

Exodus 3:7-9

Introduction: If you have been with us you know that we have been studying book of Exodus.

Before we look at our passage this morning - Just a quick review of kind of where we have been - If you recall the book starts with God's people in bondage, being horrendously treated. A man by the name of Moses is raised up and he sees the mistreatment of his people, he is outraged and tries to do something about it to stop it. So he tries to take matters into his own hands and tries to rescue the people out of that terrible situation but that doesn't work - his plan fails. So he runs away and spends 40 years away from Egypt where he meets a women gets married, has children and becomes a shepherd.

Last week - we read about God then appearing to Moses in the burning bush where He will ultimately call Moses to go back to Egypt to be the instrument God uses to free His people of out bondage.

But - I don't want us miss the fact that while Moses has spent those 40 years getting married having children and becoming a shepherd - during that time the Israelites have spent *another 40 years in bondage*, another 40 years crying out to God, 40 years begging Him to change their circumstances but not getting any apparent help!

All that time crying out to God, you have to imagine they are losing hope, growing impatient and its reasonable to think they are wondering if God even cares about them.

I mean how many of us have maybe even spent one year crying out to God and growing frustrated and hopeless that God is ignoring our circumstances?

I know I can get impatient with God after crying out to him for 40 hours.

And so the first important truth from this passage this morning is that the Bible never denies the reality that God's people can hurt and struggle especially when God is not seeming to be very present.

So many of us use pain and trials in life as some sort of proof that God is not good or real... but the Bible never tries to perpetrate like there will be no struggles in the Christian life...

Counseling situation: Married couple having problems... - I don't believe in God anymore... Why? I prayed to him and he didn't change my marriage.

We see in our text this morning and throughout Scripture times where the people of God are hurting. They are crying out for help. Begging God's to help with no apparent answer. God's people can be exhausted and losing hope. This is a reality that exists throughout the entire Bible. It should never surprise us when this happens.

Again the Scripture never shies away from this... in fact David (a man the Bible calls a man after God's own heart) in the midst of trials asked in Psalm 13...

How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? ² How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

And so - its never lost on me - that often and even right now, we come to church hurting, frustrated and broken, exhausted...

- Where you may have a husband that is mean and disengaged and when you talk to him about it he gets defensive and more angry and maybe you are losing hope.
- Or you received unwanted health news that has you scared and anxious
- Or maybe you are struggling with depression and it just won't seem to lift

And maybe for some here today like David and like the Israelites - you are growing impatient with God wondering if God even cares. You say I have been crying out to God to change my circumstances for weeks, months or even years and He has not intervened.

I want to say there is good news for us this morning in our passage...

Exodus 3: starting in verse 7 God is talking to Moses and says,

⁷ Then the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, ⁸ and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹ And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.

The first thing this passage teaches us is:

1. God Sees

7 Then the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt... I know their sufferings..."

We have a God who is always present. It's one of His attributes. God is omnipresent which means He is everywhere at once.

Even though the Israelites felt forgotten - He says I have *surely seen* the affliction of my people. God is aware of what's going on in the lives of His people. He is absolutely aware of your circumstances even when He has not intervened yet.

This is a wild thought when you think of it! The God of the universe sees us and knows about us! He is not distracted. He is not spread too thin.

This truth blew David's mind - let's look at Psalm 8:3-4 because David's response should be our response... One night, David is looking at the stars, and he's thinking about how big the universe is and he says to God,

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

David gets it. He's saying, "God... like... that You would know me, that You would care about me, that You would be aware of me - is just crazy!"

But God does. He's aware of you, to the point where He knows all of the hairs on your head (Luke 12).

So in those times where we feel like God is just oblivious to our situation - we need to remind ourselves that God has surely seen our affliction. He saw the affliction of the Israelites and He sees ours.

But God does not just see our affliction...

We also see that God hears the cries of hurting people.

2. God Hears

⁷ Then the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings..."

This is a point God wants to make clear - Earlier in Exodus we read...

Exodus 2:23-24

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. ²⁴ And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

I think we take for granted this stunning reality that the God of the universe... bows down His ear to us and listens.

Psalm 56:8 — keep track of all my sorrows, catch my tears in a bottle

Illustration: The other day the Yankees / Red Sox game was on (*and we all know how that series turned out*) and I was all in - hanging on every pitch and play... totally engrossed in the game.

One of my daughters was attempting to talk to me during the game and asking me questions and truthfully I just missed it. She asked a question and after like the third Dad... Dad.... Dad... I had to say I am sorry babe, I totally wasn't listening so I need you to repeat that.

Here is the thing... and I hope we get this - that never happens with God. God is always attentive. He is never distracted. No matter how many people are talking to him at once - He hears us.

At any given moment, if we cry out to him, God hears us... and here is why He hears us:

Tim Keller in his book on prayer writes:

We know God will answer us when we call because one terrible day he did not answer Jesus when he called. Jesus prayed in Gethsemane that the "cup" of suffering on the cross be taken from him, yet his request was turned down. On the cross itself he cried out, "My God," but he was forsaken (Matt 27:46)...

Keller goes on to write...

More specifically, Jesus' prayers were given the rejection that we sinners merit so that our prayers could have the reception that he merits. That is why, when Christians pray, they have the confidence that they will be heard by God and answered in the wisest way.¹

Because of the cross - God hears our prayers and this should bring us to worship and bring us to call upon Him in prayer.

The people of Scripture understood how amazing this truth was in their life...

Psalm 116:1-2 - *I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy. Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.*

So God sees us - and He listens... But if all God did was see and just listened - but never did anything about it... that would not be good news for us. But God continues to talk to Moses and says...

3. God Responds

I know their sufferings,⁸ and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey,

What we see in this text is a God who not only sees and hears and knows but also a God who is working a plan that is for the good of His people.

God is not watchmaker who created something and wound it up and then just left it and let it run... He is actively working in our circumstances at all times.

But - we can still go - Well... if He responds - if He is actively working in our circumstances - then why in the world has He not answered my prayers?

Maybe you are here this am saying... "If you knew my situation you would also be asking, what in the world are you doing, God?"

All throughout Scripture - that is not an uncommon question or response... so again trials don't invalidate the Bible - in fact in the book of Habakkuk he had a similar

¹ Keller, Timothy. Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God (p. 238). Penguin Publishing Group.

question... Habakkuk looked at his situation or circumstances and said “God if you are good, what in the world are you doing, why are you allowing this to happen?” and this is how God answered it.

Habakkuk 1:5

Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told.

God says - I am doing things you can't see in this situation, that if I tried to explain to you, you wouldn't even believe me.

You and I, probably because of sinful nature, have this idea that we know better than God and know how He should work. When He doesn't work that way in our lives - we question His goodness.

But we have to remember that His plan is perfect, and it works itself out at just the right time, in just the right way even if it doesn't appear He knows what He is doing.

Illustration: I have been on staff at Grace Road for over six years and I remember about four years ago one of my daughters was talking with a friend - and the friend asked... Where does your dad work? My daughter replied - “My dad works at CVS”

Now... I have never worked at CVS in my life so I could not understand why she thought I worked there.

I thought my daughters have absolutely no idea what their Father is up to all day!

Often in the same way - we have no idea what our heavenly Father is up to all day.

But we have to look no further than the cross to remember that He sees our hopeless circumstances and responds for our good.

You see just like the Israelites we were in bondage and without hope of being able to get themselves out of that situation, all of us were in bondage to sin and unable to save ourselves.

And God surely saw our affliction and came to this world. He came to this earth as a man and when everyone thought He was going to overthrow Rome and establish a new Kingdom... God had a different plan and a much better plan.

So He willingly went to the cross and died.

And for three days everyone was saying... "God what in the world are you doing? I thought you cared... I thought you were good and powerful!"

God always keeps his promises perfectly, in just the right way, at just the right time.

And three days later Jesus resurrected - to deliver us from our sin and the penalty our sin deserves. And to all that put their trust in His work on the that cross, can we forgiven and rescued from their sin! He did that for you and me.

Proving and giving us assurance that God is working a plan and that plan is good, although that plan will rarely work itself out like we think it's going to.

Conclusion:

I want to end with this...

Because of the cross and because of the grace of God, we are actually told in the Scriptures to boldly approach the throne of grace with confidence. We are to pray with confidence, pursue with confidence and chase with confidence.

Hebrews 5:15-16

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

We can go to him because He is good father who loves us and cares about us.

So this morning, I am not sure what you are still begging for this am - But I can assure you it's not lost on God. He is watching not ignoring.

And when we don't get the answer we want when we want it, we can rest in knowing that He has proven that His plan is good.

Pray

SERMON QUESTIONS:

Describe a time when you were struggling and God did not seem to be present.

When God does not answer our prayers the way we want Him to, what truths about God should we take comfort in?

How does remembering what Jesus accomplished on the cross assure us in times of trials?

What is something you are begging God to do currently in your life?