



We are spending the entire spring semester walking through the book of Exodus, and there will be parts we won't even get to for the sake of time. The story in chapter one opens up with the severe oppression of God's people, the Israelites, as they live in Egypt. They are living as slaves under the Egyptians, and chapter one closes out with Pharaoh asking the entire Egyptian population to help control the Jewish population by killing all of the Jewish boys who were born. To say it simply – this is a beyond horrible situation for the Israelites. Today, the title of our study is "Cry Out for Help." This is the next step in surrendering any burden to God. Have you cried out to God for help? Today, that's what we will discuss in our passage.

Key Passage: Exodus 2

Discussion Questions:

1. What happens to Moses in verses 1-10? Does this align with Pharaoh's instructions? Who's raising Moses? Who is paying to provide for his needs? What would Pharaoh think if he knew this was happening? What does this ironic turn of events teach us about God's providence in our lives?

In Exodus 2:1-10 we see Moses's mom conclude that she could no longer hide him from those seeking to enforce the death sentence issued by Pharaoh for all Hebrew baby boys. Moving from one step of faith to another, she prepares a kind of ark for her son. While she likely returns home heartbroken, Moses's sister stays nearby to see what will happen. Eventually, Pharaoh's daughter finds the baby, asks his sister to find someone to nurse the baby for her, and agrees to pay this "woman" to do so. In short, God returns Moses to his mother and a steady income stream to help her raise him into childhood. God rescued, restored, and blessed beyond measure.

2. How do the actions of Moses' mother compare to those of the Hebrew midwives in chapter 1? What do you think Moses' mom felt when Pharaoh's daughter summoned her to care for him on her behalf? What can we learn about courageous faith from Moses' mom? Can you think of a time when you came to a crossroads and had to take a bold step of faith?

As we saw in the opening verses of chapter 2, Moses's mom faces a dilemma that requires courage and faith in uncertainty. Like the Hebrew midwives in Chapter 1, Moses's mom had no idea what would happen with her son, but she took a step of faith and hid him in her care for as long as she could and then took the steps needed to save his life by placing him in an ark of his own to survive the waters of the Nile.

3. What do we observe about Moses' character from verses 11-19? What qualities of leadership does he exhibit? How did God use Moses' time in Midian as a shepherd to prepare him to be the leader he would need to be to lead God's people out of Egypt?

In verses 11-19, we see Moses step up, on behalf of a fellow Hebrew, to rescue him from the abuse of an Egyptian, and in doing so, Moses killed the Egyptian. Next, we see Moses break up a fight between two fellow Hebrews, which wasn't received well. Finally, we see Moses step up on behalf of the seven daughters of the priest of Midian, who were in conflict with some shepherds as they tried to tend to their flocks. Moses wasn't one to sit back; it was his nature to engage on behalf of others. Moses's natural tendency to step in to rescue and combat injustice is a worthy leadership characteristic.

On the other hand, while this is an excellent leadership quality, Moses had to work through some things. After all, he killed the Egyptian earlier in chapter 2. A quick temper with violent tendencies does not make for a great leader. God had to do some work in Moses that required Moses to leave the shadow of Egyptian Royalty and enter the humble work of servant leadership as a shepherd to his father-in-law's flock – which he couldn't kill. After 40 years, Moses was ready to return to Egypt to do what God had planned for him all along.

4. Like Moses' 40 years in Midian, God has used seasons of solitude to shape people throughout the Bible (1 Kings 19:1-9 and Matthew 4:1-11). What similarities do you see in these times of solitude? How have you experienced similar seasons in your life?

"The book of Acts explains that Moses spent 40 years in Midian. Someone said, 'Moses spent 40 years in Egypt learning something; 40 years in the desert learning to be nothing; and 40 years in the wilderness proving God to be everything' (in James Boyce, *Ordinary Men*, 59). Think about that. He spent two years of preparation for every one year of ministry. By living in the wilderness, he learned to rely on God. By having a family, he learned to lead, guide, and discipline those he loved. By working with the Midianites, most likely as a shepherd, he developed skills to help him lead the Israelites out of their enslavement" (Christ Centered Exposition Commentary, Exodus, 15).

5. Read Exodus 2:23-25. What drove God's people to desperate prayer? Why do you think God allowed the Hebrew people to become enslaved in Egypt? Are there any parallels to why God may allow us to experience various burdens?

The Hebrews were driven to desperate prayer because they were facing severe mistreatment. Their crisis was one of intense grief and agony. In Genesis 15, we learn something of an answer to why Israel experienced slavery in Egypt.

"Then the Lord said to Abram, 'Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward, they shall come out with great possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete'" (Genesis 15:13-16). First, the people of God would be given great possessions. Second, they couldn't enter the Promised Land until the iniquity of the Amorites was complete. It makes sense then that for Israel to leave Egypt, they had to be there in the first place.

"God certainly could have chosen a different way or a different time frame for placing the Israelites in their Promised Land, but He chose a particular way to bring glory to Himself. The 400-year sojourn in Egypt included many examples of God's wisdom and might. Joseph's preservation of the Israelites

during a famine, Moses' rise to leadership, and God's great miracles such as the crossing of the Red Sea were all part of Israel's time in Egypt."

<https://www.gotquestions.org/400-years-Egypt.html>

6. Did God answer the prayers of His people immediately? What does this tell us about how God answers prayers? How can seeing the big picture in Exodus help encourage us as we pray for our most significant burden(s) during the 21 Days of Prayer?

God heard. God remembered. God saw. God knew. Even if He didn't move Israel out overnight. He could have done something quicker but chose to work intentionally and for a greater purpose. We get a glimpse of that purpose in Exodus 2:19-22. God said, "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; 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." God used this exodus mission to demonstrate His glory to Pharaoh, Israel, and those who read this epic today. Israel didn't just need an exodus; they needed to know God personally and see His glory up close.

7. What's one personal takeaway from today's study you can focus on this week?