

January 5, 2020
Experiencing God (1)
God is Always at Work
Exodus 1:15-22
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If God were a God who simply once reached out to us, who once spoke to us, we could rely on history alone, finding our assurance in what others claim God has already said and done. If our God were a deity who always communicated in the same way, or who could only be known and experienced by “professional” God-followers, then we might be excused from trying to experience Him ourselves. But the God of the Bible, the Father of Jesus Christ and the giver of the Holy Spirit, has been speaking to and communicating with men and women since He first created them. God has never stopped sharing Himself with His people. So we will explore how God communicates with us and how can we experience God through a new sermon series.

Today I would like to explore God in the Moses’ story in Exodus 1. When the initial founding people of Israel was just a large family, a famine hit their land. Fortunately, because of Joseph’s favor, this family could move to Egypt where there was food and they could survive. These people lived in Egypt as refugees; not in their own land, not with their own culture and not their own language. But they prospered. That is what it says in verse 6-7. *“The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy in all; Joseph was already in Egypt. Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, but the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them.”* They became exceedingly numerous, fruitful and multiplied. But this threatened the leadership of their country and so they enslaved the Israel people. Israel people became slaves. It was not an easy life - bitter lives with hard labor, oppressed with forced labor. It was a terrible situation. Yet in the middle of it, they continued to multiply and spread.

Pharaoh in Egypt made Israel people slaves and then he ordered to kill Israel’s children as they were born. But the midwives who were asked to do this didn’t do it because they feared God. There was something bigger than even the king in their lives. However, *“Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Every boy that is born, you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live.”* (1:22) The Pharaoh was saying, “Okay I can’t get it done through the midwives, we are going to kill them some other way,” and he sent out the word to everyone. If the book ended here, it would be nothing but bad news, but the Book of Exodus starts from here. When the nation was in trouble, we see God working among some of them to protect them. In today’s text we see where God is at work in one individual’s life.

In the midst of all that, there’s one story of a family that put a baby in the river. The mother made sure that the baby would stay safe and God preserved this child. There is irony here, because Pharaoh’s own daughter, the very person that gave the command, ended up protecting the baby. God protected a child from the Pharaoh’s family that God was going to use in the future. And then God used the baby’s own mother to nurse the child and she got paid to do it. Amazing what God was doing. God’s control was so complete here that He made a fool out of Pharaoh’s family. God was actually at work in a way to preserve a single individual that ultimately was going to liberate the entire people of Israel.

Despite all of the problems and despite all of the suffering, God was concerned. We are going to be looking more at Chapter 3 in the next two Sundays, but I want to mention a few verses in Chapter 3 that give us a sense of God’s heart. *“The Lord said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians.”* (7-8a) While all of these terrible things were going on in Chapter 1, God saw it, God heard it, God was concerned about it and God was getting ready to do something about it. When He began to work, people couldn’t even see it because God used Pharaoh’s own household to get it to happen.

If we are going to experience God, God has to be there to experience. He has to be engaged with this world and with our lives. We need to understand that God is at work right around us. We might not be able to see it. But in some families, in some places, God is at work just as truly as He was at work in Moses’ life. Now these people who are just doing what’s right are just like those midwives. They are doing what they know they have to do. They don’t necessarily know how it is all going to add up; how God is going to weave it into something bigger. God is at work even in our illnesses or weaknesses. God is at work in family difficulties, in financial issues, in all the burdens that we carry. What we need is to believe that God is at work.

God is here and is at work. God can be experienced. If we take a step to join God in what He is doing, then life is never going to be quite the same again. It’s going to challenge our faith in ways we never expected before. It’s going to be scary at times. It also is going to demand some new sacrifice in our lives. That’s the reality of walking together with God. There will be fruit that comes from that, but we don’t know exactly what that fruit is. We certainly don’t know the fruit when we are actually engaged in the obedience and in the service. But somewhere down the line there is fruitfulness because of what God is doing in us. If we follow God, somewhere down the line He will make sure there is fruit.