

Birth of a Nation  
January 26, 2025  
4/11 in the God Story  
Exodus 3, etc.

We're in the middle of a series called "The God Story" where we're giving you an overview of the entire Bible.

There's a book called "The God Story" which inspired this series and this message. We highly recommend that you get the book and read it along with us as we work through the greatest story of all time. Small groups have been emailed study guides. There's so much to cover that we won't be able to capture everything. So reading the book and studying as a group will be a great way to fill in the gaps and continue growing.

It goes nicely with our theme of the year: FINDING OUR WAY IN GOD'S STORY

It's a way for us as a church and as individuals to get realigned.

What's our role as individuals in God's story?

What's Cornerstone's role?

What does that look like in our schools, jobs, homes, families, with our friends and the people God puts in path from day to day?

Last week, Pastor Steve shared about the seed of Promise. How God blessed Abraham to be a blessing. Abraham, whose wife Sarah wasn't able to have kids, had a miracle child Isaac.

There was a promise. The blessing of a great nation - but Abraham had no son. But God showed up. Abraham had Isaac.

Then Isaac had a son Jacob. Jacob had an incredible story of transformation from deceiver to father of the 12 sons who would become the nation of Israel. One of his sons (Joseph) ends up in Egypt through the evil plotting of his brothers who are jealous of him. God uses it to save them during a severe famine. Then Jacob and his 70 sons all end up settling in Egypt.

Joseph dies and then the Israelites become slaves in Egypt for 400 years. They've grown from 70 to about 2 million.

God's promises not only seem unfulfilled, they seem impossible.

They are not a great nation

They don't have promised land

They are living in slavery.

There seems to be no way. Will God make a way?

Has God forgotten?

There's a new Pharaoh in Egypt and he's quite evil towards the Israelites. So much so that he orders all the baby boys under 2 years old to be unalived. (Just wondering why you chose this word? No problem at all, I know it is a common word in media right now... but killed is also okay)

In Exodus chapter 2 we read about how Moses (an Israelite baby) survives. His mom puts him in the river in a basket, and he floats down the river to Pharaoh's daughter! She adopts him and then ironically gets Moses' own mom to wean him.

God has not forgotten his people.

There was no way - but God makes a way.

I wonder what it must have been like to be Moses. He was born an Israelite - and I'm sure his mom told him the story of God and his promises and the Israelites as she was weaning him.

Then he was raised in the Palace by Pharaoh's daughter as a 'prince of Egypt'

He probably went through an identity crisis.

We see this in chapter 2 of Exodus when as an adult, Moses sees an Egyptian beating an Israelite slave. Moses kills the Egyptian and has to run away to the desert.

Let's pause there for a second.

How many of us - like Moses - go through an identity crisis from time to time?

Like Moses, our story of how we're still here is incredible. The things we've made it through, the highs and lows. Thank you God!

At the same time, we're so immersed in the culture that we tend to lose our way.

I'm terrible with directions - A week ago I went downtown. I parked in the same parking lot that I always park in because it's \$6. But I wasn't going to a Raptor's game, I was going to Stackt market. I went there with no problem, but coming back, got totally lost while walking. The GPS kept telling me where to go, but I just couldn't get it. You know what? The GPS never got mad, never shut off, it just kept - buffering and then rerouting.

Moses is off track. He clearly has anger issues and an identity crisis. Is he Egyptian? Is he an Israelite? (He can't make sense of the two and that leads him to do something crazy)

It leads him to do something he instantly regrets. (This choice has some immediate consequences and changes everything for Moses in an instant... He's worried this choice will define his life and cause him to lose everything) And he now feels like this will define him for the rest of his life.

God is rerouting. [God had a plan.](#)

At 40 years old, he goes to the wilderness - for 40 years. He becomes a shepherd. And God uses that time to recalibrate him to get him on track.

Have you ever needed to reroute? Do you need to reroute today? Are you lost and need to find your way?

The climax of this is Exodus 3 - so let's take a look at it.

Read Exodus 3:1-8a, 9-10 (spontaneous melodrama with Tamara)

One day Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. He led the flock far into the wilderness and came to Sinai, the mountain of God.

There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the middle of the bush. Moses stared in amazement. Though the bush was engulfed in flames, it didn't burn up.

"This is amazing," Moses said to himself. "Why isn't that bush burning up? I must go see it."

When the LORD saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

"Here I am!" Moses replied.

"Do not come any closer," the LORD warned. "Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground."

I am the God of your father - the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

When Moses heard this, he covered his face because he was afraid to look at God.

Then the LORD told him, "I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries of distress because of their hard slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering.

So I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them into their own fertile and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey...

Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead my people out of Egypt.

God has not forgotten Moses. God has not forgotten the Israelites.

There was no way. But God is making a way.

Just like pastor Steve talked about last week with Hagar - God is El Roi - the God who sees.

Are you going through something where you feel like God has forgotten you? [Where you can't see the way through?](#)

God sees you. He has not forgotten you.

Maybe you need to slow down and stop and look and be with God so that you can have an encounter with him.

Moses passed a bush he probably passed a million times. But this time it was different.

Moses was intrigued. He has curiosity. He has space. He was available. He said, Here I am!

He was brought into an adventure that would change him, the Israelites and even us - forever

### **1. If you want to encounter God, make yourself available.**

What if Moses had said, "Cool!" and kept going? We are in a scrolling culture where we are so desensitized. We move on from thing to thing so quickly. **We are not used to open and quiet space.** I do my devotions and then as soon as I'm finished I play some music - What if God wanted to say something to me from my devotion. Do I give him space? Do you?

Back to the text:

### **Exodus 3:11-14**

But Moses protested to God, "Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?"

God answered, "I will be with you. And this is your sign that I am the one who has sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God at this very mountain."

But Moses protested, "If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' they will ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what should I tell them?"

God replied to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you."

Let's have a hand for Tamara.

Moses is insecure. He feels inadequate. He feels like his past disqualifies him. Have you ever felt like that? Like your story is always going to be defined by something in your past?

Notice how God responds

God doesn't zap him for his insecurities. God is gentle with him. God reveals himself to Moses in the most intimate way. He tells him his name.

**I am who I am - or I will be who I will be. YHWH** - this is where we get Yahweh from. The LORD in all caps in your Bibles. God is saying that you can't comprehend him fully. You can't box him in. He is beyond our terms and categories. You can't put God in a box.

C.S. Lewis says "God is both further from us, and nearer to us than any other being."

God has created the whole universe which is so big it's beyond our comprehension.

At the same time he has created us - with details so minute and exquisite that it blows us away.

**God is infinite and intimate.**

He is out there - and he is in here.

Take a second to stop and think about that.

Pause

But this is not just a story of one person. It's the story of a nation. It's the story of God.

God has a plan to rescue the Israelites from the Egyptians and the evil Pharaoh who has been enslaving them.

There seems to be no way. But God is making a way.

God calls Moses to go back to Egypt - and tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go.

Pharaoh says no and then God challenges the Egyptians by sending 10 plagues. Each plague has specifically to do with the gods the Egyptians worship.

Water to blood

Frogs

Lice

Flies

Livestock

Boils

Hail

Locusts

Darkness

Even during all this, God was giving Pharaoh and the Egyptians the chance to change their hearts. But they did not. Each time, Pharaoh says make it stop and then I'll let them go! And each time when God made it stop, Pharaoh changed his mind and said actually no! You can't go!

Finally God has one more plague that is going to get Pharaoh to let the Egyptians go.

God told his people to take their best lamb, to kill it and to put some of its blood on their front doors. When God passes over your house, God will see the blood and know that the lamb died instead of you. (Jesus Storybook Bible).

This is foreshadowing by the way. (to what)

And so, that very night, Moses and God's people fled out of Egypt and out of slavery. They were free at last!

There was no way. But God made a way!

But then...

Pharaoh and the Egyptians change their mind. They think twice about letting the Israelites go. So they start chasing the Israelites with their whole army.

The Israelites have been following God's lead - a cloud by day and fire by night. (As he redirected them, he didn't leave them alone. He guided His presence was with them)

This has led them right to the Red sea. (Another dead end. Looking for a way where there was no way)

So you have the Red Sea on one side and the Egyptian army on the other side. The Red Sea is too far and deep to swim across, and too big to go around. Remember there's 2 million Israelites at this time.

Wait... what's going on? Reroute! Reroute!

Imagine you're in this scene. How do you feel? God has just performed mighty miracles but now it seems all will be lost.

Have you ever felt like that? Like God has been good to you in the past... but lately... you've been stuck... (Like you are looking at a dead end, with no clear way forward)

We get one of my favorite verses in the Bible from this scene.

The Israelites are panicking and then Moses gives them this message.

#### **Exodus 14:14**

But Moses told the people, "Don't be afraid. Just stand still and watch the LORD rescue you today. The Egyptians you see today will never be seen again. The LORD himself will fight for you. Just stay calm."

(Moses can say this with confidence because he has seen God show up again and again and again and again... it's not trivial words, it is confidence based on evidence)

(Get the congregation to stand on their feet and march).

A couple of things. Have you ever noticed how many times the Bible says not to be afraid? You wanna know why? Cause humans are constantly afraid.

Life on this side of eternity can be scary at times.

I would imagine that in a crowd this size, there are many people that are afraid right now.

Maybe you're waiting for something. You're afraid of the result. Maybe you're stuck and you don't know which way to go. (This is a really good build with a lot of movement, questions, and action... maybe pour out those questions... what feels scary, is it this, etc?... build it, and then stop. Pause... wait in that silence... They waited on God to move)

Stand still? I don't know about you but it's not a good military strategy to stand still when you are 2 million strong - women and kids - and you're going against an army on one side and a sea on the other side. From those odds, the army or the sea would win, but not you.

There's a tension there - on the one hand, God is calling them to be still. On the other hand, they are called to be ready to follow him wherever he leads, even when it doesn't make sense.

There was no way - but then God made a way.

God has not forgotten.

God sent a strong wind to blow all night long. It blew the water of the Red Sea until there were two towering walls of water. The Israelites go across the Sea in the middle of it. The Egyptians follow and are drowned in the Red Sea.

Shout - THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH AND MY SONG AND HE HAS BECOME MY SALVATION!

There was no way but then God made a way.

(Get the congregation to have a seat)

This story is God's story. It's a story about salvation. The freedom of the Israelites. Freedom is their destiny. Freedom is our destiny. Salvation is our story.

This points to an even greater story of salvation to come. Spoiler alert. It's Jesus.

As we continue in this series and as you read the Bible you will see that the Israelites are constantly losing their way, and God is graciously coming to them and rerouting.

There seems to be no way, but then God makes a way. God is not just a God that is far away. He is intimate. Even though he is God and infinite, he's so close. This culminates in Jesus.

The same God who made a way for the Israelites who were trapped in slavery is making a way for you today in Jesus.

Maybe there is some addiction that you're struggling with. It feels like you are trapped.

When there is no way, God makes a way.

Jesus sees you. Come to him. He'll make a way.

Maybe you are waiting on God for something today.

God sees you and is able. He is your strength and your song and has become your salvation.

Maybe you need Jesus' salvation today.

We didn't have time to cover it today but after the miraculous deliverance out of slavery, the Israelites still had a long way to go.

Read chapter 4 in the book "The God Story" to catch up on all that wasn't covered today.

They needed to establish their identity in God - from slaves to royalty.

In Exodus 19 just before God gives them the 10 commandments - ways to love God and love others, he calls them his treasured possession.

Exodus 19:5-6a

Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among the peoples of the earth; for all the earth belongs to me. And you will be my kingdom of priests, my holy nation..."

I want you to hear that today. You are God's treasured possession. The Hebrew word for that is "Segullah" The image is of a special treasure belonging to a king. It implies special value and a special relationship.

You are special. God has chosen you. God has a plan for you.

(if there's time - story of my shoes - clean timberlands and Jordan 5's)



At the burning bush God called Moses my name. God knows your name.

He reveals his name - I am. God is alive, he's present and he's ready to save.

If your back is against the wall, stand still. God is the God who saves.

Here he gives the Israelites a new name - they are no longer slaves, they are royalty. His treasured possession.

How does it make you feel to know that God calls you his treasured possession, set apart for him to connect the beauty of heaven to the brokenness of earth?

How can you celebrate God's faithfulness in your life?

Where have you lost your way?

Is God trying to reroute your story?

As we get ready to sing, to worship, let the words be your response to Jesus who has delivered you.

Let the worship be your prayer as you cry out for deliverance - for you, for someone you love.

Prayer

Benediction

Prayer ministry

Summary

This sermon explores God's faithfulness in making a way when there seems to be no way, as seen in the story of Moses and the Israelites' deliverance from slavery in Egypt. Despite their impossible circumstances—oppression under Pharaoh, identity crises, and the Red Sea blocking their path—God showed that He sees His people, hears their cries, and is always working to rescue and restore them. It reminds us that God is both infinite and intimate, calling us His treasured possession and rerouting our lives toward freedom and purpose. Just as He led the Israelites, God invites us to trust Him today, knowing He is our salvation and strength.