

Exodus Overview

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[0 : 0 0] We're starting a new sermon series this morning in the book of Exodus. Why don't you turn there with me in the Pew Bible. It's page 45, or if you brought your own Bible, the book of Exodus.

Second book of the Old Testament. So if you're not quite familiar with the Bible, just start flipping and you'll find it soon. We're going to jump around the book a little bit this morning.

So it'll be helpful to have it open before you. This morning what we want to do as we start the series is give an overview of the whole book of Exodus. If you've ever had the window seat in an airplane, you know that there are some things that you can see and notice and appreciate at 10,000 feet up in the air that you can't quite see or notice or appreciate when you're down on the ground.

So hopefully this morning we'll get the big sense of this great book before we get down into the details in the coming weeks. Before we do that, let me just say a couple thoughts about why we're studying this book.

Exodus is probably one of the most foundational books in the whole Bible, really. You might say that the rest of Scripture is sort of just stamped and impressed with the themes of this book.

[1 : 1 1] So this morning if you're exploring Christianity, then I think this book will help you see really who God is according to the Bible and what Scripture, what Christianity really is all about.

I think one of the most spiritually fruitful things you could do is stick around for a few weeks or a few months and get to know some people and see what this book and see who this God is all about for yourself. If you're already a Christian, then I think this book will hopefully give you not just a deeper sense of the Old Testament, as foundational as it is to the story of the Old Testament or the whole Bible, but really a richer knowledge of God.

I hope what we'll see in the coming weeks is that the book of Exodus helps us to know God better. And ultimately help us to do that because the book of Exodus ultimately helps us to know Jesus better.

Jesus himself in many ways understood and spoke of himself as the fulfillment of what we are going to find here in the book of Exodus. In other words, when you get this book, when you really get it, when you see it, then the gospel, who Jesus is and what he's done, will probably start to light up for you and be brilliant and beautiful to you in ways that maybe you've never noticed before.

Now this morning we're going to take our 10,000 foot overview of the book of Exodus in three big steps. Because the book of Exodus itself sort of falls into three main parts.

[2 : 4 1] We always like that as preachers when things have three main parts. Helps our sermons have a nice little arc to them. But I think you'll see, I think you'll appreciate that that is definitely true of the book of Exodus.

There are three main moments, three main movements. Briefly, what we're going to see first is that God, who is God? Exodus shows us that God is the God who saves.

He rescues his people when they're helpless to do so themselves. And then second, what we're going to see is that God is the God who instructs. He reveals himself and his laws and his ways and he shows his people how to live flourishing lives and good lives.

And then third, we'll see that God is the God who dwells with us. God chooses to be present with his people in communion with them, dwelling in their midst. That's the big arc of where we're going. One pastor put it this way and I thought it was so good, I have to share it with you. He said, Exodus is about the God who saves, the God who speaks, and the God who stays. So let's look first then at the God who saves.

[3 : 4 5] We see this in chapters 1 through 18 of Exodus. That's the first big chunk. And this part of Exodus is probably the most familiar terrain in the book. The people of Israel oppressed in slavery under Pharaoh.

The calling of Moses at the burning bush. The ten plagues. The parting of the Red Sea. This is the stuff of Hollywood movies, chapters 1 through 18. Not always good Hollywood movies, but there you go.

But why don't we pick up with the opening paragraph. Exodus chapter 1 verses 1 through 7. And again, if you're kind of new to the Bible, the big numbers are the chapter numbers. The small numbers are the verse numbers.

So Exodus 1, 1 through 7. These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin.

Dan and Naphtali. Gad and Asher. All the descendants of Jacob were 70 persons. Joseph was already in Egypt. Then Joseph died. And all his brothers. And all that generation. But the people of Israel were fruitful.

[4 : 43] And increased greatly. They multiplied and grew exceedingly strong. So that the land was filled with them. Now, what we see here is that the story of Exodus picks up right where the book of Genesis left off.

In Genesis, God had promised to repair and rescue his broken and fallen creation somehow, somehow, through Abraham's family.

Through this single family, God's blessing, his favor, his grace, intimacy and relationship with him, righteousness before him. All of that would come to all people through this single family.

God promised Abraham that he would be a great nation. That he would give them the land of Canaan. And then somehow, somehow, all peoples would be blessed in his offspring. And what do we see here as Exodus begins?

Well, we see that this first part of that promise to Abraham is coming true. No. This nomadic family of 70 people has now multiplied and grown exceedingly strong, the book of Exodus says.

[5 : 48] Now, if you're familiar with the opening chapters of the Bible, you're probably catching an echo there, right? This is a definite echo of Genesis chapter 1. In creation, God blessed the man and the woman and told them what?

Be fruitful and multiply. And here in Exodus, like an act of new creation, in the midst of the old, God's people are fruitful and they're multiplying. Some of the language there even says that they're swarming, which is creation, which is Genesis 1 language.

As the life that God creates just starts to swarm and burst forth with life. And it seems that this creation mandate, the creation purpose of God is back on track with the people of Israel.

But then, Pharaoh enters the scene. And Pharaoh enslaves and oppresses the people. Which is not just an act of tyranny and cruelty, although it is certainly that.

But seen in the context of this story, what Pharaoh's doing is essentially opposing God. And opposing God's creative purposes. It's an anti-God, an anti-creation move on Pharaoh's part.

[6 : 55] And so as chapter 1 unfolds, the situation is bad. Very bad. God's people seem trapped. And God's plan to rescue the world seems on the brink of failure.

Right? The people are far from the land of promise. They face systematic extinction. Every male child, Pharaoh commands, throw him into the Nile.

Because then, the only ones who would be left would be women. And they would intermarry with the Egyptians. And the whole race would be obliterated in probably a generation or two or less.

But with that scene set, the story of Exodus shows us the God who saves. And first, we see that God saves with compassion.

Turn to Exodus chapter 2, verses 23 through 25. This will be a good paragraph to just sort of plant on as we cover this first main movement of the book. Exodus chapter 2, verses 23 through 25.

[7 : 55] Verse 23. During those many days, the king of Egypt died. And the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help.

Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. 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. God hears and God knows the suffering of his people. Their cry and their groan.

It's compassion. And God remembers his covenant, his binding oath to Abraham. And so it's as if Exodus is saying there is no chance that God is immune or aloof from the dire straits that his people are in.

And there's no chance of his plan being thwarted. God has bound himself to them. His steadfast love has been placed on them. And he's overflowing with compassion for them. He sees and he knows.

[9:02] So God saves with compassion. And then we see that God saves through judgment. Starting in chapter 3, God calls Moses, sends him to Pharaoh. And when Pharaoh refuses to let the people go, what happens?

God's judgment is poured out. We'll see in a few weeks when we get to chapter 7 through 12, the 10 plagues. And we'll see that these plagues are not just an act of judgment on Pharaoh. And they're not just an act of judgment on the Egyptian sort of deity structure. But they're a massive act of uncreation by the one true God.

It's almost as if the creator God of Genesis is now exercising his judgment in an act of decreation. God is the creator after all.

And when his creatures rebel against him, God is fully just to give them what they are asking for. The chaos and desolation and darkness of a world without a creator.

[10:07] Of creation undone. And one by one, the plagues intensify until in the tenth and final plague, death comes to all the firstborn sons in Egypt.

Do you remember the creation story? What was the pinnacle of the creation story? The creation of humanity. And now, what's the deepest darkness of uncreation? The death of humanity.

And it's very interesting, this last plague, unlike all the rest, it actually comes near to the people of Israel as well.

You see, up till now, in the plagues, God made a clear distinction between Israel and Egypt. When the hail fell on the Egyptians, it didn't fall on the Israelites. When the plagues came, Israel was safe. But now, in this last plague, it seems as if the plague is coming near. That they too are threatened by the destroyer. But God makes a way to save them through the judgment.

[11:06] He says, In the place of your firstborn sons, take a lamb and sacrifice it. And mark your doorposts with the blood. And when God sees the blood, he will pass over and let them live.

You see, the lamb functions as a substitute. In mercy, God lets his judgment fall on the lamb instead of on the son. And he saves his people through the judgment.

Last thing we see is that God saves in power. If you flip ahead to chapter 12 and 13, the Israelites depart from Egypt at last. They go out.

And then in chapter 14, they find themselves hemmed in. As they flee Egypt, they find themselves hemmed in. By the Red Sea on one side. And Pharaoh's armies chasing them on the other side. And what do they do? What is God going to do, they say? They cry out in fear. They start blaming Moses. What have you done? But then, just as God separated the waters in creation, God now, in a redemptive act of new creation, separates the waters of the Red Sea.

[12:27] And the people escape on dry land. In power. In power, God saves his people. And in power, God delivers them once and all. Once and for all from their enemies. The Israelites escape through the sea.

But as Pharaoh's armies go in, they drown as the waters fall back again. So this opening movement shows us a God who saves in compassion, in judgment, in power.

That is, God saves with perfect love, with perfect justice, and with perfect strength. So what about us today? Friends, do you believe in the God who saves?

You know, as I've been thinking about it, I've been thinking of what good news these opening chapters of Genesis are. On the one hand, we see that God saves us even when the wait seems long.

God saves us even when the wait seems long. Exodus 20:40 tells us that the people of Israel lived in Egypt for 430 years. 430 years!

[13:36] And most of that time was spent in slavery. But even though the wait seemed long, unbearably long, at the right time, God rescued them.

I wonder if you have a friend or a family member and you've been praying for their conversion for a long time.

And as the years go by, you start to doubt whether God really is a God who saves. Or maybe you're stuck in some besetting sin and you keep failing and falling again and again and again.

And you ask, is God really a God who saves? But Exodus is telling us this morning that even when the wait seems long, God with perfect love, perfect justice, perfect power is a God who saves.

I mean, think about this on a cultural level. You know, this weekend we're celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. weekend, right? On Monday, who stood up in the name of Christ and opposed injustice and racism in our country for the sake of the gospel.

[14:49] One of the great heroes of our faith in many ways. And yet still, we wrestle and we battle with these injustices and with slavery and with racism. And we think, oh, the wait is so long.

God, are you going to save? Are you going to rescue us? But, with perfect love, perfect justice, perfect power, God continues to be a God who saves even though we wait.

Friends, how much greater confidence can we have today than the Old Testament people had today in the fact that God saves? Even though the wait seems long. Think about it.

As the story of the Bible continues, the 400 years of slavery and Exodus are then matched at the end of the Old Testament by 400 years of silence. After the last prophet Malachi spoke of a coming deliverer, 400 years, the people waited and waited and waited.

But then at last, when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law to redeem those who were under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons.

[16:02] You see, the wait seemed unbearably long, but at last Jesus came and redeemed us.

Redeemed us. Redemption. That's Exodus language. So, friends, for us today, the greatest wait is actually over.

Our sins have been forgiven. God's Spirit has been poured out. God's Spirit has been poured out. Even when the wait seems long, God saves. We also see from this first part of Exodus that God saves even when the way seems impossible.

Even when the way seems impossible. After all, what chance, what chance did this oppressed group of refugees, the Israelites, have against the greatest empire of that day?

The Egyptians. What chance did they have when they stood facing the Red Sea? The way seemed impossible. Maybe you wonder the same.

[17:17] If God were to really take stock of your life, if he were to really judge you by your moral efforts, and how well you've loved him as your creator with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and how well you've loved your neighbor as yourself, how would you fare under that examination?

You know, if we took just the last few months of your life, if we took just the last few months of your life or my life, and we projected not just your deeds, but we projected your words and your thoughts sort of around the room in the place of these stained glass windows, sort of on a running loop so that everyone could see, that would be an uncomfortable experience to say the least.

You might doubt whether anyone in the room would look at you favorably if they saw all that. And the people viewing the tape would be flawed and infallible human beings just like you and just like me.

But now, friends, imagine standing before a holy God, your creator, the God of perfect love, justice, and power, with your whole life on view before him. And you think, how could he possibly view me with favor?

How could he possibly accept me, given how far short I've fallen, of loving him as he deserves, and loving my neighbor as myself? The way seems impossible.

[18:48] And yet, just when our way seems lost, God himself makes a way through the sea.

And when our lives seem lost, God himself provides a lamb, a substitute. Jesus comes and lives the life that we were supposed to live, and he dies the death that we deserve to die, so that if we believe in him, God's judgment might pass us over, and we might walk safely through the sea, on the solid ground of Christ's own moral record, and not our own.

You see, friends, God saves, even when the way seems impossible. But the book of Exodus doesn't end there. God saves his people from slavery and death, in chapters 1 through 18.

But what does God save them for? In chapters 19 through 24, we see that God is not just the God who saves, but the God who instructs.

God speaks to his people at Mount Sinai. He makes a covenant with them. He gives them his law, his Torah, his instruction, the core of which are the Ten Commandments in chapter 20.

[20:05] And in so doing, God makes them a nation. He makes them a people with a purpose. Look at Exodus chapter 19, starting in verse 4. This will be the sort of paragraph that we kind of camp on in this second big section of Exodus.

Exodus 19, verse 4. This is God speaking to the people through Moses.

God says, God calls them a kingdom of priests, a royal priesthood, the whole people.

They're meant to display God's glory to all the earth. Having been saved by God's love and justice and power, now in response to that saving grace, they're to embody a whole new way of being human.

And the way in which they're to order their life together to do that is according to God's own instruction. So friends, this morning, do you believe in the God who instructs?

[21 : 29] Do you believe in the God who speaks? At 10,000 feet, let me just highlight two things in this middle section of Exodus. And the first thing we see is that God instructs us for our good.

God instructs us for our good. He instructs us for our good because the heart of the moral law shows us how life works best. If God really is our loving creator after all, then certainly God must know how this human machine is meant to run.

Just like the software engineer knows best how the program she has spent years designing is meant to run. Now, to be sure, some of the rules and some of the regulations here in Exodus are intended for Old Testament Israel specifically as a nation.

In chapters 21 through 23, in particular, we have a big block of what's sometimes called case law. And these are particular laws that are meant to help Old Testament Israel regulate its national life together.

And today, as we kind of go back in the story and read those chapters, we have to read them in light of the whole storyline of the Bible. Now that Christ has come and established his new covenant church, these sorts of particular laws are no longer directly applicable to us because the fullness of God's salvation has come and the church is no longer a nation state.

[22 : 53] It's a multicultural, transnational, spiritual family united in Jesus. Now, however, what we're going to see, though, is that as we come to those chapters in detail, that even those case laws point us down into principles of God's loving and just character.

and then they can point to us out some directions for how God created us to live today. But more of that to come. What we really want to see this morning is that God instructs us for our good.

And if that's true, then we need not be afraid that if we heed God's voice, if we heed the way in which he's spoken to us through his word and follow his instructions, we need not worry that somehow we'll be missing out.

Sin, friends, is very deceptive. It always promises us life and joy and happiness and security. But sin is like a computer virus.

On the surface, it sort of pretends to be this fun little app optimizing your user experience while all the while it's sort of destroying your operating system from the inside out.

[24 : 11] Now, of course, some of God's instructions might seem a little counterintuitive at first. And they will certainly seem countercultural. After all, if God is the God of all creation, of all the universe, the transcendent God of everyone and everything, then every culture is going to find something in God's instructions that seem a little countercultural and a little more uncomfortable.

But they will seem counterintuitive at first. After all, God is God and we are fallen human beings. And yet, whether it's the command to worship only one God exclusively, or whether it's the command to have sex with only one person exclusively in the lifelong covenant of marriage, or whether it's the command to be radically just and generous to your neighbors, especially the sojourner or the widow or the fatherless or the immigrant, all of God's instructions are for our good. And because they're saving God's word for us, we need not be afraid that in following them we'll be missing out. In fact, just the opposite. This is how we live into our calling of being a royal priesthood, of presenting to the world the whole new way of being human, to reflect God's glory and God's character the way he created us to.

But God's law is for our good in a second sense. The law is for our good because it continues to reveal to us how much we need a savior. Now, it is very clear in the structure of Exodus that the giving of the law comes after the salvation from Egypt.

God doesn't give Israel the law, so that they might earn or merit his favor by keeping it. That was never the intent of the law. God rescues his people and accepts them by grace always.

[26 : 09] But as much as the law functions to show us how to live in light of God's grace, it also demonstrates how much we need God's grace. After all, no one keeps the law perfectly.

In fact, when Jesus came and he taught the law, he didn't minimize it. He actually pointed to its deepest implications. You shall not murder, Jesus said, one of those famous Ten Commandments. He said, that's really about your heart.

Do you hold anger, bitterness, prejudice, frustration against your brother or sister or neighbor? Do you curse them in your heart? Do you refuse to forgive?

If so, then you've fallen short of God's design. You've fallen short of God's glory. And you need not merely try harder.

You need to do more than just try harder. You need a redeemer. You need someone who's going to give you a new heart in place of your old heart and give you his spirit to battle your flesh, your sinful nature.

[27 : 18] You know, I think sometimes it would do us good as Christians to have seasons when we meditate on the Ten Commandments and think through some of their deeper implications for how we're meant to live.

You know, Jesus himself gave the example. Let's think about that command not to murder. Do you see how deep down it's a command not to hate, not to be bitter, not to be angry? You know, you might try taking an exposition of the Ten Commandments.

The Westminster Larger Catechism, something you can find very easily online, takes each of these Ten Commandments and just blows them out and shows all the ways in which they might have ramifications for our lives.

It might be good to take one of those and do some spiritual self-examination to kind of read through it slowly or prayerfully before God. And the point of that would not be to just wallow in guilt, but to see afresh how desperately we need a Savior, how lost we are without Christ, and then to come to a richer appreciation of how He has lavished His grace upon us.

In Him, in Christ, we have redemption through His blood, Ephesians 1-7 says. Note again that Exodus language, redemption. In Him, we have redemption through His blood.

[28 : 44] And what is that? The forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace which He lavished upon us. So friends, God instructs us for our good.

So God saves and God instructs, but there's one final movement, one final motion in Exodus. God dwells in our midst.

Chapters 25-40 of Exodus are taken up largely with the detailed instructions for and then the building of the tabernacle.

And you think, golly, that's a lot of chapters on how to just build a tent. Now, what was the tabernacle? The tabernacle was essentially a portable worship site that the Israelites could take down and set up as God led them through the wilderness.

But the important thing to see about this tabernacle. And one of the reasons why there's almost to us just an insane amount of detail for this thing, they're almost sort of enjoying the fact that they get to design and build and construct this tabernacle.

[30 : 00] Well, why? Why are they taking such, why does Exodus take such delight in this thing to spend so many chapters on it? Well, because that's the place where God promised to dwell in the midst of his people.

Let's look at Exodus chapter 29, verse 43. Exodus 29, verse 43. This will be our third kind of little set of verses to just camp on as we think about the big themes of Exodus.

Exodus 29, 43. Verse 43 says, There, there at the tabernacle, I will meet with the people of Israel and it shall be sanctified by my glory.

I will consecrate the tent of meeting in the altar. Aaron also and his sons I will consecrate to serve me as priest. I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God and they shall know that I am the Lord their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am the Lord their God. Friends, in the echoes of the minds of the ancient Israelites and the echoes of all of our minds is something that we've lost.

[31 : 23] Way back in the furthest reaches of the human story there was a garden and in that garden God dwelt in the midst of us and we had an intimate communion with him that was unceasing and unchanging.

And now here in this little tent in the middle of a dusty wilderness God says I'm reclaiming that space again and I'm going to dwell in the midst of my people.

The tabernacle was going to be the place where heaven touched down to earth where the infinite God condescended to dwell in the midst of the finite where God dwelt in the midst of his people. You see God didn't save them from slavery merely so they would just follow his instructions. He saved them from slavery so that he might live in constant communion with them so that they might

enjoy his presence and live in relationship with him.

It's hard for us to grasp how stunning that is. Friends, what we know from the whole Bible is that the triune God exists and will exist eternally in infinite fullness of joy without a single need at all for perfect happiness.

[32 : 50] And that God who doesn't need us one bit chooses to condescend and stoop to dwell in our midst how radically fascinating and thrilling is that?

And again, I want to just point out two applications of sorts of this tabernacle section of Exodus. I think we see at least two things at the big picture level.

First, God dwells with us no matter where we are. no matter where we are. Essentially, God is saying to Israel at this point, okay, you dwell in tents, I'll dwell in a tent.

And then when they're settled in the promised land, as the Old Testament story goes forward, he'll say, you dwell in houses, okay, I'll dwell in a house. And the temple in Jerusalem replaces the tabernacle.

You dwell in tents, I'll dwell in a tent with you. You dwell in a house, I'll dwell in a house with you, to be with you. But it doesn't even end there. In the New Testament, we see that God goes even further.

[34 : 03] In the Gospel of John, chapter 1, verse 14, he writes, and the word became flesh and dwelt among us, as if God said, you dwell in flesh, I'll dwell in flesh, to be with you.

And that word dwell in John is the same word for tabernacle in the Old Testament Greek version, as if God were saying the word became flesh and tabernacled among us.

When the word became flesh, when Jesus walked the earth, God literally dwelt in our midst. He was fulfilling what that tabernacle was all about. The tabernacle all along was pointing ahead to the day when God would really come and dwell in our midst.

And note how John goes on, if you're familiar with that passage, you don't need to turn there. He goes on and says this, he says, the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we've seen his glory. Glory as of the only son from the father, full of grace and truth.

You know, the end of the book of Exodus, the book of Exodus ends with God's glory filling the tabernacle. A glory so heavy, a glory so powerful, a glory so thick and weighty that Moses can't even enter the tent.

[35 : 23] That same glory would come down on the temple in Solomon's day and the same thing would happen as if God was saying, I'm here in your midst. And John says in the New Testament that the glory of God is found ultimately and finally in Jesus Christ.

And one day, Christ will return in glory and the glory of God will cover the earth like the waters cover the sea. And the book of Revelation says in the new creation, there's not going to be a tent or a temple because God will be there and we will be in his midst.

But you know, even now, even with Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father, as we await that great day, his presence has still not left us.

Jesus has sent his spirit to abide with us. And because we're united to Christ by faith and filled with his spirit, God now dwells in our midst no matter where we are.

And this all connects to that tabernacle and temple storyline of the Old Testament. Do you not know, Paul said to the church in 1 Corinthians, do you not know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's spirit lives in you?

[36 : 49] It's no longer a tent in the wilderness or a temple in Jerusalem. Those things are as obsolete now as an eight-track tape. And you're thinking, what's an eight-track tape?

Exactly! Because the risen Lord Jesus has ascended to the Father and poured out his spirit, no matter where the church gathers, no matter where the individual Christian finds herself or himself, there God dwells.

there is something more spiritually powerful and beautiful and amazing in a simple gathering of Christians than in the most elaborate temple in all the world.

Right there, God takes up intimate relationship with his people, with you, if you're in Christ. This is why the earliest Christians could sing hymns in prison cells.

This is why Christians could do something as counterintuitive as civil disobedience, because no matter where they were, nothing could separate them from the love of God, the presence of God, the intimate dwelling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, no matter where they were, God was there.

[38 : 22] Second thing to point out is this, God dwells with us not just no matter where we are, God dwells with us in full knowledge of who we are.

God dwells with us in full knowledge of who we are. You know, if you've been keeping track, you may have realized that there are two pretty big parts of Exodus that we haven't really highlighted yet. The grumbling in the wilderness of chapters 16 through 18 and the making of the golden calf in chapters 32 and 34.

Now, when you view the book as a whole, you notice that each of these episodes is preceded, comes right after, an incredible display of God's power and love. He parts the Red Sea.

He comes down in a blaze of smoke and lightning on Mount Sinai. And how do we respond? After seeing God split an ocean for us, we grumble that he's brought us into the wilderness to starve.

After seeing God's incomprehensible glory on Sinai, we erect a golden calf, an idol, and worship him how we please. And in full knowledge of our grumbling and our idolatry, when God would be right and just to abandon us to our own aching stomachs and our own false gods, when God ought to leave us, the end of Exodus says, God stays.

[40 : 00] When we blamed God for our hungry stomachs, and when we traded God for a false idol, and when we took God in our own hands and condemned him and beat him and crucified him and mocked him, still God stayed.

Even on the cross, God stayed. In love, God stays to bear away our sin, to create a holy people for himself, and to magnify the unspeakable glory of his grace.

God dwells with us in full knowledge of who we are. Let that sink into your hearts this week, brothers and sisters, as you go out into the world, and as you feel the shame of your failures and the dings and bruises and scrapes and scratches of trying to live for Christ in the world, yes, God dwells with you in full knowledge of who you are, and he stays.

And so that's Exodus. God saves, and he instructs, and he dwells in our midst. And as we've been seeing throughout, Exodus itself is an unfinished story.

The last word in our English translation of Exodus, anyway, is the word journeys, which means that there's still a lot of road ahead, right? But where does the story, where does the journey find its climax?

[41 : 33] It's not in the conquest of the land in the book of Joshua. It's not in the reign of David in 1 and 2 Samuel. It's not in the return from exile in the prophets. No, the climax goes even further to Jesus Christ, because he is the one who has saved us in compassion through the judgment of the cross and the power of his resurrection.

And he is the one who instructs us and dwells with us through his word and through his spirit. So if we want to see the glory of God, the glory of God of Exodus in its greatest detail, we look to the face of Jesus Christ.

Friends, where else can you find such a God? You know, perhaps you will find a religion or a God who instructs. Maybe that's your view of God.

God lays down laws and rules and spiritual principles to follow. But you know, at the end of the day, when you fall short of those instructions, or when the spiritual practices don't seem to satisfy, those kinds of gods rarely ever save.

Perhaps you have a God who dwells in your midst, who's present, who's there. But often that God is so nameless and so faceless and so general that you can't really have a relationship with it.

[43 : 01] It's more of a force to harness than a person to love. But look at Exodus, and through Exodus, look at Jesus Christ and see the God who saves and who instructs and who dwells.

And if you see him, worship him. And in worshiping him, trust him. And trusting him, love him and follow him.

Let's pray. Amen. Father, we thank you that at the heart of the scriptures, you reveal yourself as a God who saves.

Lord, you saved your people from the terrible tyranny of Pharaoh and slavery. And Father, wonder of wonders, you have rescued us from the slavery and the tyranny of sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh Lord, we pray that our hearts would be softened by your spirit to trust you and to love you and to follow you. Lord, especially this weekend as we think about celebrating tomorrow, we pray that you would make us a church that in all the ways in which those who've gone before us, like Dr. King, have stood up in the name of Christ to proclaim your liberty and to want to see that liberty lived in

our midst.

[44 : 43] Oh God, give us the courage to continue that legacy. Help us to be freedom people, that in the freedom of Christ, we would go out and really pray and speak in love for freedom.

We ask all this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, friends, after we place our faith in Jesus, then what?

One of the first things that Jesus tells us to do is to be baptized.

And that is what Abby Stevens and Fallon Lampert are going to come up to do today. Baptism is a sign of what Jesus has done for us, and it's a sign that we've been united to him through faith.

Jesus died and rose again. And through faith, our sins have been washed away in his death, and our new life has begun in resurrection. And so, baptism... And so, baptism... ..

... ..

[45 : 53]