

Exodus Chapter 2 v 1 - 10

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[0 : 00] And so we're going to move on to chapter 2, but we're going to read the very last verse of chapter 1 as well. So Exodus and chapter 1, verse 22, and we're going to read through into chapter 2 and verse 10.

Exodus and chapter 1, verse 22, reading through into chapter 2 and verse 10. Then Pharaoh, that's the king of Egypt, gave this order to all his people.

Every boy that is born, you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live. Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman.

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. Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank.

[1 : 21] She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl 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.

The girl went and got the baby's mother. 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.

And we thank God for his word and look to him for help as we think and study it later on. If the children would like to go out now, please, to Sunday school. Yes, please do have Exodus 2 open.

[2 : 29] Oscar Wilde was one of the greatest playwrights of the 19th century. One of his most popular plays, comedy plays, mainly, was The Importance of Being Earnest.

And it's a story about a man called Jack who was found abandoned as a baby in a suitcase at a railway station.

That unfortunate beginning of Jack's life had its mark upon the rest of his development. And so much so that as he grew older, he fell in love with a woman, but was unable to marry her because her family deemed him too unworthy of her being so low-born.

And also because she was determined and set her heart upon marrying a man called Earnest. And through the story, there's all sorts of comedy and all sorts of things that happen.

But at the very end of the story, Jack finds out who he really is. He isn't the poor, illegitimate child of a nobody who was left at a railway station, but rather he's the son of a wealthy army general who was accidentally lost by a foolish nanny.

[3 : 42] And more than that, his real name is not Jack at all, but he was named after his father, Earnest. Well, they say that fact is stranger than fiction, and so it is in the case of the boy, Moses.

Moses wasn't left at a railway station in a handbag, but he was found in a small boat amongst the river reeds of the Nile. He wasn't the son of a great army general called Earnest, but he was raised the grandson of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

The very man whose wickedness and whose paranoia had led to the very need of his river hideaway. Of course, this isn't fiction.

This is solid facts. This is historical reality. And more importantly than that to us, the adventures, as it were, that begin the life of Moses are not due to an accident, but they're the organized, the wise acts of the living God in whom we have come to put our faith as well.

Now, as I said earlier on, we looked last week at chapter 1, which is the setting of the scene, as it were, for the rest of the book of Exodus. We saw there that God's people, who had only been 70 or so when they entered Egypt, had grown in great number, just as God had promised they would to Abraham and Isaac and to Jacob.

[5 : 06] And they were a people now who were suffering great oppression. They were counted as slaves. We read there in verse 14 that the Egyptians made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar, with all kinds of work in the fields.

In all their hard labor, the Egyptians used them ruthlessly. They were in a terrible situation in slavery. But worse than that was to come, because the king, fearing that the people would continue to grow and therefore overrun the country, these immigrants who had come, decides that he would attempt to have the boys murdered.

And so gives instructions to the midwives to do so. And we saw there, didn't we, that by God's overruling and the bravery and the God-fearing hearts of those two women, Pharaoh's plans were thwarted.

But the king wasn't finished yet. He hadn't given up on his demonic scheme of euthanasia and annihilation and wanted to kill even more.

And so he passed a new law. Verse 22 of chapter 1, a new law, which commanded that if there was a boy, a Hebrew boy found, born, then he was to be thrown into the Nile.

[6 : 28] Terrible. Terrible. Terrible. Surely, with such evil on the rampage, such wickedness at hand, God was going to do something.

Surely God was going to step in and strike Pharaoh and the Egyptians with a terrible plague. Surely God was going to send a great storm or an earthquake, something terrifying and destructive.

Surely God was going to step in and not allow his people to suffer in this way. Remember, this is the God of Genesis. The God of Noah and the flood, who when he looked upon the evil and the wickedness of the world, wiped them out, saving only Noah and his family.

Surely this is the God who when he looked upon Sodom and Gomorrah and the immorality and the wickedness of what was going on there, sent down fire and brimstone upon them, rescuing only Lot and his daughters.

But what do we find? God doesn't do any of these things. God doesn't move, it seems. There is no thunder. There is no earthquake. There is no flood. Isn't God bothered by this?

[7 : 36] Doesn't God care when this evil is going on? Isn't God going to do something about it? Of course he is. Of course he is.

But as always, as often, the God in whom we read in the Bible, the God who is the living God, is not the God who acts according to our understanding, but a God who works as we do not expect, who acts, does things that are very different to what we think he should do.

God is going to do something out of the ordinary. He's going to do something that's not been done before, but he's going to do something which is going to set in place a pattern for the rest of his works in the world.

He's going to set in place a pattern which will bring about the most glorious, most wonderful thing that he ever did in the world, which was the sending of a savior, his son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

You see, Moses is being raised up to be the first of a long line of rescuers, saviors that God would use to help his people and to bring them through times of great suffering and trial and difficulty and sin.

[8 : 50] People like Joshua and Gideon, Samson and Deborah and the judges, David and Solomon and the kings. Finally and ultimately, Jesus Christ, the very son of God.

Moses knew something of this. He was aware that God, later on as he grew up, was going to send somebody special, somebody even greater than himself.

Stephen mentions the words of Moses as he recounts what God had done for his people in the past. He says this, this is that Moses who told the Israelites, God will send you a prophet like me from among your own people.

A prophet was one who was sent by God to act in a situation and he knew that that prophet was going to be somebody special and that prophet indeed, Stephen tells us, is the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the best thing that God could possibly do, the greatest thing that God could possibly do. But it wasn't what they expected or perhaps what we expected.

[10:03] Sending a saviour. I wonder if we have our own expectations about how God should act and work in certain circumstances and situations, particularly in times of difficulty, particularly when we're up against it, particularly when things are going wrong in our own view and mind.

Do we think that we know the best way to God to act? Probably we do and we probably tell him in our prayers how he should act and how he should work. It may well be as well that we also find ourselves struggling whether God actually does care for us when he doesn't act in the way that we think he should.

We find ourselves wrestling with doubts and conflicting thoughts. Well, Lord, you have given promises that you will care for your people and provide for your people and protect your people, but here I am in this situation and when I look around about me, I can't see you doing anything.

Isn't that why many people in the world give reasons for not believing on the Lord Jesus? Isn't that the excuse that's given by many for not trusting in God?

Well, where is God in the Ebola crisis? Where is God in Syria? Where is God in Iraq? Where is God at 9-11?

[11:25] And perhaps you have some sympathy for them. Perhaps when they speak to you about these things, you find yourself a little bit flummoxed and don't know how to answer. You find yourself also perhaps also struggling.

Well, yes, Lord, why aren't you resolving these problems in the world? Why aren't you acting in this way or that way? Why does it seem that you are silent? Then if that's the case, dear friends, if that's something that we struggle with, if that's something that we are wrestling with in ourselves, then learn from God's word.

Learn from this incident. Learn from just here. How God deals with Moses and the people as we look at these things. See, the truth is this.

The principle that goes all the way through the Bible from start to finish is this. It's that God's ways are not man's ways. God is not confined to thinking and to working out solutions with the confinement of our small minds.

God is infinitely far better equipped with wisdom and power to work. When he spoke through Isaiah the prophet, he said this, Isaiah 55, for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.

[12:53] God does have a plan for his people. God does have a purpose in bringing them into Egypt. Remember, we saw that last week. They weren't there by accident. God had brought them into that place because of his purpose for them, his plan for them, his goodwill for them, even though at this time it included great suffering and trial.

And God has a plan to send them a savior, a savior who will be like the greatest savior, Jesus, who will lead them into liberty, freedom and deliverance from captivity.

But at the moment, this savior needs saving himself, doesn't he? As we enter the story, this savior, this little boy, who is going to be the savior of God's people, he needs rescuing.

Because there's a terrible situation looming. Just think for a moment how his mother must have felt when she found out that she was pregnant.

Surely, in one sense, her natural inclination and her natural desire would be to say, Lord, I hope it's not a boy. She already has a daughter, Miriam, and also a son called Aaron.

[14:09] We find out a little bit more about them later on as we go through the story. But they were both born before Pharaoh's latest law, the law that every boy that is born must be thrown into the Nile.

And now she's pregnant again. And this time, she must be worrying and anxious. I just hope it's not a boy. I couldn't bear it.

Being pregnant and expectant is a very worrying thing for any woman. It's a worrying enough thing for the dad as well, isn't it? Those of us who have been there.

Will my child be born healthy? What about the morning sickness that I've got to go through and the discomfort of the swollen ankles? What about the tiredness? What about the actual giving birth itself?

Will everything go well? There's a million and one things to worry about. But her worst fear wasn't any of those things. Her worst fear was that if she was to have a boy, she would have to give him up to death.

[15:13] She must have prayed. We know that she was a woman of faith because when we read Hebrews 11, it tells us that the parents of Moses were people of faith. They believed in God.

They trusted in God. She must have prayed. She must have prayed and asked. But then, of course, the baby is born. And what is he like?

The baby she's born gives birth to a son. A son. He's a fine son, we're told. He's a beautiful, bonny boy. He's a healthy and strong boy.

He's lovely. All that she'd feared, all that she'd been anxious about, had actually come true.

But if only she'd known. If only she'd known that the cause for her worry and anxiety. If only she'd known that this boy that she had fretted over for so long and so, in one sense, had not wished for.

[16:14] If only she knew that his birth was going to be the reason for the greatest rejoicing and celebration and blessing for the nation. If she'd have known that then, she would.

All those fears would have gone, wouldn't they? All of those worries would have disappeared. If only she'd known. If only she could see into the future what God was going to do through this baby boy. But, of course, she couldn't see it, could she?

We often don't see what God is going to do. In fact, we never see what God is going to do.

Especially when the thing that we fear most happens to us.

Especially when the situation and circumstances around about us seem to point in the opposite direction of things going well. We forget.

We become fearful. But the truth of God's word, the truth of the God that we have come to put our faith in, the truth of everything that we read concerning the very character of God is this, that he is a God who works for good for those who love him in all things.

[17:26] I doubt if she saw the day when Moses came back again 80 years later to be God's saviour and redeemer of the people.

She probably never saw that day. That's exactly what happened. She just saw a baby boy who, according to the law of the land, had to be killed.

And Jesus was speaking to his disciples on that night before his death. He reminded them of this wonderful truth, a principle again, which goes throughout the scriptures.

You do not realise now what I'm doing, but later you'll understand. Later you'll understand. That's exactly how we're to live, dear friends, in this world.

Day by day. We don't understand what God is doing at this time. We don't see the outcome and the result of the difficulties or the sufferings or the losses or the anxieties that we are going through.

[18:32] We cannot see the future. No matter who you go and consult, what cards you read or crystal ball they look into. But, but, but, when we put our faith in the living and true and great and glorious and sovereign God, we know that he has a plan.

A plan that he will work out. A plan that he will fulfil. A purpose that cannot be thwarted. No matter what is happening at this time.

But she's still in the problem, isn't she? She's still in the situation where the law is her son must die. What's God going to do now? How is God going to rescue and preserve this boy now in the immediate?

It's just, it's alright looking to the future and we can say, well yeah, I can see what you're saying, Peter. In the future God's going to do something great. I can believe and trust him for that. But I'm in the now. I'm in the here.

I'm in the muck. I'm in the trouble now. How is God going to protect and preserve this future saviour? Well, of course, wonderfully, he's going to use three women to fulfil his purposes.

[19:51] Three very different women, aren't they? One is a mum, one's a little girl, and one's a princess. As I said, truth is stranger than fiction.

And he's going to use three very different qualities in these women to bring Moses through this time, through the difficulty, through the problem, through the anxiety of his mother, and bring him into that place where he will become the saviour and fulfil the purpose of God.

And the first thing he's going to do, of course, he's going to use the creativity of a mother. The creativity of a mother. Let me just stop there for a moment and say this. Christianity is the most unsexist religion in the world.

Christianity and all of the Bible teaches the equality of men and women and the delight and the desire of God to use men and women to fulfil his purposes.

Do not think in any sense or way that God somehow has the upper for men over women. He doesn't. Just read your Bible.

[21 : 03] Any idiot who reads the Bible will see that God has used women again and again. We've got the two midwives at the beginning of Exodus. We've got these three women.

We go on and on and we see people as I've already mentioned like Deborah and Ruth and Rahab. People like Elizabeth and Mary in the New Testament and Phoebe and Dorcas and Priscilla. Don't let anybody, anybody tell you that the God is against women. God is not against women and Father more than that he relies upon them and entrusts them with some of the greatest works that he has ever done and let me say this to you dear ladies you are very very important in the purposes of God.

I just think I need to make that point. So we come back to mothers. A mother's creativity. What's she going to do? She got this baby. The law is if any Egyptian finds him and if she's found with the baby he's going to be thrown in the Nile and that's the end of him.

But we find that she hides him for three months. Three months she hides him. We don't know how she hides him. When she puts him in a cupboard or what she does with him. But she looks after him and she keeps him safe.

[22 : 26] She protects him and is careful. But there comes a time doesn't there verse 2 when she can hide him no longer. Babies get noisier don't they?

They don't get any quieter. They get noisier. And you can imagine after three months now he's beginning to be weaned and so on. He no doubt because of his cries we know that he cried because when he's found he's crying.

She's got to do something else. Three months. The days come. She knows that if she doesn't do something his cries will be heard and a soldier will come or an Egyptian or one of the neighbours who's not very nice will grass her up and she will lose her son.

But she's not defeated. She doesn't give up. She doesn't say well that's it I've done my best. I've tried. I've kept him for three months. That's it. No she doesn't. She's creative. What does she do? She makes a papyrus basket. Coats it with tar and pitch. That's the stuff that Noah used on his ark. Tar and pitch if you read the story of that. She designs a wonderful little ark for him.

[23 : 36] A little boat for him and she places him amongst the reeds in the bank of the Nile. She's actually keeping the law isn't she? Pharaoh said that you're going to throw the children into the river.

Yeah she's going to put the baby in the river. But he doesn't say you can't put her in her boat first. See that? Isn't that clever? She's kept the law but she's also kept and preserved a child.

You know sometimes it's very difficult isn't it? Not just for women for men as well but for women it's very difficult because we're told we've got to fit a mould of the perfect woman whether it be in outward appearance or whether it be in particular way that we dress or the way that we act.

The world's fashions can be very pressurising upon us in all sorts of ways but here is a creative woman that God uses. She stands out from the crowd.

Don't be afraid to stand out from the crowd dear ladies. Don't be afraid to be different. Don't feel you've got to go with the flow all around you.

[24 : 44] The attitudes and the impressions and the way that women are meant to think about their husbands or made to think about their children or made to think about their careers. As Christian women we dare, we, not we, you are to dare to be different.

That's the mother. And then we also find of course we have not only the mother's creativity but we have the sister's care. Verse 4.

The mum puts the baby in the reed boat in the reeds. His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

Now we know that this woman is, this young girl is Miriam. She's just a child. We don't know how old she was. We know that Aaron was three years older than Moses because we are told that later. So Miriam we imagine was some years older than that.

But let's be honest she probably was still maybe ten at the most. just a young girl, just a young child. What a responsibility placed upon her. How could her mum do that to her?

[25 : 52] To give her such an awesome responsibility and trusting the very life of her brother to her. Let's not underestimate children. Don't underestimate children.

Particularly those who have saving faith. She's sent to watch over him to see what happens. And of course it seems that very clearly the mum's plan isn't to abandon Moses.

It's a bit like putting him on the orphanage steps. It's entrusting him to somebody else's care when she cannot care for him. And so Miriam we're told is diligent isn't she?

She stands at a distance to see what will happen. We're not told that she stays there for a minute or two and then says I'm going to go and play some games with my friends. No she's faithful and obedient to her mother and she stays at her post and she waits and watches until Pharaoh's daughter comes along.

And then she approaches her. Verse 7 his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you? Almost certainly this is what her mother had told her to do.

[26 : 53] If somebody comes along say that you know somebody who will be able to nurse be a wet nurse particularly for the boy. she is faithful and loving and concerned and cared for her sibling her brother.

Children God uses. We need to pray for them don't we? Pray for our children. Pray for those children in Sunday schools.

Pray for those children as they go into school tomorrow or the next day pray for them in their classrooms. They are under all sorts of pressures again to conform and be like their friends. Be like how children are shown on the telly. I don't know if you noticed but often and often again you find children portrayed on the telly squabbling and fighting with their siblings. they are being taught at an early age that selfishness is the norm and looking after number one the pressures upon our children in our day and generation are just as great as they were for us if not greater.

Pray for them. Encourage them. Encourage them to stand up for their faith. Encourage them to seek the Lord while they are young. Encourage them that God has a purpose to use them where they are.

[28 : 13] Even in that school room in that schoolyard. here is a young girl who is obedient to her parents and faithful to her brother.

God uses her. God uses her. As the scriptures say a little child shall lead them. A little child shall lead them. Let's pray for our children.

And then thirdly we have here the princess's compassion. The mother's creativity in a sister's care and a princess's compassion perhaps in one sense the most surprising action is that of the Pharaoh.

Of the daughter of Pharaoh. The daughter of the king. She knew her father's command that Hebrew boys were to be thrown into the Nile and drowned. And yet she still has pity upon this little boy that she finds in the basket.

She opened it. Verse 6. The basket saw the baby crying and she felt sorry for him. Had pity. Had compassion on him. And so she not only saves his life and provides for him to be cared for with his own mother.

[29 : 19] Isn't that wonderful? There's a lovely lesson there in the very action and attitudes of the mother. In faith she let go of her son and God gave him back.

God gave him back. Isn't it? So she had several more months with him. In faith she let go and trusted him to God and God gave him back. And so we find that Pharaoh's daughter not only saves the life and provides for this boy but ultimately in the very purpose and plan of God she is the means by which he is equipped to be the savior of the people.

Again Stephen when he's speaking about the life of Moses reminds the people of this. Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him up as her own son and Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.

He was being prepared in the very courtroom of the very house of Pharaoh to be the mouthpiece for God to see the people delivered. Can't we see all the way through this there is the absence of the name of God but there is the clear distinctive handprints of the work of God.

Can't you see that? Who gives the Murray, this woman the courage to disobey the command of the king to preserve her son and to create that ark. It has to be said in the light of that isn't it terrible to think of it but it must have been so that there were many boys who did not get rescued and who were taken and thrown into the Nile.

[31 : 08] What prevented that little boat amongst the reeds from being washed out by the by the swell of the river and being gobbled up by a crocodile? Could have easily happened.

How is it that this princess happened to be walking about this time? How come she was going to bathe just then in that spot in that place?

Oh it's all a coincidence. No it's not. It's all the hand of God. It's all the very fingerprints of the Lord. And the dear friends the case is this.

How many millions of things has God done for you and for I which are unseen to us but really are evidences of his care, his love, his protection is watching over us.

You may say well God's done nothing for me. You're alive today. You're here today. You have been spared today from who knows what God knows what.

[32 : 13] And he has spared you dear friends and he's watched over your dear friends. Why has he done that? Because he longs and desires that you should trust him and prove him faithful.

That you should not fear and be anxious no matter what you face or what is brought before your pathway. He is the God who deserves all your trust. All your hope.

No matter what you feel. No matter what doubts you are sown with as it were. No matter what goes on. Just close with these words of Paul as he writes to the Christians in 1 Corinthians chapter 10.

Like the mother of Moses we may be faced with all sorts of fears for the future. We may find ourselves in all sorts of places of temptation to compromise.

Here's what Paul writes. God is faithful. He will not allow you to be tested beyond what you can bear.

[33 : 21] But when you are tempted he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. God always has an exit strategy.

And we can trust him with all things to prove himself faithful. Well let's sing together our final hymn this morning.

It's a lovely new translation as it were of the 23rd Psalm The Lord's My Shepherd. It's number 808 in our books and it reminds us and calls us to trust him.

Can we sing these words of the chorus believing it and again renewing our hope in him. I will trust in you alone. I'll trust in you alone.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[34 : 53] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

And I will trust you alone. And I will trust you alone.

For your endless rest we follow, And the rest will lead me home.

And though I know the darkest night, I will not fear the evil one.

[36 : 18] For you are with me and you're wrong and strong, And how proud I need to know.

And I will trust you alone. And I will trust you alone.

For your endless rest we follow, Your goodness will lead me home.

Now to him who is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, Above all that we ask or even imagine,

According to his power that is at work in us, To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus,

Throughout every generation, Now and forever and ever.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.