

# A Cry For Help Answered

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[ 0 : 00 ] I want to encourage you to open your Bibles to Etzis chapter 2. We'll continue our study in the book of Etzis.

We're really at the end of chapter 2. We have just a few verses there, and then we're going to read all of chapter 3. The sermon will cover some of all that material, but we're going to go back and zero in on some parts of that, Lord willing, next week.

But if you'll start with me, Etzis chapter 2, beginning in verse 23, we'll read there together. 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. Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness.

[ 1 : 16 ] And he came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed.

And Moses said, I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned. When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, Moses, Moses!

And he said, here I am. Then he said, do not come near. Take your sandals off your feet. For the place in which you are standing is holy ground. And he said, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters.

I know their sufferings. And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them out of that land to go to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

[ 2 : 37 ] And now, behold, the crowd of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppressed them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.

But Moses said to God, Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt? He said, But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you that I have sent you.

When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain. Then

Moses said to God, If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, What is his name?

What shall I say to them? God said to Moses, I am who I am. And he said, Say this to the people of Israel. I am has sent me to you. God also said to Moses, Say this to the people of Israel.

The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

[ 3 : 43 ] Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt.

And I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey.

And they will listen to your voice. And you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to them, The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us.

And now, please, let us go a three-day journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand.

So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it. After that, he will let you go. And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians.

[ 4 : 43 ] And when you go, you shall not go empty. But each woman shall ask of her neighbor and any woman who lives in her house for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing.

You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters, so you shall plunder the Egyptians. Let's pray together. Lord, again, thank you for your word.

We pray for your spirit's help that we would understand it, that you would make it clear to us. Even that we would understand the application and how relevant it is to us today. We ask in Christ's name.

Amen. Amen. So we saw last week Moses in Midian. We talked about there's a 40-year period in which he's there. And while Moses is in Midian, the situation for the Israelites in Egypt has continued to grow worse.

We see there in chapter 223, it says, During those many days. And again, those many days cover a 40-year period. That whole time that Moses has been in Midian, that middle part of Moses' life.

[ 5 : 43 ] So 40 years have passed in those many days. And it seems as though the people had hoped that maybe things would get better. We see in verse 23, During those many days, the king of Egypt died.

And so maybe things will change in terms of their slavery. Even in terms of what Moses faced. Maybe things would get better for them.

But apparently things have not. And we don't know if they had grown before. But we get to this point and they groan. And they cry out. And what I want us to see in this is that God hears their cry for help and he answers it.

And so I've entitled the sermon, A Cry for Help Answered. God's people cry for help and God answers it. And that's what I want us to look at today. But first we see the first point.

God hears and remembers. God's answer, at least as we see it, begins with their cry for help in verse 23.

[ 6 : 44 ] Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And so we begin to see God's response. And it says that they were groaning. And when we think of groaning, I think we tend to think of complaining.

It's obviously not just a complaint that they have here. They do. I'm sure they complained about the situation they're in. They're groaning against the situation they face. But it's not just a complaining. Even in God's word we see that same word being used not only in terms of complaining. For example, Romans 8.26. Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought.

But the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And this is something similar to what I think is being expressed here by the Israelites in Egypt. They're groaning to God in maybe ways that are too deep for them to express in words.

The pain has become severe. They cry out to God. And we're told even what's meant by their cry out to God. Look at, again, verse 23.

[ 7 : 50 ] They groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. And it says, Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. So it's not just a groaning about their life and how bad things are.

It's not just a moaning. But it's an expression to God. They cry for help that they would be rescued. There's a specific need that's being expressed here.

And so I really think we have to understand this as they pray. Right? They're praying. My situation is not good. And they're praying that they would be rescued from that situation.

And I believe, although there may be some that have forgotten who God is, they may have forgotten God's name, that obviously who God is has been passed to them. And they're crying out specifically to God that they might be rescued.

I thought of Psalm 130 maybe as an example of this, where we read the psalmist saying, Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ear be attentive to the voice of my

pleas for mercy.

[ 8 : 49 ] And here they are in the depths and they're crying out to God that he might show them mercy and they might rescue them. And we read in verse 23, the second half, that their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God.

God hears it. He's aware of that. Again, I think it's directed to God. This is a passionate prayer to God. God heard it and their groaning. Verse 24, God heard their groanings.

And so, God hears their prayer. He's aware of this dilemma that they're in. So God hears the prayers of his people, even when it may seem to us as though he's not heard.

Sometimes we imagine as though we pray and our situation doesn't change. Nothing seems to happen. We wonder if God's heard. What's not expressed to us is, it says, during those many days the king of Egypt died and the people of Israel groaned.

Is that actually a sequential statement? Is this saying in those 40 years they were groaning? How long was the slavery? We saw already that it could have been, the slavery itself may have been as long as 200 years.

[ 9 : 58 ] I don't imagine this is the first time that someone's cried out for help. And if they're crying for 200 years, or maybe the cry has only gotten more extreme as it gets closer to the end, might not they have wondered?

Does God hear? Is God listening? Will God respond? Will he rescue us? But we have a testimony here that God does hear. He hears their prayer and he responds to it.

In particular, we were told that he remembered his covenant to the patriarchs, to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob, the covenant he had made with them. Now, what does it mean when it says God remembers?

It doesn't mean what we usually mean when we say someone remembers. It doesn't mean that God forgot. Right? God is omniscient. He is all-knowing.

There's nothing that God forgets. And so it's not as though God was sitting there thinking, oh yeah, I knew there was something. I said to Abraham, you know, I've got this little string tied around my pinky.

[ 10 : 59 ] There's your pinky. Not that. Okay. Tied around my pinky to remind me. What was it? God hasn't forgotten. So what then does it mean when it says that God remembers his covenant?

One commentator described it this way. He said that when it says God remembers, what it means is it is a prelude to action. I thought that's a good summary. It's a prelude to action.

God remembers means God has decided to act now on what he has promised. He said he would do something, and now he's going to act on it. And so this remembrance is saying God's about to act.

They've cried out for help, and God said he's going to do it, and now he's going to do it. And what is it that he remembers? Well, it says a covenant to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

I believe this is just the Abrahamic covenant that we see in Genesis 12, in Genesis 15, in Genesis 17, that then gets repeated to Isaac and to Jacob. He reaffirms it to them.

[ 12 : 00 ] But in particular, he's remembered his promise to Abraham to deliver them. This is Genesis 15, 13 through 14. Then the Lord said to Abraham, Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in the land that is not theirs, and they will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for 400 years.

But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. And so the passage, if you take the whole passage that we just read, a little over a chapter, what we see is really the fulfillment of God's promise, isn't it?

We're not there yet, but notice even it says that he will bring judgment on the nation they serve. We're going to see that carried out in the book of Exodus.

It says, Afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Look at chapter 3, verse 22. But each woman shall ask her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing.

You shall put them on your sons and your daughters. I think the implication is, you're going to have so much of it, you can't wear it all, so just put it on your kids. And it says, So you shall plunder the Egyptians.

[ 13 : 10 ] Why? Because that's part of what God's promise would happen. God's going to bring judgment on the Egyptians, and he's going to plunder them. They're going to receive great wealth

from the Egyptians.

And so we see the fulfillment of that. And I think also we understand that this is the broader Abrahamic covenant. And you remember the Abrahamic covenant. God promised Abraham that he would have a child, and from that child would come a great people, many nations.

And from that child also, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. And they would be given a land in which he would dwell, which is what he's told here, that they will return to that same land. And so we're seeing God's fulfillment of that, his promise. But in particular, we see in the midst of that covenant, he even tells them that they're going to go into exile. They're going to live in a foreign land.

They're going to be servants in that land. And did you notice God even tells Abraham how long it will be? They will be afflicted for 400 years. Now, it may be that there are some in Egypt that still remember this covenant, and who are praying to God and saying, you know, I'm checking my calendar, and it sure looks like 400 years is just about up.

[14:23] Now's the time to cry out. But we know God is responding. He remembered his covenant in the sense of, he promised 400 years, and now 400 years has come, and now's the time. This is the appointed time, the moment that God has ordained to deliver his people.

It just so happens they're crying out at the same time. He hears, and he remembers his covenant. Verse 25 is a little cryptic. It says, God saw the people of Israel, and God knew.

Psalms 34, 15 tells us, the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and his ear towards their cry. And so, God's always seeing his people. Right?

We could say as well, just as God doesn't forget, there aren't people that God doesn't see. He's omniscient. He's also omnipresent. He sees everyone. So what does it mean when it says that God saw them, and he remembered?

I think that the text itself may give us some help. If you look at chapter 3, verse 7, then the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters.

[15:30] I know their suffering. So here almost, well, in close context to what we saw in verse 29, we see the same two words. God saw, and God knew. And what did God see?

God saw their affliction, and he knew their suffering. And I believe that's what chapter 2 is pointing us to. It's God seeing what's happening to his people.

He's seeing how they're being mistreated. He knows their suffering. Look at verse 9. And now behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I've also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppressed them.

So again, he's seen their oppression. I think the idea that God knew means more than just their suffering.

It means a concern for them. He has concern for them. There's a relationship that's being communicated there. It's telling us that God cares for his people. As I said already, the timing is right for him to act.

[16:32] Verse 23, we see that the king of Egypt died. Why is that important? Well, this is the king that wanted to kill Moses. This is not Moses' adopted grandfather, or Moses as the adopted grandson.

This isn't his grandfather. And so, when Moses comes back, this king maybe doesn't have the death warrant out for him, isn't going to kill him on sight. Moses can actually go and talk to this king. So if Moses is going to be the spokesperson, now he can actually go and speak to Pharaoh. And so the king dies. We're reminded as well, though, that God has appointed a time for everyone to die. And the bigger course of the timing is the 400 years is up. And so I would almost argue that the king dies because the 400 years are up. God has said he's going to live in them in 400 years, and so he's got to get this king out of the way to get it done.

And so God takes the life of the Pharaoh that there might be another in power that Moses would interact with. And so even the death of the king is according to God's timing, as well as the 400 years that was promised to Abraham has now passed.

[17:44] And it's the time for them to be delivered. We see God is active in their salvation, even at this stage. There are at least four active verbs that are used in this passage in reference to God.

We see that God hears, God remembers, God sees, and God knows. And so God is active as they cry to him for deliverance. God is active in delivering them.

Secondly, I want you to see that God provides a deliverer. He provides Moses. Now I've talked about this a little bit, but as we try to understand the book of Exodus and the big picture for the story, I think this is very crucial.

How does God answer their cry for help? How does God answer their prayer? Notice with me for a second just how the flow of the text goes.

And remember, Moses didn't put chapters in this book. We later went back and added chapters. So if you could just imagine the flow of it without that number three there. And look at what we see there.

[ 18 : 48 ] Verse 24 of chapter 2. 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. Now Moses was keeping the flock.

God's going to answer the prayer and how's he going to answer the prayer? Well there's a shift in focus, in setting. It moves from God's about to answer their prayer and then, and now Moses.

Now, I want to argue that is a major movement in the book. It's intentional. Moses is the author of the book, but more broadly, God, by his spirit inspiring this, is sending a message to the early audience.

those people wandering in the wilderness, as they recount this story, as they read this, and they're asking this question. Why is Moses our leader?

And we're going to see, they do ask that question. They wonder, why should Moses be our leader? And in particular, if we were to go even further in the Pentateuch in books like Numbers, we see the people's groaning and rebellion against Moses.

[ 20 : 02 ] And here we see an answer. God called Moses. God chose Moses. God sent Moses to be that deliverer for them. So Moses then is the direct answer to prayer.

Now, I know how that sounds because it's always awkward because we know Moses wrote the letter. If I were to stand up and tell you guys that you guys were praying for a pastor and I'm God's direct answer to your prayer, there'd be truth in that statement because in God's sovereignty, he brought me here.

And yet, we know how that sounds to say I'm God's answer to prayer, but we also understand that Moses is inspired by the Holy Spirit to write these words. He's writing what God has called him to write. And so there's a message being communicated to them and I'm going to argue to us as we go throughout the book.

But Moses is the direct answer to prayer. Listen to 1 Samuel 12a. When Jacob went into Egypt and the Egyptians oppressed them, then your fathers cried out to the Lord and the Lord sent Moses and Aaron who brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place.

So it's recounting exactly what we see here in this passage there in 1 Samuel. It says that they, when your fathers cried out to the Lord and the Lord sent Moses and Aaron. And so I think Moses is the answer to prayer and that's why we have this movement between chapter 2 and chapter 3.

[ 21 : 26 ] That's also why I'm covering such a large section because you look at the end of chapter 2, I think it intentionally flows into chapter 3. They're meant to go together. And so God calls Moses and gives him a mission to deliver his people, to save them out of the hand of the Egyptians.

Lord willing, next week we're going to look at the burning bush. I think it deserves its own message. There's a lot to account there with its calling and the name of God that's revealed. So I'm not going to spend a great deal of time on Moses' calling.

I would make the observation that God uses secondary means. That's how our confession talks about it. God is sovereign over all things and yet he uses secondary means. What that means is God isn't always acting without the help of means.

Sometimes people talk about things are miracles. I think the way we define miracles is for God to act apart from means. God does something that's beyond the natural means. But God's ordinary way of working is by ordinary means.

And here he raises up a man to deliver his people. Could God have delivered Israel in some other way? Sure he could have. Did he have to use Moses?

[ 22 : 44 ] Of course not. But what's remarkable to us is God chooses to use men to accomplish his purposes. And for us, I think the obvious implication would be things like the Great Commission.

Go there for all the world. Preaching the gospel. Making disciples of all nations. Baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Could God have sent the gospel to the ends of the

earth without us?

Sure he could have. He could appear in a burning bush in every country. And yet, that's not how God established his way of doing it. And even though it's Moses who's called to go and deliver the people, we know that it's God who's ultimately going to deliver them.

Look at verse 8 of chapter 3. And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land. God says he's come down to do this.

You may be aware of this, but you know, for example, the story of the Tower of Babel. Men worked together to build this tower to heaven. They're going to find their own way to God.

[ 23 : 48 ] And there's this phrase that says, and God came down to see what they were building. And remember, God sees all things. Did God have to come down to see it?

No, but I believe it's some divine humor. God's mocking the Tower of Babel. This great tower that's going to reach to the heavens that God has to stoop down.

He has to lower himself to see. Where's that tower you're working on? I can't even see it. Way down there. And so too, I think a similar message is being communicated to us here.

God's going to come down to deliver them. This great nation of Egypt, this great power that can conquer all the other nations that it faces. And God has to stoop down even to notice them.

He has to go down to a lower level even to deal with them. But I want you to see that it's the power of God that's going to deliver his people. We can trust even now that God's still working to accomplish his purposes.

[ 24 : 46 ] It's God's power that will accomplish even what he sends us to do. I mentioned earlier the Great Commission. Remember what Jesus said? He gives the Great Commission and he ends it with this.

And behold, I am with you always even to the end of the age. And so, God commands us, go, take the gospel to the ends of the earth and remember that I'm with you.

What's the power behind that work? It's Christ who's present with us by his spirit enabling the advance of the kingdom to the ends of the earth. And so too, I see something very similar here.

God's sending Moses but God's the active power that's going to deliver his people. Moses didn't want to be the guy.

Look at verse 11. But Moses said to God, who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt? Moses wasn't arrogant. He wasn't cocky about it.

[ 25 : 45 ] He didn't want to do it. Moses really asked two questions.

He says, who am I and who are you? And we're going to spend some time again next week, Lord willing, talking about who God is and how God reveals himself. But as for who Moses is, verse 12 answers the question, I will be with you.

And so, I think what God's saying is, Moses, it doesn't matter who you are. what matters is that I will be with you. It doesn't matter how great you are. It's not about your greatness. It's about my greatness and my power.

I will be with you. And God even promises in verse 12 a sign that he will be with Moses. Maybe you guys caught this as we read this, but consider the sign.

He said, but I will be with you and this shall be the sign for you that I have sent you. When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain. So what's the sign for Moses that God is sending Moses?

[ 26 : 51 ] They're going to worship God on the same mountain when they come out of Egypt. Think about that for a moment. Just imagine that you're being sent on a mission and you want some sign that you really should do the mission.

And the answer is, you're going to be successful with the mission. That's not especially helping in the forefront, is it? Right? Go do it because you're going to be successful with it.

That's how you're going to know that I'm sending you is you're going to be successful with it. I think what we have here is really an example of God really encouraging Moses to act on faith. What's the sign?

The sign is a promise of something that's going to happen after he does the work, not beforehand. Right? We always want some assurances beforehand. God gives Moses a promise and Moses acts on faith.

It's a promise he must receive by faith. And the promise is to return to this very same mountain. And Horeb is also Mount Sinai. It's the same mountain. And so where God speaks to Moses there in the

burning bush, he's also going to speak to him and give him the Ten Commandments and God's people will gather there.

[ 28 : 01 ] And so God does fulfill the promise, but Moses doesn't know that. He has to trust God by faith to act. We also have assurances later on that God was with Moses in his leadership.

Joshua 1.5, God tells Joshua, just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. That's the way that God was with Moses. He didn't leave Moses and he didn't forsake Moses.

He stayed with him and helped him throughout all Moses' days. God didn't leave him. He helped him with the work. And God assures him in verse 18 that they will listen to your voice.

Again, because he's given this message from God, God's going to ensure the results, but the people will listen to Moses because God will be with him. Now remember, I said one of the things that Moses is doing in the book of Exodus is showing that he is the man who's supposed to be leading them.

And so think about what we've just seen in light of that context. Moses is saying, look, I didn't want this job. I didn't want to do this. I'm not just trying to exert authority over you.

[ 29 : 10 ] I'm not being authoritarian. I didn't want to be your leader. I tried to get out of it. I tried hard and God wouldn't let me. And guys, we're not there yet, but we're going to see in chapter 4, Moses, even more so, he explains his doubts, his weakness in speech.

Aaron has to go for him and be his spokesperson. But he tries and tries to get out of the job. I didn't want this job. God's made me your leader, but God said he would be with me. And so by implication, what does it mean for those in the wilderness if they reject Moses' leadership?

Who are they ultimately rejecting? Moses is saying, it's not me you're rejecting when you reject my leadership. It's God. It's not about me. It never was. It's always been about God and his leadership. Now, I mentioned this at the end of the sermon last week, and let me point to that again. Chapter 2, verse 14.

Moses comes and he stops his fight between two Israelites, two Hebrews. And the one who was in the wrong, he says, who made you a prince and a judge over us?

[ 30 : 26 ] Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian? And remember, I said that question is one that the whole book seeks to answer. Who made you a prince and a judge over us?

And do you see how almost immediately we move into, here's the answer. God did. I didn't want to do this. In fact, I kind of tried him on. I did a really lousy job.

And it took me 40 years of God training me, and I still thought I wasn't ready for the job. But God told me, now's the time, and he made me that man. And then thirdly, I want you to see in this message a future salvation.

In Genesis 15, verses 14 and 16, we read, God promised Abraham. It says, But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation. And so we see some things promised there that are being fulfilled in our reading. One, Egypt will be judged. Two, Israel will leave with great possessions.

[ 31 : 27 ] And three, they will return to Canaan. And so God has promised through Abraham this future salvation that they're now living out. And even as they live it out, they're waiting for yet a further salvation that hasn't been realized.

So he's delivering them from a land of bondage into a far greater land. Look at the description in verse 8. to bring them up out of the land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

And so, he describes it in a few ways. One is flowing with milk and honey. I don't want to make too much of this. I think he's pointing to natural fertility.

This land is a fertile land. It's producing for them already the things that they would desire. They were not drinking cow's milk. It probably would have been goat or sheep. But the land is abundant with these things.

With wild bees that are producing honey that they're not going to have to work to produce. They're going to be given that. They're told it's a broad land. Now, why would that matter? If you're familiar at all with Egypt, I've told you Egypt's this great empire, but the Egyptians and the Israelites lived in this small strip of land next to the Nile River because that's where you could live.

[ 32 : 42 ] That fertile area by the Nile is where you could produce things, where you could live. And so, if you wanted too far from that, you've got nowhere to live. And so, they're going to be delivered from this narrow land.

And so, again, I think almost, if I can say divine humor again, God's ridiculing this great land of Egypt that's living in this little skinny area next to a river. But I'm going to move you into a broad land.

And implied with broad land is also, there'll be room for you to grow and expand. God's going to bless you in that way. You'll become a great nation as he had promised to Abraham.

And in fact, in that same verse, verse 8, he lists, six nations live there. So, Israel, that's not even a nation yet, is going to go and inhabit a land and God's going to drive out before them six other nations and give them that kingdom.

I thought if you could imagine in our day, obviously, the land's not this big, but six nations would be, I mean, you think of even North America, we encompass three nations. Six nations, it's a large area.

[ 33 : 47 ] There's going to be room for you to expand and become a greater and greater people. And I don't want you to miss that as we go throughout this, that you understand that the promised land of Canaan is meant to be a type and foreshadow our eternal rest and the heavenly reward that awaits us, the new earth and the new heavens that one day we'll enter into.

And I've made this point already a few times, but I just want you to see that there's this idea that they're being delivered from this wretched condition that they live in, much like we're delivered from sin and bondage and salvation.

They're going to wander through the wilderness, which in many ways corresponds to, I could even say, they're the paths of the waters as through baptism. They wander in the wilderness, much like our wilderness wandering in this world that's not our home.

We're strangers. We're exiles. We're wandering through this wilderness. And we were talking about this some in Sunday school, but as we think about this world, most of the time we don't think of it as a wilderness. We think it's pretty great.

Most of the time, I think we're happy with the things we have, the comforts of this world. But God's word paints it as a wilderness. Spiritually, it's a wilderness.

[ 35 : 00 ] And we wander through this world knowing we don't belong here, longing for our eternal rest, our home. And so Canaan pictures that. There's this land that's flowing with milk and honey.

It's going to provide all that we ever need. And God's word talks even more clearly about the new earth and new heavens as being a place without tear, without pain. Where we dwell in the presence of our Lord. And so they're leaving Egypt again that they might worship their God and be in His presence.

And so they have the tabernacle which we talked about is really the culmination of the whole book of Exodus ends with God in the tabernacle and His people around Him. He's in their midst and they're worshipping Him. How great is this?

And yet, it's not the greatest thing. We know that they're going to move into Canaan and they're going to get the temple. And how great is this? And yet, that's not all there is. Our ultimate desire is that we may dwell in God's presence without sin perfectly forever.

When we die, we'll be in the presence of the Lord. And it will be great and even that's not as great as it one day will be when Christ returns. This world's consumed and there's a new earth and new heavens in which we will dwell with God forever.

[ 36 : 06 ] But we're pointing to those realities. So even as the Israelites are longing for a future salvation, they're crying out to God to be saved, because we're reminded of how we ought to be crying out to God for salvation.

Not just spiritual salvation that we've experienced if you're a Christian, but also that we would be delivered from this world and one day that Christ would return and that we would dwell with Him forever. Just in closing, let me make a few more points of application.

First, I think we're encouraged that we should have concern and compassion for those who are oppressed and afflicted. Remember, God saw and God knew.

And I talked about that being a concern that was a prelude to action. So likewise, I think we ought to have that mind of God, the mind of Christ, that we, when we see people in affliction and suffering, our heart ought to go out to them.

And not just, we feel sorry for them and we do nothing. Go, be filled, and be warm, but that we act and that we serve.

[ 37 : 19 ] And so we see, again, that divine direction, but Moses acting to deliver people and God acting. And so we too, as much as it's in our ability, we ought to act to help others who are oppressed and afflicted.

Secondly, we must not rely on our own abilities nor doubt that God can use us to accomplish great things.

So we think of those as two extremes. One is, maybe we think, oh, I'm going to do great things for God because I'm so great. Look how good I am. Well, that would be obviously a wrong view. It would be a prideful view.

And I want to say that I think that at least is hinted to us with Moses when he murders the Egyptian to save the Hebrew.

He's wanting to do it in his own strength. I think that's hinted to us at the very least. But later, as Moses matures, he comes with a much different attitude. I said that's one extreme. The other extreme would be to think that I'm so pitiful that God can never use me to do anything.

[ 38 : 22 ] And so when we do that, that's still pride. We're still focused on ourselves. We still think too much of ourselves. But now we think we're too lousy to do it. And what we've denied is the power of God.

I remember one time reading a quote that I thought was so good. And the guy said, basically, what I need to do is mostly just forget about myself and do what God's called me to do.

Just forget about myself. And so here, Moses doubts his own ability. But God says, it's not about you. I will be with you. I think the same is true for us.

I love the Hudson Taylor quote. Maybe some of you have heard this. He says, depend on it. God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply.

God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply. And so if we're going about God's work, we should expect and know that God will do what's necessary to see that work accomplished.

[ 39 : 27 ] Or, we could say that through Jesus Christ, the words of Hebrews 13, 21, God will equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight.

Do we believe that? That God will work in us what's pleasing in his sight? Phil Riken, one commentator, he observes, the call to God's service always comes with the promise of God's presence.

The call to God's service always comes with the promise of God's presence. That's what we saw in the Great Commission. God's called all of us to go and make disciples. But we know that that promise is also, what accompanies that promise is also God's presence.

And I will be with you always, even to the end of the age. And that ought to be our expectation. That God will be with us. And so, we should attempt, there's another quote.

I always get confused if it was Henry Martin or William Carey that said, attempt great things for God, expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God, expect great things from God.

[ 40 : 38 ] And that ought to be our attitude. Not because we're great, but because we serve a great God and he's working in a secondary means to accomplish his purposes. Third, we should be encouraged that God hears our cries and groanings for deliverance.

Just as he heard the people in Moses' day, we ought to be encouraged in that. I know that there may be times it seems like God hasn't heard us because we don't get an answer right away.

And for those that were in bondage in Egypt, it may have been generations before God answered. That doesn't diminish that God's hearing and he's answering the prayer.

And we see, when did God answer the prayer? At the time he had appointed. God has ordained a time for this. And I want to balance this carefully.

The sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. God had already said he would deliver them in 400 years. But it wasn't apart from their crying out, their groanings. God hears their groaning and their cries for help. Both happen.

[ 41 : 41 ] God sovereignly knows when he's going to do it and yet he still hears the cries of his people and responds to their cry. And so we're encouraged. Pray. Cry out to God and know that in God's right and proper timing God will hear and answer his prayer.

And likewise, we're told God remembered his covenant. And so we ought to be encouraged to pray in line with God's covenant promises. Even what, all of what we have in God's word, what God has

promised.

We see there in God's word certain promises and certain things about God's character. Pray in line with that. God, don't forget you said this and then pray in line with that.

Fourthly, I want to encourage you that God has heard our cry. God has heard our cry. He's remembered his covenant and he sent Jesus Christ to be our savior.

Moses pointed to a greater deliverer, a greater savior. And just as the people in Egypt cried out and God heard and gave them a deliverer, a savior, and delivered them from that bondage, so too, we ought not forget that many of you in this room cried out to God in your sin and God delivered you.

[ 42 : 58 ] Even if we take a step back, I think sometimes we're not very good at doing this. I see the Psalms doing this all the time. Take a step back and look at human history. People cried out for generation after generation, thousands of years for a deliverer and God was gracious to send Jesus Christ who came and he died for our sins.

I think it's okay for me to say this now because we just got done with Thanksgiving and I have my rules about when I can mention the word Christmas. When we can start singing Christmas hymns, right, before Thanksgiving. We ought to be reminded of Christmas.

As we're moving into the Christmas season, as we think about the coming of Jesus Christ, why did he come? He came to be that deliverer, that savior. He came in answer to the cry of his people.

And so, in just a minute, we're going to sing one of my favorite Christmas hymns, O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. And in that hymn, O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, it talks about and rescue your people from their body.

I had this all in my mind beforehand. This is what happens when I don't put things down when I'm preaching. But deliver a ransom captive Israel. Which is speaking to what we're seeing here in Egypt.

[ 44 : 19 ] But you understand that what they're crying for isn't ultimately Moses. What were they crying for? Christ. That God would fulfill his promise, his covenant.

And what was God's covenant promised to Abraham? In your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. And how did that happen? It wasn't with Isaac or Jacob.

It wasn't even with Moses. It was with Christ that all the nations of the earth were blessed. And so, the covenant promise that God remembers in sending a deliverer there, what they're crying out for is ultimately Jesus Christ.

And God heard and answered their prayer. And we ought to rejoice in that. And likewise, as I said earlier, we should be crying out for our Savior. For the return of Christ.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, should be our cry. Let's pray together. Lord, we thank you that you are faithful to your promise, your covenant promise to send a Savior and deliverer, both in Moses, but also ultimately in Jesus Christ.

[ 45 : 24 ] That you heard the cry of your people and you answered them. And Lord, we cry out now asking, longing that we would see Emmanuel, God with us, that we might dwell in your presence forever.

We know that that ultimately won't be realized until Christ returns. And so we pray that Christ would return. That we would know our Savior and Deliverer, not only from our sin, which in itself is beyond anything that we deserve, but also from this world and living in a fallen world that's tainted with sin.

And, Lord, Lord, we cry out for Christ that we may no longer be separated from His presence.

Although we know we have the Spirit living inside of us, we long for a greater reality still that we might be in your presence in fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore.

So, Lord, we pray that Emmanuel would come, that you would send him. And, Lord, even in this season that we're in, that we would be appreciative of the fact that you have sent Christ, that you have given us a Savior, that you have delivered us from our sin and bondage.

We pray this all in the name of that great Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.