

May 11th

THE TIDE TURNS

“During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.” **EXODUS 2:23-25**

If you did a Google search of understatement, you’ll find a few of these: “Swimming with those starving sharks might be a bit unpleasant.” Or someone says after a hurricane, “At least my plants will get watered.” Or like in *Mighty Python and the Holy Grail* the black knight claims that when his arm is cut off: “Tis but a scratch!” These all are huge understatement, some of them meant to invite laughter, others to avoid reality. You’ll find understatement everywhere, especially when you are looking for them. Well, God gives an understatement in Exodus 2 here. “During those many days...”. That’s quite a statement, considering the genocidal maniac that had domineered over the Hebrew people. Remember, they had been slaves for over 400 years! But God. God has something to show us here, but it’s not maybe what you might expect.

We’d like to fast forward to the glorious burning bush of Exodus 3. But before we come to see God’s intervention, we see God’s heart for His people. What do we find at the end of chapter 2? The people are groaning because of their slavery. Groans and cries. You can imagine the tyranny that they were under. Their babies even were at risk for death. They were slaves that were beaten to build cities for a genocidal maniac. These cries for hundreds of years appeared to go unheard. Unseen. The key word here is appeared. God always hears the cries of His people. He always sees and hears the cries of His people. We have to allow the truth of God’s Word to penetrate our hearts. God sees and hears, even when we continue to struggle. God heard their groaning and remembers His covenant with the Patriarchs. The chapter ends with the simple statement: “God saw the people of Israel.”

Men, despite our sin and suffering, God is always near. This is the comfort of Psalm 139. “Where can I go from your presence?” The hall of faith of Hebrews 11 isn’t just a story of triumph over sin and enemies, there’s also death without seeing redemption. What does the Bible say about those people and the Hebrew people that were born as slaves and died as slaves without seeing their redemption? Hebrews 11 states: “Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated...And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.” Even though they didn’t see the promise fulfilled, they looked forward to the promise and they were commended for their faith. They looked forward, while we look back to what was given by Christ’s work. But we all have hope because of Christ, even when we suffer and die. God isn’t a God that is distant. He is near to His people. This gives us hope. Despite what our situations cause us to feel about God, the truth is that He hears and sees us. God loves and gives His Son. This momentary affliction points toward our future glory with Jesus in heaven!

Spend some time thanking God that our trials and suffering points us more to the hope of heaven. Ask Him for strength to give thanks to Him for always being with us, even when we suffer.

For Further Reading: Psalm 139

