

God Heard, God Remembered, God Saw and God Knew

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Date: 24 January 2021

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- [0 : 00] A few months ago at a meeting of Edinburgh Presbytery, the moderator of Presbytery read this very passage before the start of business.
- In the words of our text that he read there, he certainly moved me greatly. He spoke to me as I pray that they're speaking to each one of you who are worshipping this morning, because these are words for our time.
- Even those are words for all time. These are the words that God gives to bring hope to the despondent, to bring encouragement to you who are struggling.
- These are words that are given and spoken to you who are in the depths. These are words that are the antidote to despair, because God hears, God remembers, God sees, and God knows.
- Whether it's in relation to the ongoing pandemic, whether it's in relation to some particular personal matter that's known between you and to God, whether it's in relation to particular burdens that you're bearing that might appear just overwhelming, it's for you to be assured.
- [1 : 19] You who know the Lord, be assured that God hears, God remembers, God sees, and God knows. So come to him with your cries for help, for mercy, for grace.
- Come to him with your cry for his favor to be upon you. As we cry not just for yourselves as individuals, but as we cry for God's church, for this land, for this world, and we cry, and a delayed coming before God, we cry to him now.
- And you know, when we consider the context in which these words were written, the context of the weight of the burden of the Israelites in Egypt, then I pray that as we look at the context, and then as we look at the words that were said, that we realize that there are challenges and there are warnings, even in this passage.
- But above all, above these warnings and encouragements, we see the one true God, God who's with us, God who pities his people, God who remembers his covenant of faithfulness towards his people, and God who cares for you, who are in him, you whom he first loved in Christ our Savior.
- And it's very much the theme that we're seeing here in this section of Exodus 2. Because as we read there, there's no doubt that the Israelites in Egypt had been so slow to come before God during their time of trouble.
- [3 : 01] They'd endured so much under various pharaohs. And then as we're told, when one particular pharaoh died, by implication, another pharaoh came upon the throne and continued the cruelty against the Lord's people.
- But it took the people time. They'd been inactive in crying out before God. But though the people were inactive, God wasn't inactive.
- God had raised a deliverer amongst his people, and that deliverer in the fullness of time would be sent by God to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Of course, that deliverer was Moses. But in Moses, there'd be much to learn. Much to learn, much to be matured, and to be that leader of God's people.

Certainly, as an adopted Egyptian, he'd been trained in the skills of leadership. Just as a young child, he'd been trained in the ways of God, in the Word of God.

[4 : 07] He remained an Israelite at heart, even though by his appearance he would look, and he did look, as an Egyptian. But in these early years of his life, Moses had been given that foundation.

He'd been given that foundation that he never lost sight of. And it's a principle that we pray continues, even as we read in Proverbs 22, 6, Train up a child in the way he should go.

Even when he is old, he will not depart from it. But though he was of the Lord's people, though he had been trained as a young child in the ways of the Lord, He still lacked so much wisdom to be a leader of his people.

Yes, he's aware of the groans of his people. He's not insensitive to their hardships. But he lacks discernment. He lacks wisdom to deal with troubles when troubles arise.

As we read there, we're saying to the children, his rash killing of that Egyptian taskmaster, that wasn't advancing the Lord's cause in the Lord's way.

[5 : 16] He was acting on his own impulses. He wasn't seeking first the wisdom of God. And surely this is a timely reminder to all the challenges that the Lord's people face and continue to face.

When we have to respond to troubles and difficulties and setbacks and even to government laws that are contrary to God's law. Surely our first port of call has to be to God and his word.

As we seek to love him and our neighbor as ourselves. As we seek to honor the Lord Jesus. As we seek to follow him and deny ourselves. And take up our cross and follow him.

And certainly Moses, he would learn that true wisdom is found in waiting on the Lord. He'd realize, and we'd again realize, that rash, impulsive action discredits faith in the one true God.

God who hears and remembers. God who sees and God who knows. Moses had heard the groanings of his people and he'd acted rashly in response.

[6 : 29] But God had heard the groanings of his people. But God would act in all divine wisdom. He would rescue his people from their oppression. But what about the cries of the people that we render?

They're crying to God. The people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God.

For many, many generations since, Jacob and his family had moved to Egypt. Remember they'd escaped from the famine there. In their own land. Well, for many generations afterwards, the descendants of Jacob had suffered viciously.

The pharaohs had regarded them as an internal threat to their political stability. And pharaoh, remember, had tried to destroy the Egyptian people by infanticide and slavery.

But the people of Israel didn't disappear. God had ensured their survival. God had ensured their growth as a nation. But even as the burdens were imposed on them, as the burdens increased, there's no indication, as these burdens were being laid on the Israelites, there's no indication that the Israelites immediately called upon God for help.

[7 : 50] And it was only after many, many generations, that the Israelites did call upon God for help. But remember, these were the covenant people of God.

They hadn't cried out to the Lord, but they were groaning with them themselves. But as we read, they wouldn't remain in their inactivity, in their pain, in their agony, in their grief, in their hardship.

They do eventually cry out to God. They cry to Him to rescue them from their slavery. How slow they were.

And how slow we are to come before God. You know, it's a painful reality. It's a painful thing to mention even.

But it's a painful truth regarding the experience of so many of us, so many of God's people, that were so slow to come before God when troubles happen, when circumstances are desperate.

[8 : 54] When life is hard and instead of seeking first God, instead of coming before God, pleading before Him for His mercy and deliverance, we seek comfort in so many other things.

We seek comfort in the world. We seek comfort in politics. We seek comfort in money. We seek comfort in that which does not satisfy, does not bring lasting comfort, does not bring that peace God promises to all.

We call upon Him. You know, when Jesus calls you to come to Him when you labor and are heavy laden, do you come to Him?

Do you heed that call? Are you still ignoring that call? And seeking solace in that which doesn't satisfy? Because we're so prone to leave God, the Lord, out of circumstances.

The center. It's what we see there in the case of the Israelites in Egypt. They'd endured so many years of hardship, slavery under various pharaohs.

[10 : 03] And when a new pharaoh comes to the throne, and he doesn't ease the oppression of the Israelites, it's then that the people cry to God.

Yes, they've delayed in coming before God for help. And it's only at this late hour, as it were, that they call upon Him. Remember who they are calling upon.

They're calling upon their Lord and God. They're calling upon God, who in His grace was waiting for His people to turn to Him. Even as the same Lord, the same God, is waiting for you to turn to Him and to call upon Him for His mercy.

And yes, as we've already said, we can say it again. We have to confess that, whether it's as individuals or as a church, we dither so much in calling upon God for His mercy.

We have national days of prayer to help us. They're wonderful opportunities for the church to come together to call upon God for His help in times of trouble.

[11 : 08] even in our own current times of trouble. But how few these days are when surely we need the more to be proactive, each and every one of us, whether it be in corporate prayer, as well as in our own time of prayer with the Lord.

And it certainly appears that, as far as the Israelites were concerned, they did become together, collectively, active. And sincere in their crying to God, truly coming before God to help them, to deliver them.

That's a challenge to all of us, that we truly are sincere and are coming before God for His help. Yes, in times of trouble.

And we do, each and every one of us, have to ask ourselves, as you have to ask yourself, are you truly sincere when you cry out to God, when you cry out to Him for His mercy and for His help?

Because there's that real danger of pretended devotion. Many centuries after the Exodus, the verdict of God and His people, well, was clear.

[12 : 22] You read in Hosea 7.14, when God said, they do not cry to me from the heart, but they wail upon their beds. The people in Hosea's day, they certainly complied with the outward forms of religion, but it wasn't sincere.

It was sheer hypocrisy. And when you are crying out to God, pray and cry out with sincere, genuine hearts.

Truly worship Him. Truly, sincerely seek His face. Seek His power. Know that He is the Lord who heals His people. He's the Lord who heals all the troubles that we do face.

Pray that God will visit us in His mercy to heal our land, not just of the physical illness, but above all, the spiritual illness that we see in our land, that we see in our hearts.

Pray that God will visit His church to heal us of our divisions. Pray that God will heal your heart from the sinfulness of sin, as you call upon God, who hears the prayers of His people as He heard the cries of His people there in Egypt.

[13 : 37] But what of God's response? What of His response to the cries of His people? What did we read there?

We read these wonderful words. They may appear simple, but yet the words that are utterly powerful. And as Moses, many years later, had written these words down, recalling God's response to the cries of His people, and God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

God saw the people of Israel, and God knew. Let's just break this down a little and look at each of these responses of God. Responses, of course, that form the unity of God's response to His people's cries to Him.

God heard their groaning. You see, God isn't a God who shuts His ears to the cries of His people. He's not like the false god Baal.

Remember when the false prophets of Baal were engaged in that standoff with Elijah at Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal were crying out to Baal?

[14 : 52] Of course, Baal wouldn't hear them because there is no false god. There is no God. He's a false god of no substance. There were no ears to hear the cries of the false prophets.

But God is the one true God. And God hears His people. He hears you when you cry to Him for mercy, when you cry to Him and know that He is our very present help in times of trouble.

And so we have that assurance from God's Word to encourage each one of us, to encourage you to call upon Him for help, to call upon the one who hears.

And let's bring that assurance to your hearts. Peter, 1 Peter 3 verse 12, he knew that the reality of that truth of crying out to God who hears the cries of His people.

1 Peter 3 verse 12, the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are open to their prayer. Because we have a prayer hearing and a prayer answering God.

[16 : 07] And God calls you to call upon Him on a day of trouble and He will deliver you. Look at that in Psalm 50. You've got that absolute assurance from the Word of God that when you cry to Him, God hears.

And in God's own perfect timing, God answers. It's what David testified to that we read off in 2 Samuel 22. In my distress, I called upon the Lord.

To my God I called. From His temple, He heard my voice and my cry came to His ears. A few days ago on Thursday, in fact, Scripture Union had asked Christians in Scotland to pray for that organisation, to pray in the context of the challenges that SU is facing at this present time.

Various aspects of the current trouble is facing the organisation were highlighted. Individuals from SU having to be laid off, for example, because the work just isn't there for them.

Or school groups not able to function as normal in these present restrictions. But one of the passages of Scripture that was highlighted in SU's website in this call for the Lord's people to call upon Him in relation to the work of SU, one of the passages was actually from the psalm we're going to sing at the end of this service, from Psalm 28, where the cries of God's people are featured.

[17 : 42] Listen to these words. To you, O Lord, I call my rock. Be not deaf to me, lest if you be silent to me I become like those who go down to the pit.

Hear the voice of my pleas for mercy when I cry to you for help, when I lift up my hands towards your most holy sanctuary. I pray that these words, even these words from Psalm 28, that they'll give you that confidence to cry to the Lord, to cry to Him for help.

And know, as the psalmist knew, that God will not close His ears to the cries of His people who call upon Him in sincerity of heart.

You who truly are waiting on the Lord, you who are calling upon Him are covenant God. God who will have pity in His children because as God hears, God remembers.

It's that sense of His remembering that we want to look at now. We want to see God who is our faithful one, our faithful Lord. As we read there, God who remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

[18 : 54] God who remembered the promises that He made to these patriarchs that through their offspring, God would build a great nation. The nation that would settle in the promised land.

And it's that covenant, God, the covenant of faithfulness, that God would bring towards His people, that God would ensure that His people would be taken from slavery and brought into the land of security and safety, of prosperity and peace.

And let's never forget that the same God who remembered His people there in Egypt is the same God who remembers you.

He's our covenant-keeping God. He remembers you who are His in Christ. God's promised you deliverance from the slavery of sin and when you come to know Him, when you give your life to Him, when you surrender your life to the Savior who died for you.

So call upon Him. Yes, to remember you. Just as the psalmist cried out, remember me. Psalm 25, verse 7, according to your steadfast love, remember me for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.

[20 : 10] Even as the dying thief on the cross put upon Jesus and cried out to Jesus, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. So call upon the Lord Jesus.

Look to Him. Look to His face and cry out to remember me. And that sense of remembering, not just to think upon, but to think upon with a view to action.

Remember me. Remember us. Save us. Protect us from evil. Be glorified in the work that you've given your children to do. Remember us, Lord.

And you call upon the God who is faithful, who remembers you as He looks upon you with steadfast love. As we see there in the passage, God heard His people's cries.

He remembered His people. It's the covenant-keeping God. He remembered them in His faithfulness. What else do we see? We see that God saw. God saw the people and God knew.

[21 : 14] Now, of course, God had never stopped looking upon His people. He never stopped knowing their need. Just as God never stopped seeing you and knowing you. He's the all-seeing and all-seeing God.

But as we see here in the text, the passage, the emphasis is on God's active concern for His people. God was looking on His people in their misery.

And through God's knowing His people's suffering, God had that active concern for them. Just He has that active concern for your spiritual well-being, for all your needs.

He knows you. He knows your needs even before you ask. He knows you better than you know yourself. And that knowing, He cares. And again, as we've been reflecting so much on God's Word to encourage us this morning, it's the Psalms again that come to our aid as we remember God's goodness to His people in His knowing us, in His remembering us.

Psalm 103, 13-14. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear Him. For He knows our frame He remembers that we are dust.

[22 : 39] God isn't a God who's distant from you. God is near you. He's with you. By His Spirit, He's in you who are in Him, in Christ.

He is beside you, in you, with you. And so, this morning, as we've heard the cries again of the people of Israel, as they cried out to God, then, may it be that you're encouraged, you're given that encouragement to come before Him and to cry to Him for His mercy.

Yes, even in these turbulent times in our nation, in our world, even in our own lives, and have that assurance that God hears, that God remembers, God sees, and God knows.

Just as God heard and remembered and saw and knew the plight of His people there in Egypt. So, know this.

Know that He's the same God, the same God who doesn't close His ears or shut His eyes or hardens His heart or has no concern for you who are His.

[23 : 57] And so, with these words, I pray that you'll be encouraged by God's Word, that you'll rejoice to know that He doesn't forget you and rejoice to know that because He is yours and you are His, that you'll have that renewed hope in Him, that you'll have that renewed hope in God who remembered His children in their oppression as He remembers you who are a child of God.

Call upon Him. Cry to Him. Cry to God who hears and remembers and sees and knows. Amen.

Let us pray. Our Heavenly Father, we truly delight in Your Word. We truly rejoice that You speak to us and give Your people hope.

That may, Lord, all who are struggling at this time, all who are finding life difficult, challenging, all for whom these times are difficult, all who know that they are far from Your glory, we pray, Lord, that they will come to You, that they will lift up their eyes to You as they lift up their hearts to You, and that they will call upon You as You hear them, as You remember them, as You see them, and as You know them.

Lord, encourage Your people, we pray, and lift up those who as yet do not know You as Lord and Savior. May they truly come to know You as Lord and God, and may they know that You are the one who loves them, love them so much, that You heard the plight of Your people, You saw the need of those who were without a shepherd, and You sent Jesus in Your love.

[25 : 56] Hear us, Lord, as we continue in worship before You now, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. that We pray these things in Jesus' name of Him.

One hug, one hug.