

And God Came Down

1.26.2020

Exodus Series

Message 4

Exodus 2:23–25 (CSB)

²³After a long time, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned because of their difficult labor; and they cried out; and their cry for help because of the difficult labor ascended to God. ²⁴And God heard their groaning; and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob; ²⁵and God saw the Israelites; and God knew.

Introduction: [Do you ever feel forgotten?](#)

A. Many of us have a fear of suffering alone.

1. To be forgotten and alone is a scary thing.
2. We may like our solitude and privacy, but facing pain and suffering alone is something most of us cannot or do not want to face.
 - a. This is partly the reason why the New Testament says that the “religion that is true and faultless is one that cares for the orphan and the widow”.
 - b. In that context, the orphan and widow have no one to help or advocate for them in their suffering.

B. The Hebrew people, after around 400 years of suffering, is tired of feeling alone.

1. They have withstood hard labor.
2. They have endured the killing of their baby boys.
3. They have tolerated seeing the Egyptians prosper at their expense.

4. Now, as God's timing is coming to pass, God's people cry out to God.

C. Some of us here today are wondering, "when is God going to show up?"

1. When is God going to intervene?
2. Is God even hearing me right now?
3. I feel alone. What if my feelings are right...?

For the next couple of weeks, we are going to dig into the end of Exodus 2 and Exodus 3 and examine a time in God's past when He set in motion an incredible plan to help His people.

1. After a long time...

A. This passage starts out saying that a long time has passed.

1. Looking back, we know it is about 40 years.
2. 40 years is a long time to suffer.
3. 40 years is a long time to wait.
4. 40 years is a long time to deal with uncertainty.

B. I'm not really sure of how comforting this is.

1. God doesn't look at time like you and I do.
2. For God, time is a created tool marked off for our benefit.
3. He doesn't tell time like we do, for to God a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years a day.

C. God often takes longer than you and I want to act.

1. He is never late nor ever early.
2. God is always right on time.
3. Yet, God's timing seems so different than ours.

D. One of the most difficult aspects of maturing as a Christian is resting and delighting in God's timing.

1. Take for example the commandment to Sabbath.
2. It is never convenient to Sabbath or to rest.
3. It is never convenient to cease from labor and to trust that God will bless not only our work but our rest.
4. Yet, God instituted in our weekly cycle the practice of trusting God's timing.
5. Most of us trust God with our work, but not our rest.

E. *Israel had no choice but to trust the timing of God while they were in Egypt.*

1. Some of us here have fought, we have wrestled, we have pleaded, we have manipulated, and everything else we could do to speed up God's timing.
2. Yet, there are times where all we can do is to trust that God has not forgotten us and, that in the right time, God will intervene in a supernatural way.

2. At this time, a cry from the Israelites goes up to God.

A. We aren't sure if this is the first time Israel has prayed like this.

1. We know this is a prayer because of the direction.
 - a. Complaints go down.
 - b. Prayers go up
2. The sin of murmuring and complaining has as much to do with the direction of what is being said as it does the content.
 - a. Israel is going to experience a lot of heartache in the upcoming chapters because they complained and murmured when they should have prayed.
 - b. When we engage in gossip and complaining, we engage in sin and lose out on God's blessings.

B. But this time, Israel calls out to God.

1. There is a sense of desperation in this cry.
2. Desperation recognizes that the situation is far bigger than we can handle.
3. When God's people cry out to Him in desperation there is a recognition on our part that says, "I can't do this alone".
 - a. Prayers of desperation are completely dependent upon God.
 - b. When we pray these kinds of prayers, no amount of:
 1. Budgeting will be enough.
 2. Work will get the job done.
 3. Medicine, exercise, or dieting will bring health.
 - c. Prayers of desperation are prayers that only God can answer.
4. Pastor Robert Morris made the observation that many times we say things like, "I either need a miracle or to win the lottery."
 - a. But if winning the lottery will fix your problem, then you aren't desperate for God yet.
 - b. Desperation can lead to God ordained moments where we recognize that nothing BUT God will be enough.

C. **When we get desperate for God, we get...God.**

3. When our cry goes up to God, God comes down.

A. I want you to notice God's response to Israel's cry:

²⁴And God heard their groaning; and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob; ²⁵and God saw the Israelites; and God knew.

1. Do you notice how involved God is in this?

2. All the people could do was cry.
3. God did the rest.
4. The cries of God's people became the soundtrack of God's miraculous intervention.
 - a. Every great movie has great music.
 - b. Music helps to tell the story.
 - c. Throughout biblical history, it is the cries and the prayers of God's people that become the soundtrack of God's intervention.

B. The writer of Exodus wants the readers to know that what is getting ready to happen can only be attributed to God.

1. It is God who heard their groaning.
2. It is God who remembers his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
3. It is God who saw the Israelites and their situation.
4. It is God who knew.

Of these 4 actions of God, I want to comment on 2 of them.

C. The most important phrase is that God remembered his covenant.

1. A covenant is, in its basic form, an agreement or contract.
 - a. Earlier in Genesis 12 and 15, God had made a covenant with Abraham.
 - b. God had promised to bless Abraham and his descendants.
 - c. God had also promised that, although there would be a season of difficulty, that the season would not last forever and would result in overwhelming victory.
2. God "remembering" this covenant doesn't mean that God had forgot but that He was enacting the terms.

- a. It means that God is bringing it into force or action.
- b. Like a binding contract, God is now implementing and executing the terms of that contract.

3. As I study this, I can't help but think of the words and testimony of Jesus.

- a. Jesus promised us that, in this world we will have trouble.
- b. But He has overcome the world and will someday enact everything He has promised to us.
 - 1. In that day, All of God's people will be healed.
 - 2. In that day, All of God's people will be whole.
 - 3. In that day, All of God's people will be set forever free from sin, death, darkness, and decay.
 - 4. In that day, the New Covenant signed in Jesus' blood, will be fully and completely enacted.

4. Even though Israel might have felt forgotten, God had not and cannot forget His promises.

- a. Although you may feel forgotten by God in this moment, you are not forgotten.
- b. Although you may feel like you are fighting this situation alone, you are not alone.
- c. God has made His people promises and He never fails.
- d. His timing maybe different than what you are hoping for, but He is never late.

D. I want to draw our attention to the phrase "God knew".

- 1. The word "know" is pretty significant in the OT.
 - a. The word is "YADA".

b. It is used in many ways, including the relationship between a husband and wife.

2. To say that God "knew" signifies that God experienced their suffering with them.

a. The gods of Egypt were far removed from the people who worshipped them.

b. The Egyptians, then later the Greeks, and Romans, all worshipped gods that were arbitrary and distant from their people.

c. But not YHWH, not Israel's God.

d. Exodus says that God experienced and shared in Israel's suffering and oppression.

e. To oppress God's people is to oppress God himself.

1. This is why God takes it personally when nations attack Israel.

2. This is why God takes it personally when humanity rejects and persecutes God's prophets.

3. This is why Scripture cautions people to "touch not the Lord's anointed".

3. The writer of Hebrews wrote this about Jesus:

[Heb 4:15 NIV] 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet he did not sin.

a. Just as God shared in the sufferings of His people under the Old Covenant, so too does Jesus share in our suffering and temptation now that we are under the New Covenant.

b. We can confidently endure and overcome life's struggles because we know that we are not alone.

Application:

A. As we end, I want to speak to two groups of God's people today:

1. Some of you here today feel like you are alone.

a. You are facing the biggest fight of your life, and you feel alone, forgotten, and overwhelmed.

b. In just a moment, if that describes you, I'm going to ask you to join me up front so we can pray with you.

c. We are going to pray for God to make himself real and present to you.

d. To assure you that you are not forgotten or forsaken.

2. Some of us here today are anticipating a victory.

a. You know what God has promised.

b. You know that God has heard your cry.

c. Even in your desperation, you know that victory is coming.

d. And right now, you want to pray for encouragement, strength, and joy as you wait for your victory.

B. My prayer for the rest of us today is not for your life to necessarily be easy, but for you to experience the victory of Jesus in every area of your life.