

From Deliverance to Devotion

Find Exodus Ch 18

Rob covered some things in Ch 18 on Sunday...

But God has some other things in there we'll briefly cover...

Before jumping into Ch19

Let's Pray

And as we continue in our journey through the book of Exodus

We come to a turning point -- Where the story shifts directions

And now after Egypt...

God will eventually lead His people to this.. Promised Land.

But before this...

He needs to prepare the people to be WHO

He is calling them to be.

His own special treasure...

This "Holy Nation"

And in this..

We are reminded of His ultimate desire...

Was not just to rescue His people -- For Rescue sake...

But ultimately... to draw them to Himself

After delivering His people...

God expresses His desire for their devotion.

Which will be an overarching theme for us tonight.

And it's important we understand this...

That God's work in Exodus is not merely ancient history...

But it is the pattern of redemption that we see throughout the scriptures...

And are still experiencing today

The story of Israel is the story of every believer...

God desires His people's devotion.

We see that God often draws His people out, in order to draw them in.

The title I've chosen for tonight is:

From Deliverance to Devotion

Where God's focus is to prepare His people...

Now to encounter His presence...

He's brought refreshment in making the waters sweet

Provided bread from heaven.

Made water flow from the rock...

And delivered His people from the Amalekites...

And in these chapters before us...

God continues His work of drawing His people even closer...

Into His presence, into covenant, and ultimately into relationship.

And that's where these two chapters become so important.

Because although we've seen God's power...

His desire is that we as His children

KNOW HIM

HEAR HIM and **LISTEN**

WALK with HIM

WORSHIP HIM

And in an act of His amazing grace...

REPRESENT HIM - To the world around us

So we'll read through these two chapters

And examine some principles of preparation...

Ways that God will move delivered people (such as ourselves)

From deliverance to devotion...

So let's get into Chapter 18 together and we'll zero-in on our first principle.

Chapter 18. Let's read starting at v.7

So Jethro comes to Moses...

Bringing his wife and 2 boys back to Moses...

After not being together through the plagues and rescue...

So -- For a couple months.

And I have no doubt -- this reunion here in Exodus 18 was extremely special.
Especially for Moses.

And in this reunion (Especially with his Father-in-Law)
We see a great picture of the concept of Influence...

And of course we know this could go either way...
Birds of a feather... One bad apple... (Right?)

I remember my parents demanding (Maybe yours did too)
"I don't want you hanging around that kid -- He's a bad influence."
Sometimes I'd wonder how many parents said that about me!
I was quite the Eddie Haskell.

But here in Chapter 18...
We see a positive effect of Moses' story...
As Rob emphasized on Sunday

But coming from maybe a different perspective...
I want to quickly point out some aspects of Influence in this story...
That I know will be a great encouragement tonight...
In our own circles of influence.

And the 1st Principle I want to highlight here is that...
Godly influence:
Points to His faithfulness, and not our accomplishments

Moses walked Jethro through the miraculous accounts...
The plagues and power of God in Egypt.
The Red Sea.
Bitter waters made sweet and the water from the rock.

But Moses wasn't trying to impress Jethro with Moses...
He was simply testifying to the unmistakable greatness of the true and living God

The Apostle Paul would beautifully commentate this point
There in 2 Corinthians 4 where wrote:

5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

2 Corinthians 4:5-7 NKJV

What is it about our flesh that desires the spotlight?

There really is something inside of us...

That just wants to be noticed... Recognized...

I have a love/hate relationship with social media at the moment...

But I do love the opportunity it gives many to encourage others

Stay Connected, and especially share the gospel!

But I think a lot of what these platforms tap into...

Is this tendency of humanity that desires attention.

Listen

There's a BIG difference between...

Wanting others to see God's faithfulness

And wanting others to *notice* our faithfulness to God...

Where suddenly we become the heroes of our story.

A dangerous place to be in.

I will not give My glory to anyone else...

God said through the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 42:8)

God doesn't share His glory with idols.

He doesn't share His glory with man (or anything else)

Because He alone is worthy.

Paul's like -- It's not about us.

It's about Jesus.

We're just these earth vessels...

These simple -- fragile -- nothing to write home about -- clay pots.

The real treasure is found inside.

In his previous letter to the church of Ephesus,
Paul begins with this repeated refrain...
Directing our eyes towards all that God has provided.

He blesses us...
He chose us...
He predestined us...
He accepted us...
In Him we have redemption...
By His blood...
In Him we are forgiven...
By His grace...
Our Inheritance...
Sealed with the HS...
His purpose / His pleasure / His will

And Paul says... Hey -- Let there be no mistake!
This miraculous power and providence...
It's from Him -- Not us.

And this understanding (I believe) was wrought into Moses...
From the time at that burning bush until the day he died.
Who am I?
That I should go to Pharaoh...
That I should bring these people out of Egypt.

But that's the way God has designed it to be.
So that in our weakness -- His greatness is on display.
And there's no confusion about where the glory belongs.

And you know what?
God still uses broken people
To accomplish His divine purposes.

So, Godly influence points to His faithfulness and not our accomplishments
And secondly -- Godly influence:
Inspires others to worship

Again -- We see after Moses told Jethro all that the Lord had done.
There was a definite response.
He rejoiced and praised God.
Offered a burnt offering and other sacrifices we're told -- All to God.

And I want to quickly look back at his response...

Because I think it give a little portrait of how we too
Are to respond to the Goodness of God.

First -- It says that Jethro rejoiced!

And this is a rare Heb. word that's only used a few times in the OT
But it literally means: To be overwhelmed with Joy!
He was amazed at God's power and goodness towards His people.

You know...

I know -- worship is far greater than the moments...

Where we join together in praise like we did before the study...

But we really have so many opportunities...

In simply stopping long enough...

To remember and recognize God's goodness.

And rejoice.

And this joy (All you fellow bible students know)

Isn't based on circumstance, attitude, or even this hellish weather...

No -- It's simply being glad because He has done great things (Psalm 26)

Second -- Jethro blesses the Lord...

And this joy spills out of his mouth...

Have you ever had this happen to you?

Where you are impacted and affected by the goodness of God...

He comes through...

Shows up...

And you can't help but want to tell someone...

That's Praise!

Or...I love it when someone comes to me and says,
"You'll never guess what God did!"
I know I'm in for some great news!

Charles Spurgeon wrote:

Whatever others may think or say, the redeemed have overwhelming reasons for declaring the goodness of the Lord. Theirs is a peculiar redemption, and for it they ought to render peculiar praise.

This is what the Psalmist here is referring to when he writes:

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble!

And friends this is not isolated to this room...
Not just singing on Wednesdays and Sundays...
But anytime we recognize the presence and providence of God in our lives...
Praise is giving voice...
And acknowledging His goodness with our own lips.

And in my favorite verse of Ch.18

Jethro comes to a personal revelation...

And confesses, "Now I know..."
Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods...
Placing God -- Where He belongs...
Above everything else.

Above ourselves...
Our finances...
Our marriages and families...
Our sin and struggles...
Our past -- Our guilt -- Our shame
Our trials and current trouble that bring us to our knees...

Friends -- We serve a great and mighty God...
Who as Paul would confess in Ephesians 3:20:

20 Now to him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us...

[Ephesians 3:20](#) CSB

And lastly, Jethro responds with sacrifice.

And this is what I love about this OT picture of worship
Where it wasn't necessarily a bunch of folks
Piled into an air conditioned room to sing along.

There was the very real act of taking the life of an animal...
There was blood...
There was fire...
Ultimately there was a tangible cost.

Now today -- Thanks be to God that Christ IS our ultimate sacrifice...
And forever fulfills that OT system once and for all...

But NOW -- On this side of the cross...

Paul says now present your bodies as a Living Sacrifice...

Jethro brought an animal to kill and burn...
But we have the opportunity to bring ourselves...
Made alive in Christ...
To live in a way that continues to please and glorify Him.

There's still sacrifice involved...
It may be our time...
Our finances...
Resources...
Maybe our own comfort...
Or a willingness to step out of our comfort zone...
Our obedience...
Our plans...

All to say, ***"Not my will, but Yours."***

And again -- Not to earn anything.
Our deliverance has already been accomplished...
And now our devotion is our grateful response.

Now this is no formula...
But again -- such a wonderful picture...
Of the potential that exists in our Godly influence...

That may affect those people that God has placed around us.

And cause them to rejoice...

Recognize the greatness and goodness of God...

And worship Him...

Because He's worthy to receive all glory and honor and power

So Godly influence...

1. Points to His faithfulness and not our accomplishments

2. Inspires other to worship

And thirdly -- Godly influence is marked by humility

Lets read v.13-17

This is so like the Lord to write this script in Exodus 18...

Where after Moses and this amazing testimony...

Ministers to his Father-in-Law (Jethro)

Jethro is able to minister to Moses...

And be a godly influence into his role and ministry.

That's quite the role reversal...

And a principle about Godly Influence that is easy to miss.

Because our influence requires humility to receive and be taught...

Just as much as the willingness to give.

I know you've probably heard the motto:

REMAIN TEACHABLE

Especially when it comes to roles of leadership.

Moses was the one at the burning bush...

Threw down with Pharaoh...

Led his people through the Red Sea...

Spoke directly with God...

And yet could still hear:

“Hey. There’s something you’re doing that isn’t good.”

And we see that Moses heeded this advice from Jethro.

Our problems sometimes (If it is not our pride)

Is merely a blindness to all the ways God hopes to speak and teach us.

Through creation.

Through each other.

Through our spouses.

Through our children (Believe it)

Through circumstance (Both good and bad)

And yes that even means traffic!

Proverbs 1:5 reads:

5 Let the wise listen to these proverbs and become even wiser.

Let those with understanding receive guidance.

[Proverbs 1:5 NLT](#)

Friends -- He is the Potter...

We are but clay.

Still being shaped and formed by our Master

And so the person God *uses* to influence...

Must also be someone God can still influence and teach.

By any means necessary.

Our Godly influence must be marked by humility.

So just a few things in Chapter 18...

Let’s get into Chapter 19

Verse 1

Lately -- I’ve been taking my youngest son, Shepard...

To go driving...

And we started out here in the church parking lot...
You know... the basics...
Doing donuts... peeling out.

But then out into the neighborhood.
Getting a feel and sense of that...

Preparing him for what's to come (Right?)

Eventually he'll get his permit..

Take some classes...

Do they still make people watch that horrific video?
Red Asphalt?

But -- he'll get to take the test...

And gets his license.

But this is (In a way) of what takes place here...
At the base of Mt. Sinai.
Where God takes His people through a process of preparation...
To encounter His presence.

Now it's been estimated
That from the time that God's people left Egypt...
They were in the 'wilderness' for a total of 38 yrs (+/-)

And in the books of Moses...

We're only told about a small amount of that !

This account here...
Of when the people arrive and set up camp...
Here at the foot of Mt. Sinai...

This period of time is around 11 months or so...

Less than 1/40th of that total time in the wilderness...
But recorded from Exodus 19...
Through the rest of the book...
Through the book of Leviticus...
All the way to Numbers Ch. 10

Why?

Why so much skipped over...

To focus on this detail and description?

It's because the whole point of this narrative...

Isn't the reality show of what Israel did for those 40 years...

But instead...

To show us what God's ultimate plan and desire for His people.

And to reveal Himself through all of these details...

His covenant...

His holiness...

His presence...

His worship...

His instruction...

And to define how a redeemed people...

Were to live in relationship with their God.

This wasn't about a destination...

It's about belonging.

And what we see in this chapter is the dialogue begins...

With God asking Moses and the people...

1. To Remember

Look at v.4

You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.

Again -- We mentioned that God's intention (ultimately)

Was (And is) not merely to deliver His people for the sake of rescue...

But to bring us to Himself.

And the first thing we see is this call to Remember.

Now...

What's true for these people in Exodus...

Is also true for us today...

And actually true throughout Christian history...

Is that we are horribly forgetful...

When it comes to how generous and kind...

God is to us.

I mean... We quickly forget the goodness of God.

All of us...

I am including myself in all of this...

But I think it's safe to say...

That we are far more concerned with...

The things we don't have VS All the things God has given us.

So don't be too quick to judge our brothers & sisters here in Exodus.

But after God...

In a crazy display of His power and might...

Delivers His people...

From the hands of the most powerful human nation at that time...

Bending the laws of nature to His will...

In one of the most supernatural demonstrations

Throughout the Bible...

From the plagues to the parting of the Red Sea...

Where the Israelites walked across dry land to the other side...

While Pharaoh and his armies chased them down.

And after God released the waters...

And they came down upon the Egyptian army...

The people rejoiced...

They praised God...

And set up a memorial -- *"Lord, we will never forget!"*

And days later?

We're hungry.

Did you really bring us all the way out here to die?

We were better off as slaves in Egypt!

And you know what God's response was?

He made sweet tasting bread to fall from heaven...

So His people could simply pick it up off the ground and eat it.

And the people said, "***Now we're thirsty!***"

Have you brought us out here to die?

We could have just died there in Egypt!

God's response?

He makes pure, clean water to come from a rock.

And the people drink it and are satisfied.

We want some meat!

How are we supposed to get our protein?

You trying to kill us out here or what?!

God brings Quail.

But it just doesn't seem to stop!

And this is us.

They are us... And we are them.

We have these same foolish tendencies.

We are forgetful -- Especially in the midst of challenging times!

And God says to them -- Like He does to us.

Remember.

Don't forget what you've seen with your own eyes.

How I bore you up on Eagle's Wings...

And brought you to Myself.

And maybe for some of us...
We might be thinking:

Eagles' Wings?!

I've never seen this Eagles' Wings thing in MY life!

But see... These are really good moments for us...
To stop and take inventory.

Which is something God asks of His people...
Throughout this wilderness period.

Remember that you were a slave (Deut 15:15, Deut 24:22)

Or kind of like Paul's own confession:

"I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a violent man..."

"But I received mercy." (1 Timothy 1:13)

Not that we would by any means dwell on our past...
But I find this really helpful to just to think about or briefly meditate...
"Where I would be... If it weren't for God."

But maybe you're here and for you...
You were saved when I was 6
At VBS... At a church camp...
Or raised in a Godly home and never had a rebellious streak...

Like my beautiful wife...
And when my boys were rebellious and disobedient...
My poor wife would be like, ***"Whoa! What the heck was that?"***
And I was like, ***"Oh! Yeah... That's all me."***

**But even if you're like my wife...
And don't have this testimony of radical salvation...
This is why the Bible is so helpful.**

Because the Bible tells us that all have sinned and fall short...
And that you were brought forth (or born) in iniquity...

Children of wrath...

And even in the innocence of a child is the reality of sin...
That manifests itself in different ways...
But thanks be to God — He saved us (x2)

But there's times I think about it...

Where I would be today — If God hadn't saved me.

Addict...

Chasing after happiness in all the wrong places...
But ultimately unhappy, unsatisfied, and probably alone.
Messing around with things that could have ultimately destroyed me.

And I think about my marriage...

What kind of husband would I be to Rachel...
Or my family...
And what kind of Father and example I would be to my boys.

The secrets that would still be trying to hide...

And harboring in my heart and mind...
And wrestling with the shame that comes with it.

But in that simple act of Remembrance...

I'm brought to a place of peace and extreme gratitude...

My heart is lifted...
And I am filled with peace and extreme gratitude...
When I remember that He bore me up on eagle's wings.
And brought me to Himself.

And that's some interesting language God uses there...

Because we all know...
That's not exactly how he saved His people from Egypt.

That's Lord of the Rings right there...

Pulling Frodo and Samwise from Mt. Doom to the green fields of Cormallen

*And my guess is Tolkien may have been inspired by this verse.
As he was there reading Exodus...*

But why does God use this analogy?

Well from an OT perspective...

Of course an Eagle is a symbol of strength and power...

Symbolizing God's extraordinary strength...

But also His care over his people.

God wasn't like: ***You made it!***

You escaped Egypt!

You did it!

Great job -- Everyone gets a medal.

No.

Israel's salvation had nothing to do with Israel...

It had everything to do with God.

He intervened. (He List)

He brought the plagues.

He parted the sea.

He defeated Pharaoh and his armies.

God's saying -- It was Me.

I rescued you and brought you to Myself.

And we clearly see the connection from our NT perspective...

Where we read...

He made(you) alive, who were dead in your sins (Eph 2:1)

He as delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of His dear Son (Col 1:13)

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; It is the gift of (Who?) God. (Ephesians 2:8)

Israel couldn't boast -- ***Hey, Look what we did!***

And neither can we!

This my friends is the Miracle of Salvation.
And it's a miracle no one can accomplish on their own.

And that is why God uses this language...
And how He bore them up on eagles' wings.
That you and I -- We would remember our continued salvation...
As an ongoing miracle of God...
And God alone.

Secondly -- Let's talk about Purpose.

2. Purpose

And this purpose will be a perpetual picture we will see...
Through the rest of this book -- Purpose.

Again...

God tells Moses to tell the people:

You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and
brought you to Myself.

And that's it.

That's His purpose.

To bring us into communion and fellowship with Him

Again -- Just like the children of Israel...

God saves us...

He draws us out..

TO BE WITH HIM

That's the purpose in all of God's work and orchestrating...

To free His people...

Is so that we might be brought to Him...

Commune with Him...

Remain IN Him...

And be Transformed by Him.

Because there is nothing more transformative
Than the presence of God.

And again -- We see this over and over again in Exodus...
By the giving of the Law...
To the setting up of the Tabernacle...
And the details of the furniture -- the tools -- the garments...

All of it meant to communicate...

God's desire to be with His people.

That is His purpose.

And that's what we hear when we read v.5-6...
Where God reveals His purpose to His people...
Saying..

5 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 'And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'

Exodus 19:5-6 NKJV

Now -- Later in the book of Exodus...
God would make a formal covenant (or promise) to the people...

But before God called His people to KEEP His law...

His commandment here -- was to keep His covenant

And this is still the heart of our Father today.
He simply says, "Come to Me"
I know you're broken...
I know you're needy...
I know your imperfections and sin you're still dealing with...
Come.

Listen...

The Law has an important purpose...

Kind of like an MRI machine...

Where they stick us in there to expose an illness / injury...
But it can never heal us!
It only reveals what's wrong!

But God's purpose for you and I...

Primarily is that we would come into fellowship...

And find rest...

Find healing...

Find Peace / Joy / Direction...

And allow that sanctification process to have its way...

As we walk with Jesus.

But this leads us to our last point tonight...

Because once we 'Remember' what God has accomplished for us...

And we understand now – What His 'Purpose' is...

Not just to draw us out...

But to draw us to Himself...

Now we get to the rest of this chapter...

With all of it's Fire and Smoke and Thunder...

The ground shaking while trumpets are blaring...

What the heck is this?

This is (3) Grace my friends.

Think this through with me.

There in the 1st chapter of Isaiah...

Where God gives Isaiah the prophet a vision of heaven...

And with God on His throne... High and lifted up...

Isaiah's response was what?

Woe is me, for I am undone.

I'm a sinful man...

With unclean lips...

Because upon encountering God's holiness...

His own sinfulness and rebellion becomes unmistakably visible.

And this is what Sinai is doing for Israel.

God in His grace and mercy is preparing His people for His presence...

And helping them understand:

- His presence is glorious *and* powerful...
- His holiness is pure and absolute...
- Sin is deadly serious...
- And this covenant He offers cannot be taken lightly

Sneak peek into Chapter 20...

But Moses speaking to the people

Who are experiencing the Thunder / Lightning / Smoke / Fire

Says:

20 "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin."

Exodus 20:20 NKJV

David Guzik on Fear writes:

Exodus 20:20 distinguishes between two kinds of fear.

"Do not fear", speaks of a tormenting fear that comes from both guilt and danger.

"That His fear may be before you", speaks of the attitude of honor and reverence that leads us to respect and obedience.

Paul reiterates this in his letter to Titus:

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age.

Titus 2:11-12 ESV

You see...

That tremendous display of power...

Was not for show...

God knows how sin destroys...

And He knows our frailties as man... (**Intimately! - He Created Us!**)

By His grace...

He is teaching us.

Training us...

And deliberately cultivating within us a holy reverence...

A reverence that keeps us from sin...

And draws us into close communion with Him...

This is the work God continues in my life... and in your life...

Today.

He calls us to remember His faithfulness...

How He bore us up on eagles' wings...

The miracle of our salvation.

How He carried us when we could not carry ourselves...

And how He continues to draw us toward Himself.

That by remembering our salvation...

And the work of the cross...

We would not only be a delivered church...

But devoted...

As He is to us.

And as we continue to read through accounts like this...

And are reminded of God's power and majesty...

May we never lose our wonder...

At who He is.

May His grace never cause us to take His holiness lightly.

And may the closer we draw to Him,

The more deeply we come to revere Him

Because the God who delivered us...

And brought us to Himself.

Is the God who is still (By His amazing grace)

Is preparing us to enter into His presence.

From Deliverance to Devotion. All by His grace.