

## God Knows

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Scripture Reading:

Exodus 1:1-14

*Now these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob; they came each one with his household: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. All the persons who came from the loins of Jacob were seventy in number, but Joseph was already in Egypt. Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them.*

*Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. He said to his people, "Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we. Come, let us deal wisely with them, or else they will multiply and in the event of war, they will also join themselves to those who hate us, and fight against us and depart from the land." So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor. And they built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out, so that they were in dread of the sons of Israel. The Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously; and they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and at all kinds of labor in the field, all their labors which they rigorously imposed on them.*

Exodus 2:23

*Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God.*

Would you pray with me?

Our heavenly Father, speak Lord, for we are listening. We invite You to take these words from Your holy Word and apply it to our hearts that we may be able to leave here with a better understanding of who You are in context to us being Your children. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

From these first few verses of Exodus, we see that things have changed a lot in terms of fortunes for the children of Israel. No longer are they enjoying the favor of the Pharaoh who was there when Joseph was helped to lead Egypt through the famine. Now Joseph is dead and the one who had given them the favor is now no more. The new Pharaoh decides that he's got to do something to make sure that the Israelites don't rise up against him, as he thinks could happen, when enemies come against Egypt. His way of responding to that perceived situation is to give this hard labor and treat them as slaves. The Bible tells us that they reeled under this particular hard work that they were facing, and they cried out to the Lord as we see in 2:23 that they cried out to the Lord telling Him of the situation that they were in.

As I was reading this passage, I realized that such a scenario is possible even for you and me; we could be in a situation where we enter and organization or an institution or a family, community. There is favor with people who 'call the shots'. Then that person moves on and suddenly we find that the favor is not there and we begin to go through upheaval. Suddenly

things are not easy, things are getting difficult. And we cry out to the Lord, and we say, "Lord, help us. All that was going well for us has suddenly dissipated into thin air and we are seemingly under attack. It seems that joy has been taken out, peace has been confronted, and we are just going through the motions." We are continually asking the Lord for help.

Maybe some of you are in exactly that position – you too are going through a difficult time. Or maybe there is a wall in front of you and there are dark skies above. And you are reeling, wondering where God is in all of this. Your cries have been going on and on to God saying, "Would You help me? Would You bring a change? Would You come into this situation that I am facing and help me?" that's a legitimate ask, because after all, we are His Children and we can ask Him to help us in times like this.

How does God respond in a situation like this? Does He respond? For answers, I believe that we can learn a few things about God from this passage that would strengthen us. If indeed that is where you are, the first thing that we understand in terms of God's response to situations where we are crying out to Him, is that God hears and God sees.

*2:24: So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God saw the sons of Israel and God took notice of them.*

God took notice of what was going on with the sons of Israel and goes on to say –

3:7 "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have given heed to their cry."

3:9 "Now behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them."

### **God Sees!**

A good place for us to start this journey of trying to understand God in the midst of storms or the wilderness, is to know that God is still engaged with you, that God still sees, that God hasn't shipped out, and that God is intimately aware of exactly what you are going through. That must be the first starting place for us, to know that He is aware. God has seen! But that also begs the question – having seen, what does He do about it? Does God do anything after seeing the place that I am in? And the answer to that is – Yes! He does!

### **God Calls!**

*3:2-5 The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. So Moses said, "I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up." When the lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" and he said, "Here I am." Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."*

God sees, but then God calls. He calls somebody who He thinks can make a difference in the life of people who are going through a difficult time. God called Moses in this instance and said, "I've seen what's going around with the children of Israel and I need you."

Sometimes we look at the call that God has on our lives and we treat it very casually. We may flirt with it a little bit and then say, "Well! I guess God's calling me to do something, and right now I am not really in the mood, or it will inconvenience me." Yet, if we look at scripture, we see that God was trying to help the children of Israel who were going through a terrible time.

Beloved, when God calls you and me to do a particular task, to speak a word, to go into a particular area and do something for Him, He is doing it in response to something that He has seen, something that you can help to alleviate or change. And we dare not take that lightly. God calls each of us. As somebody said: We are the hands and feet of Jesus. We cannot turn a blind eye to His call on our lives because there are people who may be hurting, who desperately need you to answer that call.

I remember maybe 6 or 7 years ago, I was preaching on a passage that had to do with the call of God on our lives, especially in terms of going into full time ministry. As I was preaching, I noticed that there was once member of the church who was visibly moved by what I was saying. At the end of the service I walked up to him and said, "Do you have a call on your life to full time ministry?" And it was like a dam broke. He just started crying, tears streaming down, and he said, "Pastor, let's not talk about that. That boat has sailed." I asked him to open his Bible to Romans 11:29 and he read the verse which said that God's gifts and His call are irrevocable. This just changed him completely. He came to my office that week and we began to talk. He then answered the call to full time ministry and served as the pastor at Kharghar for five years before he answered another call to move to Chennai.

Maybe there are some of you here who are saying, "I had that kind of call some time back, but that was a long time ago." I wonder whether God would be saying to you, "That call is still on your life. I still want to do something through you." I wonder whether today might be a day for you to once again take it out, dust it off and say, "Lord, what is it that You want to do with my life?"

### **God Sends!**

When God sees, He calls and then sends. In 3:10 – *"Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt."* God sees, God calls and then God sends us out.

I remember when I was in Bible College before I went to seminary. I had just gone to the United States; Sheila and the children were still back home and they didn't join me for about nine months. It was the loneliest period of my life. I felt that if I had a return ticket, I would have come back. I really would! I was ready to throw in the towel so many times. I just couldn't take it. I was in a strange place, a good 10-12 years older than the rest of the guys in my class who were just fresh out of high school. I would go in to class and then spend the rest of my time in the library. All I did was study.

I was getting to the point where I was drained. I was just crying out to God, saying, "Lord, I can't take this. I have no friends here." Guys would wish me, say hello, but beyond that, we couldn't connect. One day, I was sitting in class thinking that I've reached the end. Then a guy walked up to me. He was in one of my classes, a big, burly guy. He said, "Hey! Do you want to grab lunch? I've been seeing you in class, very quiet and all engaged. I thought that I'm a little older than the rest of the other students, so maybe I can speak to you." We had lunch and from that came a beautiful friendship. Even today, when I look back, if it hadn't been for him, I don't know what would have happened. I was really scraping the bottom of the barrel at that time, but God sent him and it made a huge difference in my life.

Beloved, I don't know whether God has spoken to you, saying, "I need you to go somewhere. I need you to speak to somebody. I need you to fulfill a task because a person desperately needs to hear something." And I wonder, if that is so, whether you will respond with a "Yes Lord, I will do it."

### **God Accompanies!**

God sees, God calls, God sends, but God also accompanies.

Vs 12: *And He said, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain."*

One of the most beautiful things about God is that He says to us, "I will never leave you; I will never forsake you." Wherever God calls and sends us, He is with us. Emmanuel, God with us. A personal God! So whatever it is that He is calling you to do, asking you to do, know that you don't go first. We are always the second witness. The Holy Spirit is always before us, and we never need to fear that we will not know what to do in a particular situation. God says, "I will accompany you wherever you go. Where I am sending you, I'll accompany you."

### **God Equips!**

4:2-5 – *God asks Moses, "What is that in your hand?" And he says, "A staff." Then He said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. But the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand and grasp it by its tail" – so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand – "that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."*

What is it that you have in your hand? Sometimes, that's the question that we ask and say, "Lord, I am ready to do anything that you want, but let me first prepare myself. Let me first get all that I need before I take that first step." And it seems in this passage of scripture that all God is asking Moses is: What do you have? Not what will you get or what do you need? But what do you have? "I have a staff", and God says that it is enough. So maybe one of the reasons why you've dithered about answering or following something that God is inviting you to do is the fact that you think you are not equipped. You don't have the wherewithal to answer this particular call.

Maybe today, God is saying to you, "What do you have? What do you bring to the table? That's all I need; I can work with that." God goes on with Moses to continue to lead and guide him. When he was out and he needed to talk to the people, God brought his father-in-law Jethro to help him and give him leadership advice.

Beloved, God continues to do that in our lives as well. God sees, God calls, God sends, God accompanies and God equips. All of this because God has seen somebody who desperately needs a touch from Him. I wonder whether His hand is on your shoulder this morning, whether He is tapping you through His Spirit, through your spirit, and saying, "Somebody needs me. And I need you to be an avenue of blessing, of encouragement, of inspiration into their lives." I wonder whether that's some part of that call that you are stuck in, that you haven't responded to. You may have heard Him, you may have said, "Here I am, Lord," but you're not going anywhere. I wonder whether today is the day to make that decision to respond to Him and say, "Lord, I am willing to go wherever You want me to go, do what You want me to do. Lord, here I am, available."

I believe that's our word from the Lord this morning. But in closing, I want to pray for just two areas. This morning I seem to sense a lot of heaviness; that many of you are going through extremely difficult times. You are managing, going through, but it is not easy. I felt

that, even as we were going through worship, that God was trying to lift that cloud of heaviness off your shoulders. And so I feel the need to pray for you. If that's where you are, if you're just weighed down and saying, "Lord, I'm so glad You are seeing me, and You know what I am going through," just rest in that assurance. But can I pray for you? If you would be willing to stand where you are, I want to pray for you.

Heavenly Father, would You just let Your Spirit flow through this entire room, Master, touching each person with Your beautiful presence. Lord God, I pray that You would touch them in such ways that they would immediately sense and feel Your holy presence. Then Lord, we ask that You would do even more, that somehow You would dispel the gloom, the dark clouds that hover above and replace it with sunny skies. Let them know, Master, that You look down upon them with great favor, that they have not been forgotten, that they are not alone and that You are with them. Lord, we would be even bold enough to ask that You would infuse them with more of Your holy presence, Lord, that they would see and feel a resurgence of Your holy presence in them, letting them know that You are with them and that You would carry them through this difficult time. Remind them, Master, that underneath are the everlasting arms, that they cannot fall beyond Your hands, that You will hold them during this time. Lord, I would be even bolder to ask to let joy come upon them, inexplicable joy and peace that they don't understand. But let it envelope them. We ask this in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.