites? They're now hearing that God not only hears their cries for help, not only does he see it, but he's actually going to come down and help them.

He was willing to associate with them, to identify himself with them by coming down. Isn't that an amazing thought that the God of all creation was willing to come down and rescue his people?

- [14 : 06] We sing a popular song, My God is Mighty to Save, and the Israelites were about to find out the truth of that song. Now, God could have saved the Israelites by himself.

Couldn't he? He literally could have just opened up the gates of Israel, let all the people pass through, and go up to the land. But he didn't. He had a certain plan of action.

Look at verse 1, when we're introduced to Moses. Now, Moses was going about his normal, everyday business as a shepherd. And he sees a burning bush, and this is probably a story that's very familiar to us.

And being curious, as any of us was, he went over to it. And God calls out to him. He says in verse 4, Moses, Moses.

And Moses replies, Here I am. And then God identifies himself. He says in verse 6, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

- [15 : 18] At this, Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God. God was identifying himself to Moses. He was saying, I am the God of your father.

He was linking Moses with his family back in Egypt. But not only that, he was also the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, linking back to the entire people of Israel.

And God had something very important to say to Moses. Look down in verse 10. So now go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.

Moses was about to become the mediator between God and man. Now to say Moses didn't jump at the idea of being a mediator would be an understatement.

Look at verse 11. But God said, but Moses said to God, who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out? Moses was immediately looking at himself and saying, I'm not going to be able to do this.

[16 : 25] Now, God doesn't say, oh actually Moses, you're the perfect man to do this. You're qualified. You're going to be able. Look at what God says to him in verse 12.

He says, I will be with you. Because that's what Moses needed to go and rescue the people. The fact that God was with him. Now, this actually wasn't good enough for Moses.

And he had another question. Look down in verse 13. Moses said to God, suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, the God of your fathers has sent me to you and they ask me, what is his name?

And then what shall I tell them? For whatever reason, Moses wanted to know what God's name was so that he could have authority in going to the Israelites. And the next two verses reveal something about God that was never revealed before.

And we learn something about the nature and character of God. Reading from verse 14. God said to Moses, I am who I am.

[17 : 38] This is what you are to say to the Israelites. I am has sent me to you. Verse 15. God also said to Moses, say to the Israelites, the Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob has sent me to you.

This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation. God was giving a name to Moses that hadn't been given before.

We know that because later on in chapter 6, God says, this is something I've never told them before. And what is God's name? Well, it's a little confusing when we read it first.

Look at verse 14 again. He says, I am who I am. I mean, what does that mean? At the end of verse 14, he says, I am has sent you. And then in verse 15, look at the word in caps, in capitals, the Lord, which he's calling himself the God of your fathers.

What is God actually saying here? Is he using the word I am and the word Lord interchangeably? In other words, he's saying, I am the same as Lord.

[18 : 54] Well, first looking at the word Lord. If you ever see in your Bible the word Lord in capitals, L-O-R-D, the Hebrew word has only four letters in it.

You might be familiar with it. Y-H-W-H and we pronounce that word Yahweh. So, God was giving a name to Moses that he hadn't given before.

Lord, or Yahweh. It was his personal name or if you'd like, his covenant name. But he's also calling himself I am. Well, what's the connection? Well, the root word for both is the verb to be.

So, what God was saying was I am. I simply exist. Now, pause for a moment to think, what does that mean? If God says, I am, I just am.

It's a very strange thing to say, but think about what it actually means. If something is just is, it's just there. There's no beginning and there's no end.

[19 : 58] So, what we could say is that God is revealing something about himself that we can understand to be to be an exciting illustration of what God is like.

We might say God exists. That might seem obvious. We know God exists. What he's saying is I never didn't exist. So often we can live our lives as if God doesn't exist.

Well, how are the Israelites going to hear that? Here they are in their slavery. Nobody seems to be listening to them and all of a sudden Moses is going to come and say to them, I am. In other words, I exist.

Isn't that going to be exciting for them after all? Here they are. They had no hope in their lives and God was going to tell them, well, actually, I exist. So, if there was a time, no time that God didn't exist, then God is more powerful than anything or anywhere else because if God always existed, then nobody created him.

There was no power or authority that was bigger than him. In fact, God wasn't influenced or reliant on anyone. He was totally sovereign.

[21 : 14] So when the Israelites are hearing that God is coming to save them, they can be assured of this, that there was no one greater than him. There was no one God was reliant on.

there was no one that was going to tell God what to do. In fact, if God always existed and he just is, he also doesn't change.

So when God was going to tell the Israelites that I am has sent you, what he was saying was also, I'm not going to change. I am a God of love.

I will always be a God of love. I am a faithful God. I will always be a faithful God. When I made you a promise, when I made a promise to Abraham, I'm going to keep that promise.

So, what's in a name? Well, tied up in God's name, the Lord, is that he's an active God. He's an ever-present God.

[22 : 15] He's not going to change. We're not going to be surprised. He's not going to do anything out of character. And no matter what place or what time or what circumstances, any of us are in, God is always going to be there.

So, we ask ourselves, is God going to be able to save the rest of the people of Israel? After all, we always want to know, if someone's going to save us, are they going to be able?

Well, God was just about to tell the Israelites, there was no one else able. I am able. I am mighty to save. So, if he's established that God is going to be able to save the Israelites, how did the rescue work itself out?

Look over at verse 16. God was going to reveal his rescue plan to Moses, and in a sense, it was actually quite simple.

He'd already told Moses to go, and in verse 16, he now tells him to go again. But this time, he was going to go to the elders of the Israelites, those who were leading Israel, and he was going to tell them the good news that God himself was going to do the rescue.

[23 : 29] Verse 16, go assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, the Lord, the God of your fathers, appeared to me and said, I have watched over you and have seen what has been done in Egypt.

No doubt they're going to be very excited at that, and even more excited from verse 17, and I have promised to bring you up out of the land of your misery into the land of the Canaanites and all these other people groups, a land flowing with milk and honey.

So Moses was going to go to the elders, tell them the good news is coming, and then, in verse 18, they were all going to go to Pharaoh and say, we're going to take a journey out into the desert.

But God in his providence tells Moses something. He tells in verse 19 that Pharaoh isn't going to like the idea in fact, he's going to say no.

Now, that's actually not very helpful, really, if you're about to be told God's going to rescue and then say, well, actually, Pharaoh's not going to go along with the plan. But God was going to do something amazing in Egypt.

[24 : 34] In verse 20, we see that God was going to bring judgment on Egypt. You see, the Egyptians hadn't treated God's people well, and there was going to have to be a price to pay for that.

And God was going to bring judgment, and they were going to pay for what they've done. Look down in the end of verse 20.

After that, he will let you go. And surely that's what the Israelites wanted to hear, that they can now go. But when you're being rescued, you don't want to be just rescued out of your own situation, you want to be rescued to something.

Look at verse 17 again. The Israelites are going to hear this great news that not only are they going to be taken out of the misery of Egypt, but into a land that is flowing with milk and honey.

And this rescue of the Israelites is something that was going to be remembered for generations to generation. If you think of even the passage that Ralph was reading earlier in Exodus chapter 15, there were songs written about these rescues.

[25 : 44] We see it in the Psalms, in Psalms 77, 78. We know it in the Passover. It's remembered that God had rescued his people. But we also see it in the New Testament.

If you ever read Acts chapter 7 about the stoning of Stephen, Stephen refers to this rescue from Egypt by God. We also see it in Hebrews chapter 11, that great chapter of faith.

the writer speaks of being saved out of that exodus. But this rescue, it's been remembered for generations to generations.

But do we see something greater than that? You know, if we're watching a movie and we really like it and they bring out a sequel, we often want to go and see the sequel, but it's never as good as the original.

But in this rescue that we're reading about here, we see that there's actually an even greater rescue. Think of the similarities that we have read in our passage just now.

[26 : 53] You see, a lot of what we read in the Old Testament finds its fulfillment in the New. There's so many people and events that we read about and it's like a shadow.

We see something greater in the New Testament and this rescue is one of those great events. Think of the position of the Israelites.

They were in slavery and there was nothing they could do about it. Now, we don't have slave bastards over us. We're not forced to do things we don't want to do.

Not all the time anyway. But are we still not in slavery? Think of the words of Jesus. In chapter 8, verse 34, he said, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

That's everyone. Now, you might say to yourself, well, that doesn't include me because I don't sin. But Paul wrote in Romans chapter 3, verse 23, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

[27 : 58] So, in effect, all of us were once slaves to sin. Just like the Israelites, we were slaves. and like the Israelites, there is nothing we can do in it.

We're powerless in ourselves to save ourselves. Think also of the mediator. God chose Moses to be a mediator.

Somebody to come between God and the people. But is there not a greater mediator that came? In 1 Timothy chapter 2, Jesus is referred to as a mediator.

it says there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. Moses, he was faithful as a servant in bringing the people out of Israel.

But Jesus, it speaks in Hebrews, he was faithful as a son because Jesus is greater than Moses and we needed a mediator because there was nothing we could do.

[29 : 03] you might recall we spoke about God coming down to rescue the Israelites. What an amazing thought that is. In the powerlessness of the Israelites, God came down.

Aren't there wonderful verses in the New Testament that speak of Jesus coming down to rescue us from our sins? Think of Romans chapter 5, verse 6. It says, you see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

That's all of us. There was nothing we could do. God came down to rescue the Israelites. And we see it in the New Testament, Jesus coming down to rescue us.

Turn back, if you will, to verse 12 of Exodus. Exodus. When Moses asked his very first question and God said, I will be with you, he also said something else, something very interesting.

He said, and this will be the sign to you that I, who have sent you, when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.

[30 : 18] So as soon as they came out of Egypt, they were going to gather together on the mountain and worship God. And that was fulfilled on Mount Sinai when they all came together and worshipped.

A little earlier, Ralph referred to it, there's going to be a time for us as believers in Christ when we too are going to be finally rescued, when we're going to be in eternity with God, when we will gather together and worship.

Let me read these verses from Revelation chapter 7, which Ralph mentioned. And we also, you might recall as we read it, that we also sang in one of our songs. In verse 9 of chapter 7 of Revelation, it is written, After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb.

they were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands, and they cried out in a loud voice, salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

There was no one else that could save the Israelites, and there was no one else could save us. Salvation belongs to our God, and that will be for us, we can look forward to that, that one day we will, as believers, we will be together to worship the Lord.

[31 : 52] But what about sin? What about sin we've just said, that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God? Think back on the judgment that God brought on the Egyptians.

He said to them that he would stretch out his hand and strike them because of what they had done. But for us, we don't have to pay that penalty for our sin.

Listen to these words from 1 Peter 24. He himself bore our sins on the cross. You see, for us, there was a penalty to pay as well, but we, unlike the Egyptians, didn't have to pay it.

It was Christ who paid for that penalty. But there's one other thing that we can learn from this rescue, and that's a further revelation of God.

We have seen how God was revealing his name, the covenant name, I am. Does that sound familiar to you? Have you heard the words I am from the New Testament?

[33 : 04] in John chapter 8, Jesus himself used that phrase. In chapter 8, verse 58, Jesus said, I tell you the truth.

Jesus answered, before Abraham was born, I am. Jesus was using the very name of God for himself.

blasphemy. Now, if that was a mere man did that, he would have deserved to be accused of blasphemy. But Jesus said, I tell you the truth, because this was the truth.

And if we think, oh well, maybe that wasn't what Jesus was saying, well, the people at that time certainly understood what he was saying, because the following verse says, at this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself.

They knew exactly what Jesus was doing, because Jesus was identifying, making himself equal to God. And now we have a wonderful opportunity to know more about God through Jesus.

- [34 : 15] Jesus said in John chapter 14, that anyone who has seen him has seen the Father. And Hebrews, wonderful words in Hebrews chapter 1, they say that Jesus is the radiance of God's glory, and the exact representation of his being.

We now have the benefit of having further revelation of God in Jesus. So, what can we learn from this?

After all, we've concluded that God is able to save. But you know, as believers, we can go through difficult times we can go through struggles, we can get tired, and there can be times, if we're honest, that we feel God isn't there, or he's not listening to us.

So what can we do? Well, we can reflect on God's character. We can learn from this passage about the uniqueness of God, the fact that there's no one greater than God, and the fact that he is able to save.

We can reflect on the fact that he keeps his promises. We have his continuous presence, because we can lose sight of God, but we can pick up God's word and meditate on various passages that speak of God.

- [35 : 38] Think of passages such as Isaiah chapter 40, or Colossians chapter 1, that speak of the supremacy of Christ. When Moses met with God and God spoke, his reaction was to hide his face.

he was in awe of God. Do we sometimes lose that sense of awe of God? When we read God's word and we realize how great God is, we can relive that sense of awe, because God is so much more wonderful, and when we think we might have him sussed, well, we don't, because God is far greater than we can even ever imagine.

rest in God. Do you know when we get up tomorrow morning as a believer, we don't have to think about how can we please God today such that he'll make sure he saves us.

We don't have to worry, well, what if I do something today and I don't end up being among that great throng in Revelation. When Jesus died on the cross, he said, it is finished.

We cannot add to our salvation. We can rest in that. But in that resting in Jesus, we can also find refreshment.

- [36 : 56] Think of these words in Isaiah chapter 40. Let me read them out. Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, my way is hidden from the Lord?

My cause is disregarded by my God. But look at what Isaiah says. He says, do you not know, have you not heard, the Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.

We can rest in that God. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. In verse 29, it reads, he gives strength to the weary, because we do get weary.

And increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall. But listen to this, but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strengths.

And when we rest in God, we can renew our strength. They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not be faint. And finally, we can rely on God.

- [38 : 08] We've just read that about resting in God. We can totally rely on him for our salvation.

And when he makes promises to us, he will fulfill them. So when he promises that our sin is forgiven, it's forgiven. And when he promises that we will spend eternity with him, we will do that, because we can, he is totally trustworthy.

So is God a mighty God? Is he mighty to save? The Israelites could say yes, and we too can say yes. Let's just bow our heads and pray.

Amen. Father, thank you indeed that you are mighty to save.

I thank you that, as we read, when you saw the Israelites, you saw, you heard, and you were concerned. But you also came down.

[39 : 06] And I thank you that we can see that as a picture of what Jesus did for us in coming down to take our sin upon himself. Unlike the Egyptians, we didn't have to pay for the penalty for our sin, but it was all paid in Jesus.

I thank you that in Jesus we see and learn more about you, Father. I thank you for the great truths of your word that point us to the promise of eternity with you, and that as believers we can look forward to spending eternity with you in worship and in praise.

Salvation belongs to our God. Amen. We're going to sing