

We continue through the Book of Exodus into chapter 2. To jump in, I want to quote Bob Dylan, who wasn't involved in Exodus, but I think we'll see some connections!

**Come gather 'round people/Wherever you roam/
And admit that the waters/Around you have
grown/And accept it that soon/You'll be drenched
to the bone/If your time to you is worth savin'/
And you better start swimmin'/Or you'll sink like
a stone/For the times they are a-changin'**

These are the opening lines of his 1964 iconic song by the same title as that last line, "The Times They Are A-Changin'." The song is an anthem for the radical changes that the 1960s brought throughout the USA. Specifically, there was the civil rights movement. There was the youth in the countercultural movement and a growing sense of generational conflict and cultural change. It was in that space there was an increasingly hostile political climate. You see, Dylan was giving voice to what was mainly known as the spirit of the day, and it gives voice even as we look back retrospectively into the 60s and mirror that with our own time, that the times they are a-changin'.

It reminds me of that old dictum that the only thing constant is change. These words speak to our own time as much as it does the sixties. I wasn't around then but I've heard it felt like an impossible situation like slogging through mud to try to get through all of the tensions swirling within our country. Read the final verse of the song,

**The line it is drawn/The curse it is cast/The slow
one now/Will later be fast/As the present now/
Will later be past/The order is rapidly fadin'/And
the first one now/Will later be last/For the times
they are a-changin'**

The order is rapidly fading. See, there's something in Dylan's hopefulness that he saw in social change, albeit he came to faith later in life, and you see echoes of that even in this line: "And the first one now will later be last."

That sounds eerily similar to Jesus' teaching. But there's a sense in which the world is longing for change. I don't think I need to do much work to convince you that we live in precarious times. We live in times when there are wars and rumors of wars. We live in times in which violence and tension seem to be palpable right under the surface. What remains constant is that tension. And while the times, yes, are a-changin' as in the sixties, the only thing constant is change.

Maybe similarly to that sentiment in the sixties, we, too, feel like we live in an impossible time. We're looking at a text, the story that really begins the Exodus narrative, in which we see an impossible situation. The only thing constant is change. It was happening then, dating back all

the way to Exodus as it was in the 60s and is today. We live in impossible times, but this is not the first time that they have been impossible. So, as we look at the text, we're reminded that these impossible times are not just familiar to us, but they're also familiar to God. God works often in these impossible situations. What we find is a three-month-old Moses in a precariously impossible situation. And God uses this story to mirror and map onto what our impossible situation looks like today. Let's pick up in Exodus 1:22.

I pick up at the end of chapter 1 because when the Bible was written, chapters, verses, and headings weren't there. Those were added much later to help us navigate quite a long book. We have to always think that the end of chapter 1 has the exact same flow as the beginning of chapter 2. "Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: 'Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live'" (Exodus 1:22). At the end of chapter 1, Pharaoh is calling for the genocide of all Hebrew boys.

This is a dark time. It's maybe the darkest in history. I think you can make that case when you begin to see the sort of tyrannical power that Pharaoh rules with and the lengths that he will go to maintain that power.

At this time in the story, the Israelite people are growing in numbers; they're expanding. Some would argue they were upwards of a million people. That's a lot of people at that time. Pharaoh, the most powerful man in the world at his time, is concerned politically about his power being compromised. He begins to take action and gives orders to all of the people—every Hebrew boy who is born must be thrown into the Nile.

Now, you would think that this edict would disincentivize, particularly oppressed people, from giving themselves in marriage and having children. Yet we arrive at Exodus 2.

Now, a man of the Levi tribe married a Levite woman, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him. Exodus 2:1-4

Even with this edict, the proliferation of the Israelite people continues. Remember that links all the way back to the beginning of Genesis when God said to be fruitful and multiply. Exodus is mirroring that flourishing with the Israelite people. So they're continuing to do what began in Genesis 1. Even amidst that impossible edict, she becomes pregnant.

She gives birth to a son. Then she saw that he was a fine child. That Hebrew word is the word *טוב*, the exact same word in Genesis, when God creates and says it's good. God created the earth, and it was good. The stars were good, and the light was good. Here, it says that when this woman saw that the child was good, linking again to the Genesis story, she began to hide him for three months.

Put yourself in the story. She's hiding him because all the people have now been recruited by Pharaoh to carry out this genocide of the Hebrew people. The edict seems not to have been given to a small group of soldiers but rather to the entire population on the hunt to carry out this heinous act. Now, if you've been a parent, can you imagine trying to keep a three-month-old baby quiet? A newborn is going to need feeding, changing, sleeping, all of that for three months. But Moses' mom keeps him quiet. As you can imagine, there comes a time when it's nearly impossible to do so. Can you imagine the anxiety and fear that must have been bubbling beneath the surface every time young Moses cried out to be fed? The fear that someone would hear and turn in the child or throw him into the Nile? It was a dark time. It was a difficult, impossible time.

Then, Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said. Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" "Yes, go," she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother. vv. 5-8

The time comes when his mom can't protect Moses anymore. She creates the basket, which is similarly akin to an arc. That reminds us again of Genesis. She takes the baby, puts him in the basket, and then actually carries out Pharaoh's edict, doesn't she? Probably not the way Pharaoh had in mind, but she takes this little basket, places it in the Nile, and lo and behold, it travels down the river and finds itself in the reeds where Pharaoh's daughter happens to be bathing.

Now imagine that you're Moses' mom or any of his family. What's the tension you feel as that little basket floats over to the very house in which this edict is given? But what we find is that Pharaoh's daughter is in a very different place from that of Pharaoh. This is not a misunderstanding. It wasn't like Pharaoh's daughter got there and thought, well, this is an Egyptian baby, right? She even says, "This is a Hebrew boy." But instead of the tyrannical evil that her dad had, she has compassion for Moses.

It says later, she draws him out of the water. You see the beautiful irony of God. You see almost a bit of humor mixed with power and the sovereignty of God. That clearly contrasted with the sovereignty of Pharaoh, whose own household he couldn't get to carry out his edict! You see the sovereignty of God in which this Pharaoh's daughter takes up the child, and then Moses' sister asks if she should get one of the Hebrew women to nurse this baby. And who is it that raises Moses? Moses's mom! It's a beautiful picture, the stunning beauty of a God who's in control in

the midst of it all. Yet when Pharaoh's daughter scoops Moses out of the water, Moses joins Pharaoh's family, is adopted, and will be raised inside that court.

The edict that Pharaoh delivered was subverted by someone from within his very house. This goes back to the midwives earlier. This is the first attempt that Pharaoh had to kill off the Hebrews. The midwives were instructed to kill all the Hebrew boys. They didn't do that. They were the vulnerable people of the time. He's not worried about his daughters either. And yet, it is the vulnerable that God uses to overthrow the strong. It's a beautiful picture.

Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him. When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water. vv. 9-10

That word "drew him out" or "drawn him out," there's a word play there. It sounds very similar to the name Moses. So that is why Pharaoh's daughter names him Moses, because I drew you out of the water.

Three Forces Against Moses

The Force of Pharaoh

What we witness here in this scene is an impossible situation. It appears that there are three forces against the three-month-old Moses. The first force that was set against Moses is Pharaoh. Again, Pharaoh was the most powerful man in the world at the time. He had this massive empire, larger and more powerful than anything the world had seen at the time. Pharaoh would go to extreme lengths to protect, extend, and guard his power.

But he finds himself in a quandary because the Hebrew people that he had enslaved were meant to build up and extend his power. He's done such a good of a job raising them up that he's got to push back on that. You see the chaos of power. You see the chaos of him trying to protect what is his. And so, through chapter 1, you see him use fear, manipulation, savagery, intimidation, and oppression. What you find in Pharaoh is a sociopathic tyrant who is hell-bent on remaining in power, even to his own demise. This is the first force that's against a three-month-old baby. Does Moses stand a chance against Pharaoh? Not at all; he's three months old.

The Force of the Entire Egyptian Nation

To make matters worse, there's also this second power. This is the one I mentioned already, but it's this edict that has turned its gaze towards Moses to push and kill off the very plans of God. The redemptive plan of God is this edict. As I mentioned, this was not Pharaoh's first attempt to tamp out the Hebrew people. First, in Exodus 1:9-10 it says that Pharaoh was going to deal shrewdly with the people. His second attempt was that he would call the Egyptian midwives to kill the babies during their delivery, but that, too, failed. So, finally, he enlists the entire nation to set his angry, evil, heinousness against the Hebrew people, specifically Moses.

Imagine that scene, every cry, every night, every feeding time, living in fear and anxiety. All of it poses a threat of discovery. It poses the challenge that Hebrew boys would be thrown into the Nile, which begs the question, as one commentator mentioned when Pharaoh's daughter goes down to the river: What do we imagine? The population of the Israelite people was vast. It is likely she watched bodies float down the river. It's dark, it's heinous. You have Pharaoh, the most powerful man in the world, set against Moses. You now have the entire Egyptian people against him because Pharaoh had seared the consciousness of an entire nation and had recruited them in his own evil plot of genocide.

The Force of the Nile River

And then third, the Nile River. The Nile River is not like any river that we can imagine, at least on the West Coast. It is the longest river in the world, which may be debated with the Amazon, but it runs 4,132 miles long. It flows through 11 modern countries. The amount of water it discharges annually is 22 trillion gallons of water. I don't know how you estimate this, but one person said it's like six fully loaded semi-trucks constantly moving at you at a consistent rate. It's into this river that a three-month-old baby was dropped into.

Moses can't throw hands with Pharaoh. He can't take on the entire nation of Egypt, and he certainly can't swim the Nile River. This is more impossible than you could even imagine. This impossible situation that Moses faces is something that we can't comprehend. But it's important that we try because this is a true historical story. I believe every part of this story actually happened. But the brilliance of it is that it also functions as a metaphor for our salvation. It functions as an illustration of the very situation that you and I find ourselves in. And so, as we look at this, the question we have to ask when viewing ourselves as three-month-old Moses is, what are we to do to overcome this impossible situation?

Before we answer that, I want to see what Moses attempts to do to overcome this impossible situation because I believe that's why the authors put this story of his birth immediately preceding verses 11 and 12. This is a flash forward quite a few years.

One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. vv. 11-12

Moses, as he grew older, maybe forgot the impossibility of his situation, although I find that hard to believe. But he goes out and begins to watch his people at work, and I'm guessing he sees the very same impossible situation. He sees the world's most powerful empire. He'd been living within that empire for his entire upbringing. All those years, he'd been watching Pharaoh lead this powerful empire, and he went out and looked at his people working. He sees an Egyptian beating one of his fellow Hebrews, and he thinks there's no way they can overthrow this empire. He's witnessing the very impossibility of what he is facing.

Pharaoh is bent against these Hebrews. The people are bent against these Hebrews. They're facing a very impossible situation.

I believe that what this story is teaching us is that Moses is attempting to solve the problem on his own. When he watches this Egyptian beating a Hebrew, he takes up the only thing he knows. The only thing this world has to offer is the very power and means of the empire. Because sin always pulls towards violence. So Moses uses the tools of the empire and begins to lash out. Note the kind of editorial note: "He looks this way and that to make sure no one's watching." He knows what he's doing. It's premeditated. It isn't just an act of passion. He comes into this moment angry at the impossibility and says, "Well, I can do something about that." He lashes out and kills the Egyptian and then buries him in the sand to try to cover up what he has done.

We don't have time to get through the rest of it, but as you read through chapter 2, you'll notice the way he eventually gets called out for this since another Egyptian had seen him and said, "Are you going to kill me like you killed that one?" You watch this spiral of sin and brokenness continue to play out.

We find ourselves in impossible situations. Whether it's external situations or the impossibility of dealing with our sin and brokenness, you and I often tend to take things into our own hands. We, like Moses, want to find our way out of this impossible situation. But what we learn from Moses killing this Egyptian is sin begets sin and brokenness begets more brokenness.

Which Moses do you see yourself as? Do you find yourself as the older Moses, ready to take on the problems of the world? Maybe you have this ache. You recognize something's broken in the world, and you have the gall to say, "I'm going to solve that for us." It may not swell up into murdering someone, but it can often look like sacrificing family on the altar of work, sacrificing character, cutting corners here, cheating there. It's all of these different things. All sin is our attempt to solve the ache we feel at our core, but in the process, we push away or reject God and his ability.

Do you find yourself as that older Moses in an impossible situation, taking things into your own hands? Or do you see yourself as the three-month-old Moses with no hope and desperation? The beauty of the three-month-old Moses is he can do nothing but trust. I doubt a three-month-old was consciously thinking of that. But I do believe that posture of just being there and God moving in and somehow orchestrating this giant Nile River with 22 trillion gallons of water flowing through it, tucking Moses into the reeds. Then, by happenstance, Pharaoh's daughter is there and scoops Moses out of the water. By another happenstance, Moses's mom nurses him, and by another happenstance, is adopted into the very family that gave the edict to kill him!

Do you see the power of God? Do you see the ability of God? It was nothing done by Moses. He's three months old. There's not a thing Moses did, and yet God moves towards and scoops this little baby out of this impossible situation because God works in impossibility. As I've alluded to, it isn't that we face a Pharaoh, it isn't that we face the Nile, it isn't that we even face a nation set against us. But rather, we face this

issue of sin and death, which is just as precarious, much more so. We all are caught in this.

I want to address the question that may linger beneath the surface: Why doesn't God just take out Pharaoh? Why doesn't he just wipe him off the planet? Wouldn't that be easier? Read what Dr. Pete Enns, the commentator on Exodus that I've been reading says: "God places Moses in the same Nile that Pharaoh intends for the boy's harm. He brings the boy right to Pharaoh's doorstep and raises him in Pharaoh's house. Why? To defeat the enemy decisively at his own game, at the very heart of his strength."

God understands that if you cut off the head of Pharaoh another Pharaoh just rises in his place. I love that last line, "What God is doing here is decisively defeating the enemy," but he's doing it in a way in which he uses Pharaoh's evil force against him. We can map this onto the issue of sin because this is all a picture of our own salvation story. Sin's greatest weapon is death. "*For the wages of sin is death*" (Romans 3:23). That which death or sin begets is death. If that's the most powerful weapon that sin has, think of Jesus. Why would you fear someone who can kill you? There's a greater thing that can destroy your soul.

This is the same exact thing. So if sin begets death, the logic proves that what you need is someone who could enter into death and come out the other side. If you take the biggest swing and take away their biggest power, you've gutted it from the inside out. God uses the very weakness of a three-month-old baby to change the Nile from a representation of death to a representation of life. It is through the Nile that God brings and saves Moses so that he can become the Moses who will lead the people through the sovereignty of God.

Jesus is doing his ministry, and as all of this evil is being thrown at him, he takes it and absorbs it. Do you notice that Jesus never responds in kind? If violence, death, and sin are all that this world can offer, all it can reap, what does Jesus do in the Garden of Gethsemane when Peter pulls the sword out? He says to put it back in its sheath. Jesus marches right into death, takes its biggest blow, consumes all that sin could give, the guilt, the shame he takes that on himself. And that resurrection morning, when he began to walk out of that tomb, he had gutted the very power of sin and death from the inside out. It's as if he marched into darkness and flipped on the light switch, and the darkness had to obey the light.

What exactly is this concept of sin? This is the basis of our impossible situation. I would argue that most of us have a pretty flat understanding of sin, which seems odd. In the modern world outside the church, the idea of sin is so foreign. There's really no understanding of sin. But I think even within the church, we have a very flat understanding of sin. And I want to give a little more rounded view of it because it helps us see the beauty of what God has done.

I want to define the Nile, if you will, metaphorically. What was Moses facing? What are we facing? Most of us think of sin as an arbitrary breaking of rules, and there are parts of that. But it's much more than that. It's much more complex. So, to unpack this, I want to quote a guy

named Cornelius Plantinga in a brilliant book called *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be*. He breaks down this concept of sin. The whole book is about trying to define sin because the problem with the concept of sin is that all of us have heard that word.

The whole Bible talks about sin. But because the whole Bible talks about sin, because we're so familiar with that word, it has lost its definition. Our familiarity breeds an unfamiliarity with this concept of sin. He says, "God is, after all, not arbitrarily offended." So that's what I'm saying. It's not just arbitrary rules that are being followed, and then God's angry and all that. It's more complex than that. God hates sin and not just because it violates his law. Notice that not just violating the law of God is, in fact, a sin. That's part of it. It says not just because it violates his law but more substantively because it violates shalom.

Shalom is what we would translate as the word peace, but it's much more than that. In the modern world, we think of peace as the absence of conflict. For the Hebrew idea of shalom is better to think of flourishing. Flourishing between me and God, flourishing between one another, and flourishing with creation. It's the picture that we see in Genesis 1 and 2 and in Revelation 21 and 22. Perfection isn't quite the right word, but it's kind of like that. That's the vision that God has all through the scriptures, particularly in the prophets. You see these prophets speaking of this vision of shalom, of what the world could be, and we have fallen from that. So he says it's not just because it violates his law, but more substantively because it violates shalom, breaks the peace, and interferes with the way things are supposed to be.

God is for shalom and, therefore, against sin. In fact, we may safely describe evil as any spoiling of shalom, whether physically, morally, spiritually, or otherwise. The otherwise is that line on your job description, which is other duties as assigned. Everything, every thought, action, word, deed, all of it falls under this category. If it disrupts shalom, it falls in the category of sin. I love that line that it bases God's understanding of sin on his fullness of shalom, God's heartbeat. The thing that pulses through God's very being is love, flourishing, peace, and the desire for all of us to experience the fullness of life in communion with him and with one another and the good world that he's created. Sin, like an intruder, bursts in on Genesis 3, and it wreaks unbelievable havoc throughout all of creation. This is why God hates sin.

Sin Is Personal

So, the first thing we understand about sin is that it is personal. It is a personal affront against a personal God. Sin is those actions in which Adam and Eve at the Tree of Good and Evil said, "God, I understand that you've let me have all of this, but I actually know what's better for me." So we seize and take the position of God, and we fall in love with God's creation, but we disregard the Creator. We believe we can remedy the situation. "God, I know that I'm in an impossible situation, but I can take on Pharaoh. I've got this on my own." And it's out of this that comes all sorts of moral evils.

All of that stems from this personal aspect of sin. Sin is a personal affront to a personal God. It's the actions you take when you lie and cheat.

It's the subtle things; it's the thoughts, the deeds, all those things that you have that are pulsing around in your head, the things that surprise you, the things that you don't know you do, the things you do, and the things that you don't do. All of those things can fall into this category of sin if it disrupts shalom, if it disrupts that which is moving in the direction of flourishing for the world. I don't think I have to make the case that we've contributed to this. You've contributed; I have contributed to the brokenness of this world without question, whether thought or deed, all of it. This is sin. It is a personal affront.

This personal sin aspect not only comes with the contribution of brokenness into the world, but it ruptures all those relationships as well. Shalom is about relational standing as well as physical standing. So, our relationship with this God is fractured. It's broken in the same way that if you sin against your spouse, your neighbor, roommate, or whoever it is, there's a relational breach that needs to be healed and fixed. We find ourselves caught in this personal aspect of sin. Listen to a different quote by Plantinga. "Sin is disruption of created harmony." That's what I've been talking about. The resistance to divine restoration of that harmony.

That's Moses trying to take things into his own hands. I'll take on Egypt myself. It's not only the affront, but then when God says, I know the way home; when we resist that when we resist God's loving grace to us, that might be an even more extreme level of sin. Because to reject the very one that's trying to bring healing, there's nothing but more brokenness. The resistance to the divine restoration of humanity continues on above all sin. It disrupts and resists the vital human relationship with God.

It does all this disrupting and resisting in a number of intertwined ways. I love this phrase, "Sin is the culpable disturbance of shalom." Culpable means we bear responsibility. You can't just point the finger and say, it's because I was born into that family, or because my coworker did this, or because my friend said this thing. No, you are culpable. You are responsible for the disruption or disturbance of shalom. That is culpable in the eyes of God, which also means that even if it's a socially acceptable thing, God views that potentially differently. So even if no one finds you culpable for that action—Hey, it's okay, just live your truth, do your thing—the culpability isn't in the eyes of others, it's in the eyes of God, and we find ourselves caught.

Hebrews would talk about how we get tangled up in sin. Sometimes, we do it willingly; other times, we do it without thinking. But either way, it's a personal affront. Romans says all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We've chosen our stuff over him. We've assumed we're smarter than him. We believe our way is better than his. And, so, the thought patterns, the actions committed, the lies embraced, the active rebellion and the inactive rebellion, the engagement in socially acceptable behaviors that are all out of bounds, this is sin, regardless of how big or small, this is that simple, personal aspect of sin. "Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love," as the old hymn would say.

Sin Is Systemic

The second is that sin is systemic. As I mentioned, sin is always pulling towards more. Think of Genesis 3, in which the individual action in Adam and Eve, just a few short chapters later, spiraled into a systemic thing that we see in the Tower of Babel and ultimately into the creation of Egypt itself.

Sometimes, we have some issues with this concept of systemic sin. We get a little leery about that at times, but I want you just to play the logic. If a bunch of individual sinners create something, are we foolish enough to think that their sin wouldn't be imputed into the very thing they created? Into the very structures and policies and things in which these sinful individuals have built together? Sin is systemic. You see this all over the scriptures. You see this when Jesus cast an entire judgment on the city of Jerusalem. There was a remnant in there. The disciples were there. Yes, they were sinners, but the judgment came on all of Jerusalem. You see that in Sodom and Gomorrah. Even though they were fighting for a remnant, God was judging an entire structure, an entire system. Sin is always pulling towards more. It is personal, and it is systemic.

Plantinga says. "Sin is not only personal, but also interpersonal and even suprapersonal." I don't know anyone who's ever used that word except for right here. It might not even be a word, but what he means is it transcends the personal. It goes beyond the personal. Sin is more than the sum of what sinners do. Sin acquires the powerful and elusive form of a spirit, the spirit of an age, or a company, a nation, or a political movement. Sin burrows into the bowels of institutions and traditions, making a home and taking them over. Sin burrows into these things.

A brief look at our current world and history gives testament to this. Think of our own country's history with racism and slavery, something that's tarnished even today. Our country wrestles with these past sins. You see that pop-up and maybe even redlining in our own Bay Area in which some people based on ethnicity were excluded from certain neighborhoods and from securing a mortgage. You see that across the world. You see that with the atrocities in North Korea, you see that in the Middle East, with the senseless cycle of violence between Israel and Palestine.

This distortion and the subsequent pain of the abortion epidemic, gender confusion, and identity politics all of these things are built into structures that they're perpetuating throughout the world. They're a zeitgeist, the spirit of the age in which the New Testament would call the powers and principalities that are bent away from God. You see that with Pharaoh when he gives this edict to all the people. He's severing the consciousness of an entire nation to help him carry out his genocidal attack. Sin is always pulling towards more. Sin is personal; sin is systemic. This is the telos, the goal at which it's going. It's the third thing we understand about sin.

Sin Brings Death

The personal and the systemic always pull towards death. Romans 6:23 says, "*For the wages of sin is death.*" Meaning the result, what sin earns is spiritual death, this disconnect between you and God, this relational

rupture in which now there's a barrier. It must be overcome through Pharaoh's daughter scooping Moses out of the water, through the movement of God in that impossible situation.

Sin brings spiritual death, but it also brings physical death. You see it in Moses killing the Egyptian. That's a very clear example. You see it again in some of those systemic ways I mentioned earlier—the senseless violence in the Middle East, the history of racism and slavery in our own country that's led to the brutal, unjust death of others.

Sin leads to spiritual death. It leads to physical death. And the last blow that sin has is it leads to eternal death. The reality is that there's coming a time in which God is all in all, as Paul says in Colossians. If your heart is cultivated by sin, meaning set against the way of God, then when God is all in all, you simply don't fit into the world, and God's judgment on you will be eternal death. You will be expelled. Not inherently. It's really God giving the individual what they desire. If they don't want God, and that day is coming when God is all in all, what more can God do than give that individual exactly what they want? It's terrifying. It's dark. It's impossible. Sin is personal, systemic, physical, spiritual, and eternal death.

So what are we to do about that? That's the impossible situation we find ourselves in. And like Moses, we metaphorically kill Egyptian after Egyptian, trying to find our way out. But that's not the solution. All of this impossibility that we find ourselves trapped in, these cycles that come to define us, and we live and make our home in, well, the Egyptians or the Israelites found themselves in that.

During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them. vv. 23-25

"And that king died." Pharaoh, as a manifestation of evil, is not eternal like our God. "So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them." That's one of the most hopeful verses you can find. Some writers will say this is the moment history began in which the Israelites cried out. And what I love about this is it's not even certain they were crying to God. It just says they cried out; they groaned. The text says because of their impossibility in slavery, their cries went up to God, and God heard them.

The only thing we can do in this impossible situation is cry out to God. I can't help but think of Moses' mom. Where's the cries of this three-month-old baby? Maybe they were going up to God as well. He wasn't certain what was happening. I can assure you, Moses' mom, the heart of a parent and a mother, was crying out to God. There was nothing she could do but she cried out to God.

What's preventing you from crying out to God? That's all you can do. It's all you have to do. Romans 10:9 says, "If you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord, you will be saved." It's a simple process in which you recognize the impossibility of being caught in your sin, and the wages of sin are death. The second part of that verse is, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." The beauty of the gospel is that eternal life is not one that happens later. Moses was saved at three months old, and he had an up-and-down journey the rest of his way. Eternal life begins the moment you cry out and say yes to God. That freedom, forgiveness, and salvation is offered through the very death of God. Jesus went into the impossibility that sin gives. The biggest weapon that sin offers is death. And he enters into it, comes out the other side, and says, "There's a different way that I've created that for you." Receive the forgiveness and the grace of Jesus.

What is preventing you from saying yes? Many of you are here week after week, and we're so grateful you're here, but there's something preventing you from saying yes. I don't know what it is, but do you see the grace of God that you're here week after week? It's God wooing you. He's pulling you in. He's reaching out. He's reaching his hands out to that Nile River and pulling you out. Would you consider today to be the day that you cry out to God and say:

God, I am in an impossible situation. The sin I'm caught in, I can't get out of, Lord. Would you work towards the healing of my soul? Can I partner with you for the rest of our lives, walking together and learning what it means to receive forgiveness and the grace of Jesus' death on the cross? Your sins are now healed.

This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.

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