

I. Set up / Passage

A. Reading the last eight versus of the book of Exodus. The Jews have just completed building the Tabernacle. Most of chapter 40 is about Moses setting things in place.

B. **V34: Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out—until the day it lifted. So the cloud of the Lord was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the Israelites during all their travels.**

II. Intro

A. Good morning. Welcome. Greetings to everyone. Special welcome to those of you upstairs at the 01, and at CR, HP and VH.

B. What you see in this Mason Jar is muddy water that has settled. I have one of these in my study at home – and one at my office here at the church. And occasionally, I shake them up to give myself a visual of what is going on in my heart and mind – to remind myself of the need to be quiet for a while so I can see.

C. The idea came to me about ten years ago when we were visiting one of our boys at college. His roommate worked in the local water treatment plant. And I asked, “what do you do?” How does this work? And he explained.”

1. Open valves, let settle, you drink.

2. “Wait, what about carbon filters and reverse osmosis and fluoride and all of that.”

3. And he said, “yeah, we don’t do that.”

4. So, I started drinking bottled water there, and I got the idea of seeing how

D. I start my day by sitting in silence with a cup of coffee and just letting things settle.

E. Before very long, all kinds of thoughts start waking up and bouncing around:

1. Some are much more urgent than important – don’t forget to call so-and-so; you’ve got to send that email to XYZ; need to order that password protection software

2. Some are just inputs from the world rattling around. It’s pretty crazy out there. Things are a bit frenetic:

a) Some of it is unsettling – there are two big wars raging, threats of others, our debt is way too high, AI is coming for your job, trust is down, hate and polarization are up.

b) Not everything is bad – the bad tends to take all the oxygen. Many things are going well.

3. But there are lots of ideas and voices and inputs – and it can feel like a popcorn popper is popping, and so I wait for that to settle.

F. And then engage in some Bible reading and prayer in an effort to superimpose a structure –

III. We've been in Exodus

A. 2nd book of Torah. The 2nd of five written by Moses.

B. Book about getting Jews out of Egypt and then Egypt out of the Jews

C. Starts with Jews in captivity. They cry out. God recruits Moses – queue the burning bush and the revelation of God's name: Yahweh or I AM.

D. That leads into the cage match between Moses and Pharaoh – who are really just proxies for a cage match between good and evil. The 10 plagues follow, leading up to the tenth, which is the first Passover.

E.

F. That leads up to the 10 Commandments, which is the first step of the second half of the book, where the goal is no longer to get the Jews out of Egypt, but to get Egypt out of the Jews. To help them

G. Several things will happen in the second half:

1. We get an extended exploration of the Law.

2. We get a re-establishment of the covenant – a reframing of what had been set up with Abraham. It is now set up via Moses.

3. You then get a lot about the Tabernacle – which is the building God has agreed to come and occupy. He is going to live in the center of the people.

4. There is the side story about the golden calf – and we did a few weeks on that.

H. But then the tabernacle is finally built, and you end up with the passage that was read to kick things off:

I. **V34: Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out—until the day it lifted. So the cloud of the Lord was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the Israelites during all their travels.**

IV. We've been in Exodus for the last ten months. I doubt you will remember, but I opened this series noting that the operative word was “and.”

- A. As in, “and here we go” - with a new series. This epic tale of “fire, sand, wind and water.”
- B. And because the first word in Exodus was “and” making it clear that it was just a continuation of Genesis. Because, although the Bible is a collection of 66 books, it tells one story.
- C. And because we were joining a parade of people studying Exodus. I noted that the book was trending. It was hot. All of the sudden all kinds of people were studying it.
1. Not just other churches – there was a lot of that. Lots of churches doing series on Exodus. Lots of Christian scholars writing books on Exodus. Several conferences on Exodus.
 2. But what I noted was that it was suddenly hot in the broader public.
 - a) Leon Kass – a prominent political philosopher and Great Books advocate who has taught at the University of Chicago and Harvard – just came out with a 700-page commentary on Exodus, because he thought that, politically speaking, Exodus was more important than *Plato’s Republic*.
 - b) Then you also had Dennis Prager – the conservative Jewish radio host - rolling out a 500-page commentary on Exodus.
 - c) And Jordan Peterson – the Canadian psychiatrist who was suddenly all over the place, and was one of the many emerging out of the university who were giving up on secularism and looking favorably at Jesus
 - (1) This week I was at a very exciting
 - (2)
 - (3)
 - (4) .
 - d) clearly on some sort of spiritual journey – filling concert halls for two- and three-hour lectures on Exodus.
- D. Why was – why is - Exodus suddenly so popular? I’m not sure. If I was going to guess, I’d note that given the Jews helped launch Western civilization (the West emerges out of the mash up of the Greek philosophers and the Hebrew poets, being further shaped a bit by Rome and quite a bit by Jesus) given that the West is unraveling, I think a lot of people are looking back on what it is.
- E. Given in particular that things like Rule of Law and human dignity grow out of the West – which is launched by the Law in Exodus – I think it was getting some press.
- V. But to be clear, we were not studying it because everyone else was. We were studying it because we think the Bible is divinely inspired and because it provides a frame work for life – the Law is a gift (it is train tracks that allows life to work) and because, I wanted to point out how clearly it directs us to Jesus.
- VI. In this study I have made much about the way Exodus points ahead to Jesus, which is one of the points I made over and over.

A. I make this point whenever we study the Old Testament. Like Little Johnny One Note I end up saying, “And this points to Jesus. And this points to Jesus. And here we have a big arrow that points ahead to Jesus.

1. Jesus is the true and better Abraham who answered the call of God to leave all the comfortable and familiar and journey to a distant land for the sake of others.
2. And that Jesus is the true and better Isaac who was not just offered up by his father on the mount but was truly sacrificed for us.

B. In Exodus, it is: Jesus is the true and better Moses who stands in the gap between the people and the Lord and who mediates a new covenant. Jesus being the true manna – the bread of life that fell from heaven. And Jesus being the true and better Rock, who Moses struck with the rod of God’s justice, which now gives us water in the desert.

C. There are many. Let me mention two:.

1. The Passover. So, at the 10th plague they are instructed to paint the doorposts with the blood of an innocent, unblemished mail lamb, and then when the angel of death comes, it will Passover that house.
2. The Tabernacle

VII. Let me bring this home with a story – that I hopes brings this hope a bit more

A. About 15 years ago, a friend and I each took a son and sailed across Lake Michigan – which in the 35’ boat we had – took 14 hours. We left at 4 AM. Got to South Haven for dinner. Spent the night. Planned to sail back the next morning. But the wind and waves kicked up so we ended up staying.

1. Well, one of the things we did with the boys was some body surfing. And we were having a riot because the waves were huge. But after about 30 minutes Dan and I decided that the waves were too big and we pulled the boys out.
2. We had just gotten out of the Lake because the waves were so big when we realized that a few people were in trouble about 100 yards away next to the pier.
3. We ran over, and went out about 50 yards to a group of people trying to get a man, who was already unconscious, onto the pier.
4. There were three already in the water. Dan and I laid on the pier and tried to help get this man onto the dock.
5. After about 10 minutes of trying it was obvious that the waves were too big and disruptive and we needed to do something else.
6. At that moment I thought about jumping in, but was persuaded that what we needed to do was help get the three who were already in the water out.

B. Dan and I have rehearsed this a bunch of times – wondering what else we could have done. And I’m pretty certain that my jumping in would have been a bad idea. But I wonder.

1. But then about ten years ago a friend took me out and I loved it and ended up buying into a boat with a friend – for you sailors, it's a 1986, 35' ODay.
 2. Well, shortly after we bought it we sailed it across Lake Michigan with our youngest sons. We went to South Haven, Michigan, which is straight across and which takes about 14 hours in a boat.
 3. The plan was to get there around 7PM, eat, spend the night in a slip and then get up very early the next morning and sail back. But during the night the wind and waves kicked up and we didn't want to face that so we ended up staying.
 4. Well, one of the things we did with the boys was some body surfing. And we were having a riot because the waves were huge. But after about 30 minutes Dan and I decided that the waves were too big and we pulled the boys out.
 5. We had just gotten out of the Lake because the waves were so big when we realized that a few people were in trouble about 100 yards away next to the pier.
 6. We ran over, and went out about 50 yards to a group of people trying to get a man, who was already unconscious, onto the pier.
 7. There were three already in the water. Dan and I laid on the pier and tried to help get this man onto the dock.
 8. After about 10 minutes of trying it was obvious that the waves were too big and disruptive and we needed to do something else.
 9. At that moment I thought about jumping in, but was persuaded that what we needed to do was help get the three who were already in the water out.
- C. Which we did. It took all we had but everyone else was able to get out of the water around the time that all kind of emergency personnel showed up and we were relieved.
- D. It was a horrible scene. The family was wailing. We had failed. No one said much as we walked back down the pier and sat down. Eventually we started talking about what we should have done, playing out a bunch of scenarios. We kept this going on much of the afternoon and occasionally on the next day as we sailed back. And throughout that time and off and on over the next few weeks, I felt really bad about not jumping in. It was clear to me that it was the wrong thing to do, but it felt like I should have tried.
- E. And then I had this very powerful moment.
- F. It was early in the morning about three months after the drowning and I had just left the bedroom and was walking down the hallway praying a prayer I often start my morning with. It comes from John Stott, a British theologian. And it goes like this:
1. Good morning, heavenly Father; good morning, Lord Jesus; good morning, Holy Spirit. Heavenly Father, I worship you as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Lord Jesus, I worship you, Savior and Lord of the world. Holy Spirit, I worship you, Sanctifier of the people of God. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

2. Heavenly Father, I pray that I may live this day in your presence and please you more and more. Lord Jesus, I pray that this day I may take up my cross and follow you. Holy Spirit, I pray that this day you will fill me with yourself and cause your fruit to ripen in my life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons in one God, have mercy upon me. Amen.

G. I do not say the prayer word for word. On that morning I started:

1. Good Morning Heavenly Father, I praise you as the Creator of everything everywhere. Good morning Lord Jesus, I thank you for saving me.

H. And as I said that, I thought, “He would have jumped.”

I. And then I thought, “no, no, no. you’ve been over this 1,000 times. Jumping was the wrong thing to do. If you jumped in you would have drowned.”

J. And at that moment it hit me, “He would have jumped anyway. That’s what he did. He was willing to trade his life for mine.”

K. And I was so hit by this that I sat down on the stairs and thought about this. And about thirty second later it hit me, “God the Father sent the Son to his death to save me.”

L. In all of the months rehearsing what I could have done, should have done it never occurred to me to send my son in after the man. That would have made more sense. He’s the swimmer. He’s the one who ended up captain of his water polo team. But the idea of sending him was unthinkable. And yet, that is what God did.

1. For God so loved you, that He sent His Son, that whoever believes should not perish, but have life after life.

2. And as I was praying – when I said, “you saved me” – I thought, Jesus would have jumped.

3. And, he would have jumped even knowing that it would cost him his life.

4. And then, and this really staggered me, I thought, and his Father sent him.

a) My youngest son was behind me on the dock.

b) There was no thought in my mind of sending him in – I can’t even comprehend the idea.

5. And yet that is what God did.

M. That is the level of God’s love.

1. I don’t have answers to all of the questions we have about suffering, but what is clear is that God paid the ultimate price in order to deal with our debt.