

Our Story of Redemption

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[0:00] All right, so like Bear said, we're starting a whole new series. If it's your first Sunday, it's a great Sunday to be here. You get to be at the launching point of this, and we are going to be going through the book of Exodus.

And if you grew up in church, you're probably really familiar with a lot of the stories that are in Exodus. We're thinking about Moses being put in a basket, floating down the Nile, being pulled out of the water.

We think about Moses and the burning bush that never really burnt. And then, of course, there's the crossing through the Red Sea. There's all the plagues, and then so on and so forth, the calf, the golden calf, all those things.

And so this book is a lot more than just those epic moments, though, right? This book, man, it puts God's power on display, and that's awesome. But it's more than just like disassociated moments that wow us.

It's a book about God's redemption plan. Actually, when we look at the book of Exodus, it's this little moment in history, in Israel's history, but it explains the whole of history of what God is on about and what his plan is and what he's doing and what he's always done.

[1:10] And so this book is the prototype for what salvation is in Jesus Christ. As N.T. Wright puts it, it says, he says, it is the key to understanding the meaning of the cross of Christ.

And if you think about those guys when Jesus came and then went and then the church started spreading the gospel, they didn't have the New Testament to draw from. They were actually proving Jesus through the Old Testament.

And so you can be sure that the apostles, when they would go into new lands and they were sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, they were coming back to Exodus, amongst many other passages in the Bible and pulling out the truth of who Jesus was and how he was the fulfillment of those things.

And so Exodus isn't not only, it's not only Israel's story of liberation from slavery in Egypt, it is also the Christian story of God's salvation. God's salvation that delivers us from sin and brings us all the way home, brings us all the way to the promised land, all the way to heaven, eternal life in him.

And so before we just jump into it, I also want to say that, hey, this isn't just this amazing story of God's redemption. It's also, it's a story of God's grace as well.

[2:24] It puts it on display because God doesn't have to redeem. God didn't redeem us and he doesn't redeem us because he owes us something and he doesn't redeem us because we deserved it.

Rather, God redeems us because he is faithful. He is faithful to his promises. Like we said about today, he's the promise maker and the promise keeper. God redeems because he is faithful and always fulfills his promise.

So we're going to be in Exodus chapter one. We're going to start in verse one. We should have the scriptures up here. If you have your Bible, you can turn there with me, but let's read together. These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his household.

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher. All right, got through that fast. All the descendants of Jacob were 70 persons in all.

Joseph was already in Egypt and Joseph died and all his brothers and all that generation. But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly. They multiplied and grew exceedingly strong so that the land was filled with them.

[3:27] So Exodus kicks off where the book of Genesis left off. It's kind of like a TV show that starts with a backstory, you know, like previously on The Walking Dead.

And so the backstory kind of kicks us off so that we know, okay, that helps us make sense of what's about to happen, right? And that's what Exodus is doing here. And there's even more of the backstory.

Let's, I just want to make sure you know it. So let's just run through it really quick. So Jacob, it refers to him. He's the great grandson of Abraham. And if you know Abraham, Abraham is the guy who God came to him and called him out of his city and said, hey, I'm going to have a special relationship with you.

I'm going to make you into a great nation. I'm going to bring you into a land called Canaan and that's going to be yours and it's going to be your inheritance. And so time goes on and Abraham's great grandson, Jacob, came along and then he had 12 sons.

One of them named was Joseph. His brothers hated him and they hated him so much they sold him into slavery and lied to dad about it. So you have Jacob, he's at home dad.

[4:29] He's very sad. You have Joseph in Egypt, probably mad. And you have Jacob's other sons who sold them into slavery. They're very bad. And so Joseph is in Egypt getting falsely accused of rape, lands in jail, then gets out because he interprets Pharaoh's dream that predicted a coming famine.

And not only does that, but then he architects a way to save Egypt and all the surrounding people and nations from dying of famine, right? Instantly, Joseph's this hero. He gets promoted to second of the land, only to Pharaoh.

So goodbye prison, hello palace, right? For Joseph. Then Joseph, later on in the story, he reunites with his family, including his brothers. There's reconciliation. He forgives his brothers.

There's lots of tears. There's lots of snot. There's lots of hugging happening, right? Lots of like good heart emojis going on. And then God tells Jacob, Israel, hey, you're in Canaan. I want you to go to Egypt.

Your son Joseph's in Egypt. I want you to go there and be reunited with Joseph. And he makes this promise to Jacob. In Genesis 46, 2 to 4, God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, Jacob, Jacob.

[5:33] And he said, here I am. Then he said, I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt. For there I will make you into a great nation. I myself will go down with you to Egypt.

And I will also bring you up again. And Joseph's hand shall close your eyes. And so we see some of God's promises he's making to Jacob here, right? I'm going to go.

I'm going to go with you into Egypt. I'm going to make you a great nation. There in Egypt is where you're going to become a great nation, okay? So we see that fulfilled in the early part of Exodus 1 that we just read.

Check. I'm going to go down with you to Egypt. He's not saying like, hey, I need you to go down in Egypt. I'm going to stay over here in Canaan. And then at some point you guys will come back and then you can kick it with me again, right? That's not what's happening.

He's, I'm going to send you into Egypt. I'm going to go with you. And then I'm going to bring you up again. I'm going to bring you back. I'm going to bring you back to the land. I promise because God fulfills his promises. Exodus 1, 5, remember it tells us they came as this small clan.

[6:35] So Jacob and all his family, they go down into Egypt and there's 70 persons in all. Not quite a great nation. But then what we see, something happened, right? They started multiplying like rabbits.

I don't know what was going on. I don't know if every time they became pregnant, they had a litter of puppies or what was going on. But they started multiplying at a very rapid rate. And some reckon in the 400 years where they came down to 70 and then they came out of Egypt, there was more than 600,000 people.

Israel became more than 600,000 people strong. So something was going on. Maybe you can blame it on the cold Egyptian nights and the smell of sheep and goats. I don't know. Whatever was working for them was working for them, right?

But we see that in a few short generations it became strong in number. God is faithfully doing what he promised to do. And you know what? I'm sure, man, that was awesome.

I'm sure that made Israel happy. I'm sure they looked around and they began to see themselves multiplying and being fruitful and spreading out and stepping into the promises of God. And they were like, man, this is awesome. This is so cool. It made them happy.

[7:38] And that's awesome. And stepping into God's promises is so cool. But you know what? The story of Exodus reminds us that while God is for us, there's an enemy that is against us.

There's a real enemy that doesn't want to see God's purposes and plans fulfilled. He didn't want God's people to become strong and powerful.

See, Satan, sin, and this age, this fallen world want to keep us from God's promises. They want to crush God's promises. And so while Egypt is a real place and all this is happening in Exodus, it's also this spiritual metaphor for the world that we live in.

It's a fallen world. And this fallen world isn't for God. It's anti-God. And then we look at Pharaoh, the leader of Egypt. And he's akin to Satan. He's akin to the devil who rules this present age, right?

Ephesians talks about this. He talks about the prince of the power of this age. So what does all this mean? What is God getting at? What is he trying to tell us?

[8:39] See, the more that we step into God's promises, the more God's enemies fight back. The more our enemies kick back. And how do God's enemies fight?

How do they fight us, right? Well, I want to propose that there's three things. And three things we can actually see from Scripture, right? They get us to drift. Drift from God.

Well, they want to have dominion over us and they want to destroy us. Those are the three ways God's enemies fight and are coming against us. And they drift. They get us to drift by seducing our hearts.

By seducing our hearts away from God so that God's no longer the most important thing. That we don't start connecting the promises of God that we're experiencing to God. We don't start seeing the things of the way God is blessing us as coming from God anymore.

And then that turns into their dominion over us. We drift from God and we don't worship God alone. We start to worship other things and we become enslaved to our passions. And that's where the enemy wants us to be because the end deal is he wants to destroy us.

[9:44] And this is exactly what we see the enemy is going to try to do to Israel as they were becoming a mighty nation. Egypt was God's provision for a season.

It was God's means for him to fulfill his promise. But in the time that Israel was there in Egypt, they began to cozy up to Egypt in ways they shouldn't have.

They were getting bigger. They were getting stronger. They were multiplying. Their needs were being met. Got land, got food. Everything was going so well. And here's the thing, guys. There's always this lurking danger when we're prospering.

There's always this lurking danger when things are going well. And this is it. We often just drift from God. When things are going well, we're kind of like, well, we don't really need God anymore. Things are going great.

Things are going fine. And then we start attributing to our work and our efforts as being all that is what's accomplishing all that we need. So Israel went from dwelling in Egypt to having Egypt dwell in their hearts.

[10:42] And that's what we got to watch out for. If you don't believe me, Ezekiel 20, 5 to 8 kind of fills in the gaps that we don't get in this first chapter in Exodus. And God's saying something and reminding the people of Israel of their idolatry back in this particular chapter in this time of Exodus.

It says this, Thus says the Lord God, On the day when I chose Israel, I swore to the offspring of the house of Jacob, making myself known to them in the land of Egypt.

Context here is Exodus 1. I swore to them saying, I am the Lord your God. On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, a land flown with milk and honey, the most glorious of all lands.

And I said to them, cast away the detestable things your eyes feast on, every one of you. And do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt.

I am the Lord your God. But they rebelled against me and were not willing to listen to me. See, what is happening is they're in Egypt and they're seeing God's promises, but in the meantime they've drifted.

[11:53] And they've drifted so far that they've turned into idol worshipers. They've adopted the worship of the land. They adopted the Egyptian idolatry and they made it their own.

There's an age-old Latin phrase that captures the essence of the Christian life, right? And it's this, quorum deus. It just means this, living before the face of God.

R.C. Sproul says this, to live quorum deus, to live one's entire life in the presence of God, under the authority of God, to the glory of God. And so what we, the danger is, is man, when things are going well, we stop living this way.

We start living like Israel did, this slow drift. And all of a sudden, our love for God begins to go from hot to lukewarm and then from lukewarm to cold.

And all of a sudden, we stop thinking about living before the face of God anymore. God ceases to be this real thing in our lives where we're thinking about Him and we're realizing that we can always be living before His presence all the time, under His authority, under His rule, under His sovereignty.

[13:03] And what can grow, what can happen in our hearts, like the sun setting over the horizon, our love for God can dip until all of a sudden we find ourselves in darkness. Israel ceased to live quorum deus.

And when that happens to them and what happened to them can happen to us, we drift and then what happens? We begin to worship the idols of the land. Here's the funny thing. The Egyptians had many gods.

They worshiped the sun god. They worshiped God that, you know, had control over livestock, over the plants and the produce, over the Nile and all that. And even Pharaoh himself was a god and they worshiped Pharaoh.

So you see Israel actually joining in and worshiping Pharaoh as a god himself. And for a while, for Israel, things were going well. God's promises were still being fulfilled. They're still multiplying. They're still being fruitful. Everything's good, hunky-dory. But make no mistake, when we drift into idolatry and we drift into sin, it never stays that way. See, when we forsake God, when you forsake God who is a good father, you end up in bondage to a Pharaoh.

[14:09] Sin always leads to slave and suffering, guys. Check out what happens in Exodus 1 verse 8. Now there arose a new king over Egypt who did not know Joseph, and he said to his people, Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us.

Come, let us deal shrewdly with them. Lest they multiply and if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land. Therefore, they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens.

They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Ramses. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied, and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves and made their lives bitter with hard service and mortar and brick.

And in all kinds of work in the field, in all their work, they ruthlessly made them work as slaves. Sin always turns on us, right? It holds out this promise.

Man, things are going well. You're going to, if you just worship me, it's going to be good. It's going to go well for you. But then what we find is that it turns on us and it actually enslaves us.

[15:18] It doesn't serve us, it enslaves us. The devil here isn't a dummy. Pharaoh wasn't a dummy. He's shrewd, right? He wants to deal with them shrewdly, and that's what happens to us. This great lie that the devil gets us to believe is that our slavery to sin is our best and our only option, right?

We get so in bondage to sin and enslaved to sin that we kind of give up hope that we could ever get out of it. And so what we do is we settle for a life of quiet desperation, right?

That's kind of what happens in our day and age. We may not be forced into working and building someone else's kingdom with mortar and brick, but we settle for a life of quiet desperation.

We settle for too little. There's this interesting story. Joseph Stalin. You guys remember him, the Russian dictator.

He told his officers and his henchmen, you want to know how we can rule the people and keep them from revolting against us? And he grabbed a chicken, and this chicken's struggling against him, and he began plucking the feathers one by one off this chicken as this chicken is fighting and getting hurt, and he's inflicting this pain on him.

[16:31] And he did it until the chicken had no more feathers, and then he gave the chicken a little bit of food, and then he put the chicken down. You know what the chicken did? Clung to his leg. He walked around the room.

The chicken would follow him everywhere. And he says, this is the way to rule the people. Do you see how that chicken followed me for food, even though I had caused it such torture?

People are like that chicken. Guys, that's what sin does to us. Man, it promises us everything, and then it gives us an inordinate amount of pain, and we suffer because of it, but we're like these chickens that cling so closely to it because we can't imagine anything else.

We've become comfortable with that. It's all that we have hope for. I grew up in church, saved as a young kid. I knew the Bible.

I knew God's promises. I knew all the stories, but then I began to be seduced by the world as I got older. It's promises of riches and luxurious living and career and fame and all that.

[17:36] Now, I've just bought into that. Man, I wanted to have this amazing career. I wanted to be rolling in the dough. I wanted to have fancy cars and great money, and so I saw my career as the opportunity for me to get what I want, and I launched into it.

You know what? From the time I was 18, I was working 70-plus hours a week, no joke, and that went on for 10 years. And you know what? I experienced some success.

Sin gave me a little taste of what I wanted. By the time I was 21, I was making six figures. I was like, yes, I'm well on my way. I'm getting to where I want. The future was bright ahead of me.

But you know what the cost was? The cost was that I could never stop working. Work followed me wherever I went. I couldn't enjoy the money that I had.

If I went on vacations, work would be busy. I would spend all my time working, just not in the office. And so I lost out on so many good memories with my family.

[18:36] My marriage suffered because of that, right? And then to kind of cope with the stress of life, I turned to pornography and then got addicted to that because of how bad things were.

And so what happened was this promise of what I wanted turned into my slave master. Actually, it enslaved me. It held out this thing of, Jesse, look at this good life that you can get, and then it turned on me.

And it cost me so much. I was like that plucked chicken. I bought into it. I'll tell you another story about a friend of mine.

He started dabbling in drugs when he was a young man, an early teenager. And it was great for him because he got new friends, and he became popular with some of the gals that were into that scene as well.

But you know what? They weren't truly caring for him. They were more interested about sharing highs and experiences than really sharing life together. And the drugs that he turned to became stronger and stronger until he realized he was at a point that he, though he had freedom to do drugs, he didn't have freedom to not do drugs.

[19:41] He couldn't say no to them anymore, and he realized his addiction. And I remember sitting across from him at a park. Like, we had an intervention, me and some other guys, and we said, hey, man, you need to get to rehab.

Something needs to stop. You're ruining yourself. This thing has taken over your life, and it is killing you slowly. And he said, you know what? You're right.

Man, you know what? I can stop all this stuff. Like, cold turkey, it'll be hard, but I could do it. He's like, but just one thing, man. Don't take away the Xanax because literally if you take that away from me, I think I'm going to die. You want to talk about enslavement to something.

Something that is that strong where you could at some point believe that without this pill, you are going to die. Man, that is the definition of bondage.

That is the definition of being hopeless. But sometimes it isn't the pain and the suffering isn't the sin because of the sin that we run to.

[20:45] Sometimes it's that we're sinned against. In pastoral counseling, I come across people who've been victims of all type of abuse, and it's heartbreaking. And it's not their fault.

It's nothing they've done. There's just evil people in this world that perpetrate evil on other people. And they suffered in ways that it's so hard to imagine, and it hurts me to think about. And what's more devastating than the abuse is the way that abuse begins to define their life.

Right? They become bitter and vengeful because of those things. Or sometimes they even take on the guilt that the abuser should be having.

They start to say, you know what? I deserve this. Or I did something to deserve this. And they begin to believe that lie. They get plucked like that chicken. When people are enslaved to that victim

identity or vengeful identity, they become a real danger to themselves and to others. But here's the thing, guys. Ultimately, Pharaoh and Egypt, they're out to dominate and destroy us. We look at what Israel did to God.

[21 : 52] Right? God is being so kind to them and multiplying them and making them fruitful. And then they walk away from him. They ditch him for something else. We can look at that and think, you know what?

Well, you sow what you reap. You're probably getting what you deserve. And you know what? Maybe that's true. Maybe they were getting what they deserve. But you know what? God's redemption isn't about us getting what we deserve.

He gives us what we don't deserve. Right? And that's grace. His redemption is rooted in his grace. God is out to deliver and redeem us into his good promises because he is good and he is faithful to his promises.

And here's the thing, because it's God's plan of redemption and he does it in grace, we don't get to prescribe to him how it happens. Have you ever prayed?

I mean, have you ever been in like a dark season, a difficult time, something really tough? Have you ever prayed to God? I mean, really sincerely prayed, just laid your heart out there, cried out for him, and then nothing happens.

[22 : 56] He doesn't answer your prayer. What is that all about? Why is God silent sometimes? Why doesn't he respond and save in those moments?

And if that's true, then how can he be trusted if he treats the people he loves like that? Or at least the people he claims to love, right? How can he just leave them to suffer without stepping in and intervening and getting them out?

And here is what God is teaching us from Exodus. God is always working to fulfill his promises, even when he is silent. So in this story that we're going to continue on reading, there's two ways that we see God keeping his promises to Israel in the midst of their suffering.

And the first is he raises up godly women to keep Israel's sons for being murdered. Verse 15, it says, The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of them was named Shiphrah and the other Pua, And when you serve as midwife to the Hebrew women and see them on the birthstool, if it is a son, you shall kill him.

But if it is a daughter, she shall live. But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded. But let the male children live.

[24 : 13] So God raises up these two ladies. And most likely, by all accounts, they were actually Egyptian women.

They weren't Hebrew women. They were Egyptian women whose job was to deliver for the midwives. But he raises them up to fear him and not Pharaoh. And then we see Pharaoh going after the sons.

Why was Pharaoh going after the sons? Why is he like, hey, I want to kill the sons but not the daughters? Like, what's up, dude? Aren't you an equal opportunist here? So here, think about this. If you wanted to keep a nation enslaved to you, in those days, man, the good idea is to limit their fighting numbers, right?

And in those days, when you went to war, you didn't have jets or tanks or bombs or you didn't even have fancy catapults, right? It was hand-to-hand combat stuff. So might and power were the key to winning wars and winning battles.

So sons equaled future soldiers. And Pharaoh was in this for the long haul. He wanted to keep Israel under his thumb for as long as possible.

[25 : 15] And so he's nipping this in the bud by going after the sons and killing them. And that was Pharaoh's reason. But you know what? The interesting thing, the spiritual Pharaoh, Satan, behind the scenes, what he knew, he knew that a he, a son born to a woman, one day would crush him and defeat him and his reign.

God promised that in Genesis after Adam and Eve sinned. He said, your offspring born to a woman is going to crush Satan.

He will crush Satan. Which is why we always see time and time again through the Bible, Satan going after the sons. Going after the baby boys.

Because he fights dirty. And he wants to win. But here's the thing, guys. God keeps him from being successful. He raises up these awesome, godly women and uses them to keep his redemption plan

on track.

And here's the encouragement. No matter how insignificant in power or number you may be, it's always the right time to obey God. It's always the right time to fear God.

[26 : 24] Because God could be using you in that moment for some amazing things and keeping his plan of redemption on track. And that's what he does all the time. And then again, we see him saving his people.

Because not long after this, Pharaoh attempts again to go after the sons. He says this in verse 22. So he tries another tactic, right?

He commands all the people instead of the midwives. So it goes on to say this in chapter 2. A man from the house of Levi went and took his wife, a Levite woman. The woman conceived, bore a son. And when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the riverbank.

And his sister, Moses' sister, stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. Now check this out. Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river while her young women walked beside the river.

[27 : 29] She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman and she took it. And when she opened it, she saw the child and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, this is one of the Hebrew children, right?

Man, that's a bummer. If we're looking at the story of like, oh great, Pharaoh's daughter found a Hebrew child. We know how this is going to end. But God is faithful to deliver on his promises. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, shall I go and call you a nurse for the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, go. So the girl went and called the child's mother and Pharaoh's daughter said to her, take this child away and nurse him for me and I will give you your wages.

So the woman took the child and nursed him. And when the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter. Man, the most unlikely person.

God comes and works out his plan of redemption and keeps it going. It's amazing. And so we see what happens for the rest of chapter two.

[28 : 33] We don't have time to get into it. But Moses is saved, right? And he is weaned as a child and then he goes to live in Pharaoh's palace with Pharaoh's daughter.

And in the meantime, all this happening as he's growing older, we still see God's people are suffering. And to them, to Israel, God still seems silent.

They're out there. They're being tortured through hard work. But we have the privilege of seeing behind the scenes in this story. And what do we see?

Actually, what we see, we see God is near. And he's at work bringing about his redemption.

Remember that promise to Israel in Genesis 46. God said, I will be with you in Egypt.

In the suffering, in the good times, in the bad times, I am going to be with you. So all the while Israel's suffering, God is preparing Moses. In the rest of chapter two, just to quickly summarize it, for the sake of time, Moses grows up into this man and he isn't faithful to Pharaoh.

[29 : 43] He's actually zealous for God's people and he goes and he's checking out the work of the kingdom. And he sees an Egyptian taskmaster abusing one of his Hebrew brothers.

And he goes and he kills the Egyptian taskmaster. And he thought he was going to get away with it, but he doesn't. There was some other witnesses spying on him. They called him out on it and he got afraid. And he said, oh, I'm in trouble.

I better get out of here. And then he has to flee to Midian. So he has to actually go away. And then Moses, he was probably a bad dude, man. He might have been like a really good UFC guy, you know.

He might even like have won some championships in the octagon. One, we see him like slay an Egyptian taskmaster. And then when he flees to Midian, like the first thing that happens is he rolls up at this well.

And there's some like sheep herders picking on some gals at the well. And he all by himself runs off this crowd of shepherds, right? He must have been some kind of like jujitsu toting dude.

[30 : 40] I don't know what they had back in the day, but he was a serious guy, right? And so this is all happening in the meantime. And then he becomes a shepherd and then he gets a wife and he

has a son and he's there for decades.

And all the while that's happening, Israel is still over here and they're still in Egypt and they're still suffering and they're still crying out to God and God is still seemingly silent.

Yet we know behind the scenes, God is working out his promises. God is working out his plans.

God is preparing his redeemer. Has he forgotten Israel? No. Exodus 2.23 says this.

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 our cries.

[31:45] He knows and sees our suffering and never forgets us or his promises. I want to ask us, how do you handle suffering?

Do you just try to ignore it? Grit your teeth and bear it? Pretend it's not there? No, no, no. I can get through this on my own. Could be worse. Do you blame God?

God, how could you allow this to happen to me? Start grumbling against him. Do you question God's goodness or if he cares? God, are you just indifferent? Why aren't you stepping in and intervening?

And what Exodus teaches us is to not run after these other functional saviors that we can run after to alleviate our suffering. It's to cry out to our heavenly father.

Not to earthly pharaohs. How are you handling your suffering? Are you crying out to God? Or are you grumbling and blaming him? Or blaming others?

[32:51] Don't let your feelings dictate what to do. Hold on to the truth. Look at what happens here. The truth is that God is faithful. The truth is God hasn't abandoned you.

God is near. The truth is God will hear your cry. And the truth is God will redeem you. He will deliver you. We have this promise. He turns all things for our good.

The suffering that you go through. The trials that we experience were promised in Romans 8. He turns all things for our good. To those whom he loves and are called by his name.

And here's the other thing, guys. Even in your suffering, you know what? While God may allow suffering to happen, he always goes through it with us. You gotta remember this.

You never, ever, ever face suffering alone. If you believe in Jesus, God is your father and you have faith in him, you must realize that you never suffer alone.

[33:57] He is with you in the suffering. Consider this. In the New Testament, Jesus rises from the dead, is in heaven.

His apostles are spreading the good news about him. The church is growing and then it becomes persecuted. A man named Saul is persecuting the church.

He's jailing them. They're getting imprisoned. They're losing their possessions. They're getting falsely accused of things and some of them are even dying for their faith.

And then Jesus stops Paul on his road to Damascus, knocks him off his donkey. And what does he say to Paul? Paul or Saul, why are you persecuting the church?

No, he says, Paul, why are you persecuting me? See, God loves his people. And you know what?

[34:56] When we suffer, he suffers. He feels our suffering. He not only knows about it, man, he bears it with us. That's an amazing truth.

I want you to realize that, man. Jesus isn't up in heaven and everything's like, well, everything's cool here. Why are you persecuting me? He feels our pain.

He knows our suffering. God takes our suffering personal. The last words of Exodus chapter 2 shows us this. It says, and God knew. What does it mean for God to know?

I'm going to have the band come up. We're going to end here. What does it mean for God to know?

To be known by God, William Edgar says this, to be known by God is to be loved, to be in the best place you could possibly be.

This is because God now bears the burden, not the people. Knowledge here means full acknowledgement and commitment to intervene. In Exodus, God knew and sent Moses as his redeemer to lead his people out of Egypt and out of Pharaoh's hand.

[36:08] But there is a greater enemy, a greater enemy that we are all in bondage to, and that's the enemy of sin and death. And so God sent his only son, Jesus Christ, the greater redeemer, the greater Moses, and Jesus came and he put on flesh.

He carried our burdens. He carried our sorrow. He came in our same likeness and he walked among us and he lived a perfect life that we couldn't live and he died a death and we could not die. And through his death and his resurrection, we are forgiven of our sins. We're not in bondage to sin anymore. And death is something we simply pass through. And you know what?

He's with us even as we pass through death. He says he will never leave us or forsake us. And even through the valley of the shadow of death, whether that is metaphorical or of a dark time in your life or a trial or that's the legitimate real thing of us going on from this world to the next, this age to the next, Jesus is with us every step of the way because he loves us and because God is faithful to fulfill his promises.

some homework for us to do this week. Maybe think about this right now. Maybe think about this at some point. Maybe it's around a dining room table.

[37 : 31] Maybe it's in community group. Open up some conversation. Take turns sharing how you might be suffering or have faced suffering. How are you facing it?

Are you trying to face it alone? Or are you facing it with God? How may God use it for his glory and your good? And what are some ways you can praise God and trust him in your suffering?

Just think about that. And now we're going to respond by taking communion. And as we come and take communion, we're reminded that Jesus did suffer in our place. He went to the cross.

His body, represented by the bread, really broken, actually broken for us. His blood was shed, represented in the cup. His blood was shed for the forgiveness of our sins so we could be set free from bondage to sin.

And we share in that suffering. Communion is co-union. It is being united with Christ. It's sharing in his suffering and partaking of that, knowing that he also shares with us in our suffering.

[38 : 41] It's a beautiful promise that we're with him and he is with us. And this sacred meal is for those who believe. And we want to invite you, if you don't believe, to put your faith in Jesus.

Put your faith in Jesus and respond to him. He is holding out something precious to you today to set you free from the bondage to sin and death, to live with him.

Let's pray. Lord, thank you. Thank you for your story of redemption and your actual work of redemption, Jesus. We see this powerful picture being played out in front of us in this book of Exodus.

And it helps us to understand this truth that sin, Satan, this world, they want to enslave us. They want to take us out.

They want to keep us in bondage. They want to keep us from the hope of your promises. But Lord God, we see that in Jesus Christ, those things are defeated.

[39 : 47] And we see this promise and as Paul talks about in Romans 6, that we are dead to sin and alive to Christ. Sin has no dominion over us anymore. And so we must consider ourselves dead to sin.

And the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead is at work in us. And it's an amazing truth and an amazing promise. And we want to step into those promises. And so we thank you, Jesus Christ. We thank you for your amazing plan of redemption.

Amen.