

God Working in The Lives of His People

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[0 : 0 0] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Take your bibles and open them to a brand new book, Exodus. Exodus chapter 1 and Exodus chapter 2 tonight, in the next 25 minutes or so.

And we'll look at those two chapters. It's exciting. You get to watch the story of God unfold. He has, we have seen him call Abraham out in Genesis chapter 11, give him the promise in chapter 12.

We watched him build Abraham's family, build his faith. Then we watched Isaac get saved or get used, get called of God, and then Jacob. And now Joseph has gotten the family into Egypt because there was a famine.

And you're now in the book of Exodus. And what's going to happen in the book of Exodus is that they are going to become slaves. At first they move in and everything is good. And they're working there. They're living there because of Joseph.

They are treated well. Although they're put over in a special area for shepherds. And shepherds were looked down on and despised by them. And so they put them over to work with their sheep because they didn't have respect for the shepherds.

[1 : 0 6] They put them over there as shepherds working with the sheep. And the time goes by and Joseph has died. And anybody who knows Joseph and all that generation, they've all died.

And now we have here with us just the nation of Israel left. And the persecution begins. The fear. They're afraid of them.

They're multiplying. They're becoming... There's a lot of people in their family. They're growing every day. They're afraid of them. And so they begin to persecute them.

They bring problems on the people. They're causing them to suffer. They send them out doing slave labor. And they have them doing slave labor. They have them working hard. And you know the story about what happens.

And in chapter 2, I want to try to show you both chapters tonight. In chapter 2, God's going to call out His man who will be used to lead them out of the nation, out of captivity.

[2 : 0 1] And used to lead them out of Egypt. And so we're going to look at those two chapters. I don't have time to read the two chapters with you tonight. So we're going to have a word of prayer. We're going to jump right in. You will read a great deal of the chapters.

So let's have a word of prayer and ask God to help us to learn what we can apply to our lives out of these two chapters. Father, I love you. And I thank you so much for your word. I thank you for the opportunity to speak to your people.

I thank you, Lord, for what you're doing in our lives. Now take this Bible. Bring it to our lives. Help us. Help us to realize what you're doing. Help us to realize that we have to trust you in hard times. When things don't go right, we have to know that you're there and know that you're working in our lives.

And trust you to do the work that you will. We'll give you praise and honor and glory for all you do. In Jesus' precious name, amen. Now go with me to Genesis chapter 1. Now the people have started suffering.

Chapter 1, the people begin to suffer. The families there in Egypt, if you look at verse 5, only 70 of them came in because Joseph was already there. And everybody dies by verse 6 that knows Joseph.

[3 : 01] Joseph died and all his brothers and all that generation. And the country, the people of the Israelites started growing. Look at verse 7. You might underline that. We could have taken a long time on this, but they multiply there in the land.

It says they were fruitful. They increased abundantly. They multiplied. They waxed exceedingly, exceedingly mighty, and the land was filled with them. And in verse 8, they get a new king.

And that king doesn't know Joseph. That king doesn't know the family. Maybe it was a change of political parties. Maybe it was an invader king. But whatever happens, the king doesn't know Joseph, doesn't recognize any of the covenants or promises that had gone on between them.

And so in verse 11, he decides, look at your Bible, to afflict them. So he begins to bring in verse 11. He says, therefore, they set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens.

And they built cities, treasure cities for Pharaoh, the Pithom and Ramses. And it causes them to suffer. In verse 13, they're serving with rigor.

[4 : 04] They're making bricks. And they're preparing everything. Verses 15 and 16, they start killing their children. All the boys are going to be killed. They're going to put them to death when they're born.

And the midwives are going to end up lying and covering for them and watching over them. Look over me to verse 12, if you would. Even in horrible conditions, God took care of his people.

Look at verse 12. The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved. The nation of Egypt is grieved because of the children of Israel.

In verse 17, underline this, the midwives feared God. Something happened in those midwives' lives. And they decided that God was real and it was true. And they feared the God of Egypt.

But in verse 18 and 19, they lie and they protect all the male children. And God's good to them. God's good to those ladies. And he blesses them and he works in their lives.

[5 : 05] I want you to think in chapter 1 of just some applications that might be made for your life and my life out of Exodus chapter 1. 400 years. Many people certainly look to God to do something and get them back to the promised land that they heard about.

For the first part of that 400 years, I'm sure Joseph's family thought, we're getting out of here. The famine gets over. We're going back to our land. We're going back to where we came from. But it's going to be a total of 400 years.

You ever think about they probably got used to living in Egypt. They moved into Egypt. Maybe the first generation or the second generation or the third generation.

They weren't used to Egypt. They probably wanted out of Egypt. They probably wanted to go back home where they came from. But they've quit now. They aren't crying out to God. They're not looking to get back to their home.

They have become accustomed to this world. And they have forgotten the other. Most of the people in the story are living ordinary lives in the shadow of great promises.

[6 : 04] God has a land for them. God is going to do great things with them. But they're living ordinary lives. Egypt was getting a great opportunity, by the way, to see the God of heaven and his worship.

Do you have any idea? The nation of Israel is not really big on taking the gospel out. They're not really big in going out and witnessing to other people. But they're supposed to be living their faith. They have faith. They come from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

They come from Joseph. They are God's people. They know God. They know how to worship God. They know how to build altars to God. And they're living right in the middle of Egypt. They're living right in the middle of Egypt. So Egypt's getting a chance to hear the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Remember what it said in Genesis 12, 2. The Bible said in Genesis 12, 2, I will make of thee a great nation. I will bless thee and make your name great. But he said, and you shall be a blessing.

You shall be a blessing. You shall be a blessing. In chapter 18 and verse 18, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. That promise is repeated so many times in the Bible.

[7 : 04] Israel is going to be a blessing to the world. They knew they were to be a blessing. They worshiped one God. Egypt worships many gods. 400 years. Egypt's getting a witness from Egypt.

But I have some questions. And it's not answered by the Bible. But I think it's a pretty obvious answer. Pretty obvious questions. Did they share their faith? Did they share their faith? Did they tell people?

Did they show people? Did they live it out? Did they make a difference? Did they waste an opportunity? It seems that at least the midwives learned about God enough to fear him.

The midwives learned enough about God to fear him. Maybe while they were in the house. Maybe as they came in to kill the babies. Maybe they saw mothers of faith. Maybe they saw mothers that believed in God. Maybe they saw something different in their homes.

But they began to realize there was a God. And he was a real God. And they began to believe in him. As the persecution comes, the prayers begin to go up again.

[8 : 01] It's amazing how little we pray while things are going well. In Exodus chapter 1, until the trouble starts, no mention of prayer.

Until the things get bad, no mention of prayer. In times of quiet and relative prosperity, we must remember to share our faith and not take for granted what God has done in all our lives.

The great majority of us, if not all of us, are just normal people. 400 years now, normal people have just lived and died. And I'll be honest with you, everybody in this room, I'm pretty sure we're all just kind of normal.

There's probably not one Moses in this room. I know I'm not that level. But we're normal people. And we live in a world where we're waiting to get out of it. We're not Bible heroes.

We're not Bible heroes. We're not big shots. We're never going to have big ministries. And we're not going to be earth shakers. I don't see one of you that's going to invent the Apple computer. Or you haven't done it yet. Maybe you're fixing to.

[9 : 02] Or something that's going to make you rich and famous. But we're normal people. But normal people lived among the Egyptians for 400 years. And I'm afraid, if I have a lesson out of chapter 1, and I could say to us is, I wonder if you and I live among people and they have no idea that we're born again.

I wonder if we live among people and do regular, normal, everyday lives, and we never think about it. There will be a Moses come. There will be a time when a big earth-shaking thing happens.

And that's going to happen in the chapters that come. But in chapter 1, it's like everything's just kind of normal. They're growing. There's more of them every day. There's bunches of them.

Everybody knows about them. And I know a couple of midwives got saved. A couple of midwives, it seems, believed and feared God and were watched over by Him. And I thought as I read and studied the chapter, I thought about us.

And I thought about how we can live in a neighborhood and no one know Christ. We can go to work and no one know Christ. We can go to school. We can have friends and no one become, no one have any conviction or any idea.

[10:06] Go with me to Exodus chapter 2 if you would, verse 1. Second chapter. God prepares this man. This chapter is about God getting Moses ready to be the man that will lead the nation of Israel out of Egypt.

And I'd like you to just watch some of the things that happen. I think it's just the wildest thing. If I had a phrase or a term that sums up one and two, normal people. Normal people.

Because we're going to be studying Moses. He's absolutely not normal. He's a hero. He's a superhero. He's a great man of God. He's not just a normal, regular, everyday Joe.

But you and I are. And you and I can be used even to train and raise up some of those special people. Look if you would at chapter 2, verse 1. The great man is born into a normal family.

Notice what they say. Chapter 2, verse 1. And there went a man, a man. You ought to circle that. There went a man of the house of Levi. And he took a wife of the daughter of Levi. A man and a daughter.

[11:06] And the woman conceived. A man, the woman, conceived and the bare son. And when she saw him, that he was a goodly child. She hid him three months. A normal man, a normal woman, have this unusual baby who will become extremely famous, write the first five books of the Bible, and be one of the greatest men in all the Bible history.

It was a normal family taking small steps to protect their family. They protect the baby as long as they can in verses 3 and 4. Then they put him in an ark and they get it all prepared.

And they put it out in the water. And the sister watches as the little baby is put in that little ark and sent out there. It's very doubtful that this man and woman had any idea who their baby was going to be.

It's very doubtful they had any idea that he was going to be the great man of God, Moses. But God protected and provided for him in verse 5. And following God protected him and God washed over him.

I'd just like to stop and say, you know, sometimes when you read the Bible, most of the time when I read the Bible, I see myself in that story as the hero.

[12:11] I want to be Moses. I want to be David killing Goliath. I want to be the big man of God. But the truth of the matter is, I'm never going to be the big man of God. I haven't been the big man of God. I'm just a regular guy. I'm just kind of a normal guy.

I get up every morning. I put my pants on just like everybody else. I'm just a regular guy. But a regular man and a regular woman raised a wild man named Moses. A regular man and a regular woman prepared him.

And God used him to make a difference in his life. And you and I, regular people, live among all kinds of people. And you may not be missionaries. And you may not go across the sea. And you might just be a regular person.

But God is at work in your life. And you ought not take yourself for granted. I'll give you one in verse 10. And the child grew. And she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter. And he became her son.

And she called his name Moses. And she said, I drew him out because I drew him out of the water. Moses will live 40 years in Egypt. And for 40 years, Moses is going to learn how to be a great man.

[13:08] For 40 years, Moses will be trained that way. If you would, in Acts chapter 7 and verse 20, the Bible says, At which time Moses was born and was exceeding fair and nourished up in his father's house three months.

In chapter 7 and verse 21, he's cast out and Pharaoh's daughter took him up. Acts chapter 4 and verse 22, Moses learned all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in word and in deeds.

A very unusual thing. There's approximately, by now, there's somewhere between 2 and 3 million. They've grown from 70 to 2 or 3 million, it appears, in the 400 years that they've been there.

And Moses gets picked by God. And he learns the wisdom of the Egyptians. And he's mighty. Acts chapter 4, verse 23. You can write in a margin of your Bible. In chapter 2, he's 40 years old.

The Bible says in Acts 4, verse 23, and when he was full 40, when he was a full 40 years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren and the children of Israel. And here's what ends up happening.

[14:10] The people of Israel have been ordinary, regular people. That somehow this really wild circumstance takes place. And this young man born to a regular man and a regular woman and a regular family who do everything they can to protect their kid, all of a sudden, he's picked.

God calls him out. God protects him in a special way. And he's taken down to Egypt. And for 40 years, he studies and learns and goes to the university. Now he's a 40-year-old man.

He's going to live to be 120. He's a 40-year-old man. And he knows he knows. And he's pretty sure all the Israelites ought to think pretty highly of him.

He's pretty sure everybody ought to know who he is. Look, if you would, with me, what the Bible says in Exodus chapter 2, verse 11, but he thought he could be a hero and protect his people. And he goes out and he spies an Egyptian mistreating one of the Hebrews.

He's hitting him and one of his brothers. And he looks both ways and he kills the Egyptian. He buries him in the sand. And a day or so later, when he sees some Israelites fighting, he says, Hey, guys, break it up.

[15:11] And he figures they're going to know who he is. They're going to realize, man, God raised up this guy to lead us out of Egypt. God's going to do something big in his life.

That's not what happened. Look, if you would, at Acts chapter 4, verse 24. That's how I know he thought something. Look at Acts chapter 4, verse 24. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him and avenged him that was oppressed and smote the Egyptian.

Look at verse 25. For he supposed his brethren would have understood. He said, I figure my brothers understand. I figure the Israelites know who I am.

I'm God's man. I've got a big ass carved on my chest. I'm here to save everybody. He assumed everybody knew. The Israelites felt like Moses was trying to lift himself up and to be a big shot and to rule over them.

In Acts chapter 4, verse 27, he said, who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday? And Moses took off running.

[16 : 12] Take your Bible with me to Hebrews chapter 11. Take your Bible to Hebrews chapter 11. The truth is most of us are just common, ordinary, everyday people. We might not want to think of ourselves as that.

But most of us are probably not going to be elected president of the United States. We're not going to be great preachers. We're not going to be great businessmen as far as world renown. We're probably not going to make it on Forbes major list.

We're just regular people. The Bible says in Hebrews 11.23 that Moses was now 40 years old. You need to underline this so you get it.

It's what happened. And his parents, when he was a baby, they didn't care what the king's commandment was. The king said the babies had to die. And mom and dad said, we don't care what the king's commandment is.

It's worth it for us to save our son alive. God someday maybe is going to provide a savior, a leader. Somebody is going to get us out of here. And in verse 23, they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

[17 : 08] In verse 24, Moses, now 40 years old, says, you know what? He says, I don't want to be called the son of Pharaoh. I don't want to be Pharaoh's daughter's son.

That's not who I want to be, verse 24. And he refused to be called that. In verse 25, he said, I would rather suffer affliction. I'd rather go down with the slaves. I'd rather be with those that are in trouble and mistreated.

That's where I'd rather be. He knew God had a plan for his life. He knew that God was going to do something with him. And in verse 26, he esteemed the reproach of Christ's greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.

Verse 27, because he saw him that was invisible. He's 40 years old. I don't know if mama taught him when he was a little boy. Just like I don't know how those midwives got to where they feared God.

But apparently mama taught him. Apparently somewhere along the way, he learned that God had a plan for his life. Here's the big issue. The second I think God has a plan for me, I get lifted up.

[18 : 07] And I get proud. And in Exodus chapter 2, in verse 16, he runs. And when he runs, he runs and becomes a shepherd. And you'll have to go back to Genesis to find out.

In the last part of Genesis, you'll find out that shepherds were an abomination to Egyptians. So he went from the biggest shot in the country, in the big family, living in the big house, living in the white house, down to being a shepherd of sheep.

He went from being the highly educated man in Exodus chapter 2, verse 16, and following to being a nobody. In Acts chapter 7, in verse 40, he will stay in the wilderness 40 more years.

In Acts 7, when the 40 years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, an angel of the Lord, and a flame of fire, and a bush is on fire, and it doesn't get burned up. And an angel appears to talk to him.

I'll give you the last thing, and I quit. But watch this. Number one, God's people, 400 years, in the middle of a whole other nation. Can you imagine if we could put, if we could, listen to this, if we could transplant 3 million Christians to North Africa in the middle of the Muslims, would we make a difference?

[19 : 21] Would they notice by us living there that we were different? Would they know by our worship? Would they know by the way we live our lives? Would they know by what we talk about that we make a difference? In Ephesians chapter 1, it appears they didn't make much of a difference.

In Exodus chapter 1, in Exodus chapter 2, God prepares his man. But in Exodus chapter 2, I see a big problem that comes in my life. And that is, as soon as God wants to do something with me, I'm always looking to think of Austin very highly, and to build Austin up and think he's somebody.

So let me give you some lessons real quickly that I see out of the two chapters. Most of us live normal lives, but we should use our lives to make a difference in those around us. The midwives learned to fear God, maybe in the house of those giving birth.

Moses learned about serving God probably at the hand of his mother and his daddy. And that was probably only for a handful of years before he went off to live at Pharaoh's daughter's house.

We should seek God in the good and pleasant times as well as the difficult. Do you realize that most of us right now, we're living in prosperous times? Some of you are going through some really hard times, and some of you are.

[20 : 29] But can I just tell you that when things are good, that's when you ought to be praying. Isn't it amazing? When do we pray? We pray when our lives are falling apart. We pray when we're being persecuted.

We pray when everything's going wrong. We should be involved in more than lifestyle evangelism. I think they lived in Egypt, but I don't think they must have talked about it much. But Jews were famous for that.

Their idea was, we're the people, you're not the people. They were racist. They weren't vocal in their faith. It's easy to see God doing great things in your life and to begin to think that you are someone and you're the hero.

I would say to you, this is Thanksgiving week. I'd say to you, do you ever think about this? You didn't make you. He did. It's so easy to think that I'm smarter than everybody else.

I work harder than everybody else. I'm just good. That's the way it is when it's God who's doing a work in your life. God often has to remind us that it's Him and not us at work.

[21 : 27] We should choose to do right no matter what we have to do. We have to risk our lives like Moses did. Moses at 40 years of age said, I don't care.

I'd rather give up all I have and be where God wants me. I count the riches of Egypt to be nothing. I count the reproach of Christ to be everything. By the way, Moses' parents did the same thing when they said, we're going to raise our boy even if it means us getting killed.

By the way, the midwives did the same thing when they said, we know that we could get in trouble. We know we could be killed for not killing those babies, but we'd rather not. We make a stand that cost us. That's probably where we don't do much of that anymore.

Is it possible that we could love God and live in this society and never make a difference in the lives of those around us? Is it possible that we could love God and live in this society and never make any difference in the lives of those around us?

God's going to keep his word. He's going to accomplish what he promised that he would. But we need some ordinary people making big decisions every day, decisions that affect people around us.

[22 : 33] I read chapter 1 and I read chapter 2 and I question myself and I say, are we acting like salt and light in our society? Are we making a difference? Do North Americans know there's some people that meet at Vision Baptist Church that love Jesus, honor the word of God, aren't kooks, aren't nuts, live holy lives, live on Monday through Friday and Saturday night.

They live out what their faith says on Sunday morning. Do they know that there's a difference? You and I, you, some of you guys, you go into some really important places. I mean, big shots know you and you know big shots.

And you go into places and you're all the, are we making a difference? Are we making a difference? It's been 400 years. They've lived in Egypt for 400 years.

These are the people of God living in the middle of Egypt for 400 years. And there's no word of much being accomplished in those 400 years. I wonder if that's a problem for us.

Are you making decisions that affect other people? Are you taking your faith seriously? Are you believing your own press release and thinking, I'm a pretty big shot? I made myself.

[23 : 43] I've done these great things. Or do you just realize it's never about us. It's about him. We're going to get in the book of Exodus. God's fixing to start crazy stuff in chapter 3. We're going to get in the story as he calls out Moses and he does the work in his life and prepares him to leave the nation of Israel.

We're going to watch great things happen. But it all starts, I think, with ordinary people. Just people like us. Just me and you. We're just regular. We're just regular. We're just regular.

We're just regular. Nobody knows us. But you're making decisions every day that affect lives around you. And by the way, take serious raising your kid. You have absolutely no idea. We have no idea who's the parent of the next William Carey.

We have no idea who's the parent of the next Moses. I don't think Moses' parents knew that. We have no idea if our lives are affecting others, changing others, and making a difference or not. I challenge you.

Take it seriously. The place where God's put you to work. Father, I love you. And I thank you for the chance to serve you. I thank you for your word. I pray you would apply it to our lives. I pray you'd make a difference in us.

[24 : 42] And I pray, God, that we would stand and honor you and bring glory to you through our lives. And we'll give you praise and honor and glory for all in Jesus' name. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia.

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