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Exodus 2:1-10

God's Exodus People: Christmas Rescue in Exodus

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Have you ever had something stolen? When I was a kid, I always went to bed on Christmas Eve wondering if robbers would steal all of my Christmas gifts during the night. They never did, but whenever I heard a story on the news that something like that had happened, I was convinced our house was next.

I just heard a story out of St. George Utah about three teenagers¹ who tried to steal a a laser light show out a homeowner's front yard. Unfortunately, for them, the homeowner was home. The *St. George News* says:²

On Nov. 27, at approximately 8:45 p.m., laser light bandits had struck, again. This time, at the home of Little Valley resident Scott Joens where juveniles had allegedly helped themselves to Joens' Star Showers Laser Light – a popular Christmas decor item which projects patterns onto a house or building and typically costs between \$25 and \$75.

“(The) crazy kids stole my laser light show right out of our yard,” Joens wrote in a Facebook post, confirmed to St. George News. “They picked the wrong old man to mess with because I got in the car and found them.”

Joens dialed 911 as he followed the alleged thieves in his vehicle.

“They led me on a 20-minute joyride,” he said, “but my mad driving skills kept up with their evasive maneuvers.”

With a 911 dispatcher now on the line, Joens said he called out street names along with traffic infractions perpetrated by the juveniles, such as speeding and blown stop signs.

The car chase continued through Little Valley into Bloomington Hills and then over by Desert Hills High School, reaching speeds of up to 50 mph, he said.

“An officer finally pulled in front of me and got the crazy kids,” Joens said, noting that he retrieved his stolen laser light.

Scott is my old worship pastor at the church I grew up in. He's the nicest most giving guy you could ever meet, but don't steal his laser lights! Exodus is the story of God getting back what Pharaoh tries to steal from him, his people. In the Old Testament, God's chose the nation of Israel to be his people. The Israelites lived in Egypt for **400 years**, and an evil Pharaoh came along who enslaves them, forcing them to do harsh labor making bricks and building cities. He tries to steal them from God, but God won't have it.

¹ St. George man chases teens who took his Christmas decorations by DJ Bolerjack. Published December 21st 2016. <http://kutv.com/news/local/st-george-man-chases-teens-who-took-his-christmas-decorations> (accessed 12/22/2016).

² St. George News: Homeowner pursues thieves on 20-minute chase to retrieve stolen Christmas yard decor. Written by Kimberly Scott, December 19, 2016. <http://www.stgeorgeutah.com/news/archive/2016/12/19/kss-homeowner-pursues-christmas-light-thieves-on-20-minute-chase-to-retrieve-stolen-property/#.WFV-jbYrKV4> (accessed 12/22/2016).

God is going to raise up a **leader** among the Israelites to deliver them, a prophet named **Moses**. But Pharaoh orders the people to throw every Israelite boy into the Nile to drown. Boys grow up to be soldiers, and he didn't want them to form an army, so he tries to kill them all. The good news is, God has a plan.

I. God rescues Moses from Pharaoh. (Exodus 2:1-10)

Last week we learned that God used the faith of two ordinary Hebrew midwives to save the baby boys in Egypt. This week we see that same faith in another women, Moses' mother, Jochebed.

A. God uses the faith of Moses' mother. (vv. 1-4)

Jochebed hides her baby boy for three months, but before long it becomes too dangerous to hide him, so she weaves a basket and covers it with tar and pitch. The word "basket" is the Hebrew word for "**ark**." The only other place this word is used is in the story of Noah and the flood in Genesis. In Noah's day, people were so bad God decided to wipe them off the earth with a flood and start again. But God spared Noah's family by asking him to build an ark, a really big boat. Noah built the ark and filled it with his family and all kinds of animals. God sent the flood but the Ark saved Noah and his family.

We can imagine that as Moses' mother made this basket, this ark, she cries out to God in prayer, asking for him to deliver her baby boy just like he delivered Noah. The type of faith she demonstrates here is special. It's resurrection faith. **Resurrection faith** is anytime we believe God can bring life out of death. Moses' mother places him in the very river that is supposed to kill him, the Nile. She does so trusting God will deliver Moses just like he delivered Noah from the waters that should have killed him.

If you're a parent, and you worry about your kids, this passage can be an encouragement. We have a God who listens to your prayers and cares about your children. If you worry for your child's physical or spiritual wellbeing, we have a God who wants to hear those worries. In the end, Jochebed trusted God with her child. God desires that same trust from each of you. He wants us to trust him with what is most precious to us. If God can bring life out of death, he can care for your child.

Moses's mother takes him to the shore and places him among the reeds in the Nile but she doesn't leave her baby alone. She leaves him with God and with his older sister.

B. God uses the courage of Moses' sister. (vv. 5-7)

Moses' mother assigns his sister Miriam to watch him. She is probably between six to twelve years old and God uses her to save the day. When Pharaoh's daughter comes down to the Nile to bathe (they didn't have modern plumbing), she spots the basket in the reeds. As soon as she opens the basket she sees the Hebrew baby crying, and she has pity on him.

In that moment, Miriam steps forward to address Pharaoh's daughter. Miriam is a nobody, the daughter of a smelly slave, and Pharaoh's daughter is royalty. For Miriam to step forward took a lot of courage. She asks, "Shall I go and get a nursing woman for you from the Hebrews, so that she may nurse the child for you?" (NET)³ Miriam is offering to find Pharaoh's daughter a nursing Hebrew woman to nurse this child.

³ Biblical Studies Press, The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible (Biblical Studies Press, 2005), Ex 2:7.

Now I don't think Pharaoh's daughter was dumb. She might have suspected this young girl was planted at the river to watch out for this baby, maybe even her brother, and that this nursing woman was probably this baby's mother. That took incredible courage for Miriam, because Pharaoh's daughter could have asked, "Why are you here? Is your mother the baby's mother? Why is your family disobeying Pharaoh?" But Miriam doesn't think about that; instead, she acts with courage.

We can act with courage no matter what age we are. Another kid who acted with courage is 13-year old Jeremy who saw his bus driver pass out while he was driving the bus. He jumped up, steered the bus to the side of the road, and yanked the keys out of the ignition. Other kids on the bus called 911, and Jeremy's friend Johnny performed CPR on the bus driver. They had courage and they saved the day.

If you're a kid, God can use you to do important things too, but it takes courage. Just like Miriam stood up for her brother, if you have a friend, or know someone at school who gets picked on, you can stand up for them. You can be their friend. You can stop others from bullying them.

Have you ever read a book or watched a movie where the kids defeat the bad guy? In the movie *The Incredibles*, Dash is 10-years-old and Violet is 15-years-old when they defeat the evil robot Omnidroid. God uses Miriam at an even younger age to defeat the evil king Pharaoh. When we tell other kids about Jesus, we're actually helping God defeat the most evil bad guy of them all.

We don't have a Pharaoh that is out to get us. But we do have a great spiritual enemy. In the beginning of the Bible, Genesis calls this enemy the serpent or snake. In other places, he is called Lucifer, Satan, or simply the Accuser. He accuses every human being for sin because we're all guilty of it. That's why we feel shame. Sin is missing the mark, it's distorting the truth, it's disobeying God. *Our greatest enemy is Satan, but our greatest problem is sin. The only one who can defeat Satan and fix our sin problem is Jesus.* When we tell other kids about Jesus, we're helping mess-up the serpent's plans. Just like God used Miriam to defeat Pharaoh, who happens to have a serpent on his crown, God can use you to help fight the serpent today.⁴

God uses the faith of Moses' mother and the courage of his sister to rescue baby Moses. He can use our faith and our courage today to rescue others. God delivers Moses because Moses is going to deliver his people the Israelites.

C. God rescues Moses for Israel. (vv. 8-10)

Moses' mother raises him till he is about three then she takes him to live with Pharaoh's daughter. She gives him his name, Moses. Have you ever named a dog or cat? I tried to name our childhood lab, which was yellow, "Chocolate", but my brothers wouldn't let me. Moses' name is special because it's Egyptian and Hebrew. In Egyptian, Moses' name means "born of" but in Hebrew, it sounds like, "I drew him out of the water." God raised Moses to speak on behalf of the Israelites, as a Hebrew, but to the Egyptians, as an Egyptian. God gives the Israelites the best possible leader in Moses. In fact, his name means "to draw out" and he is the one who is going to draw his people out of slavery in Egypt. God rescues Moses for Israel.

⁴ The Crowns of the Pharaohs by Willem Witteveen. 23 June, 2013. <http://www.ancient-origins.net/ancient-places-africa-news-general-opinion/crowns-pharaohs-00579> (accessed 12.22.2016).

This story, of God using Moses' mother and sister to rescue him, and he becoming the leader who will one day rescue the people of Israel, God's people, points forward to another story. Have you ever shined a flashlight down a pathway and you can faintly see what's ahead. This story shines the light on what's coming. God delivers Moses from Pharaoh to show how he will one day rescue another baby boy.

II. God rescues Jesus from Herod. (Matthew 2:1-20)

At the time of Jesus' birth, the Bible tells us Magi came from the east to Jerusalem searching for the Messiah. The Messiah is supposed to be just like Moses. He's supposed to lead his people out of spiritual captivity. The Magi ask the King of Jerusalem, Herod, where the king of the Jews is born; and this makes Herod very upset because one of his titles is "King of the Jews." Herod thinks this baby will overthrow his kingdom! He doesn't understand the Messiah's true purpose, so he tells the Magi to report back on the baby's location so he can secretly kill him. Thankfully, God warns the Magi not to return to Herod. Once they go home by a different route, an angel appears to Joseph telling him to leave town.

Matthew 2:13–14 When [the magi] had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, (NIV®)

A. God uses the obedience of Jesus' father. (v. 16)

An angel comes to Joseph to warn him to leave. Joseph doesn't question the angel. He just gets up during the middle of the night and goes. Joseph reminds us of the importance of obeying God immediately. *Slow obedience is disobedience.* As husbands and fathers, God calls us to obey him as examples for our families. The way we trust and obey God will influence how our families trust and obey God. Are you an example of quick obedience or slow disobedience? I want to be more like Joseph. His obedience saves his son.

Matthew 2:16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. (NIV®)

The story in Matthew chapter two is just like the story in Exodus chapter two. An evil king in each tries to steal away God's people, kills innocent baby boys, and yet is ultimately thwarted by God's plan. God uses the simple faith of a mother, the courage of a sister, and the obedience of a father to rescue his people from physical captivity, and one day, spiritual captivity too.

B. God rescues Jesus for us.

Like God rescues Moses for Israel, God rescues Jesus for us. One day Moses will lead his people out of physical captivity; and one day Jesus will lead his people out of spiritual captivity. Remember how Moses' name tells us he will "draw out" his people from slavery? Jesus' name tells us "he will save his people from their sins" (Matt 1:21). Just like Moses, Jesus' name tells us he came to save, rescue, and deliver us from our sins. He does this by dying for us. *The consequence of sin is death; so the only way to pay for sin is to die.*

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NIV®)

If you put your faith in Jesus, Jesus pays for your sins, which deserve death, with his own death. Jesus pays the ultimate price for his people. How can we receive this gift? By saying we're sorry for our sins and trusting Jesus with our life. That's what repentance and faith is.

When we accept Jesus as our deliverer, we don't have to be afraid of Pharaoh, Herod, or Satan anymore. None of them is powerful enough to steal us away from God. When God rescues his people through Jesus, he really rescues them.

John 10:28–29 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. (NIV®)

Robbers may steal our presents, and thieves may steal our laser lights, but no one can ever take us from God because Jesus paid the ultimate price for us. Jesus stole our sins away so that no one can steal us away from God. With Jesus, we're safe, secure, and delivered. *God rescued Jesus for us.*

Big Idea: With Jesus, we're rescued.

The story of Moses points forward to the story of Jesus. God delivers Moses so that one day he can deliver the nation of Israel. God delivers Jesus so that one day he can deliver any who trust in him. I want to end by telling you about a man named John Howland.

John Howland was born around 1599 and came to America on the Mayflower in 1620.⁵ On the voyage over he got sick of the cramped and filthy smelling below-deck conditions and went up on deck which was only for the crew. He was swept overboard and was almost lost at sea. But as he fell overboard, "he managed to grab hold of the topsail halyards (a rope to sail), giving the crew enough time to rescue him with a boat-hook."⁶ This painting is called "Howland Overboard". In the artist's imagination, you can see John stretching for the line, being pulled to the boat by the shipmates as the waves crash down.

When John Howland was rescued, he didn't know the impact that would have. Today, John Howland has over a million descendants, including President Franklin Roosevelt, President George H. Bush and George W. Bush, Alec and Stephen Baldwin, Humphrey Bogart, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. You can meet John Howland's descendants all over the United States today, thanks to a single rope and a boat hook that saved his life.

God reached down and hooked Moses out of the Nile and away from Pharaoh. He used the faith of his mother and the courage of his sister to rescue a baby boy who would grow up to rescue the Israelites, the people of God.

⁵ If John Howland was alive today, he'd be 417 years old.

⁶ John Howland <http://mayflowerhistory.com/howland/> (accessed 2016.12.22)

A thousand years later God reached down and hooked another little baby boy, this time his own son, from the murderous clutches of King Herod, using the quick obedience of his father Joseph. From that baby boy a great multitude of people has come. Anyone who puts their faith in Jesus becomes one of God's people. *God rescued Jesus for us.* With Jesus, we're safe, secure, and free. *With Jesus, we're rescued.*

Jude 24-25 To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen. (NIV®)