

# Exodus 2

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[0:00] One of the stories that really captured me this week was that on Monday, the pupils of the army school in Peshawar went back to class.

Their school that on the 16th of December, four Taliban armed gunmen walked in and went on the rampage. The most atrocious thing that Pakistan has seen for many, many decades. 148 dead, 132 of which were children under 15. A further 130 taken to hospital with bullet wounds. Kashif Ali said this, he's 10 years old. I came to school after 26 days and noticed all my friends were missing. I cried because I miss them so much.

Lakit Ahmed, 13 years old, I'm afraid because the Taliban can hit at any time. I saw the classrooms where the Taliban killed all my friends.

[1:13] And I couldn't hold back the tears. Shahrukh Khan, 16 years old, shot in both legs, who only survived because he pretended to be dead.

Hiding under the dead body of his best friend. I've lost 30 of my friends. How will I sit in the empty classroom? How will I look at their empty benches?

How will I survive when it is only my jacket on the hook of the classroom? My heart is broken. All my classmates have died.

Now my heart hates school. And I'm terrified to come back. Sickening. Brutal. So unfair.

So unjust. There is something that is utterly repugnant about the killing of children. Something that was an absolute atrocity that went down in that school in Pakistan.

[2:20] Utterly inhumane. How each of us should be praying for these children. And the pain and brutality that they witnessed.

But when we left Exodus 1. There's something even more brutal going on. Something even more. Inhumane.

And something even more. Disgusting. You see in chapter 1. There's a new pharaoh in town. And he's decided. That he wants to set about. Disarming. And killing. The Hebrews. That are enslaved in his country.

And he tries to do this by enlisting the help of Shipra and Pua. These two Hebrew midwives. Saying that when they give birth. Don't worry about the baby. Make sure.

[3:16] If he's a boy he dies. But we read it was unsuccessful. These midwives honored. The Lord. That was small scale.

At the maternity ward. But if you've got Exodus 1 open. See what it says in verse 22. Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people.

Every Hebrew boy that is born. You must throw into the Nile. But let every girl live. It was small scale. In the maternity ward.

Now it is in the neighborhoods. Now it is the right. And the. Responsibility. Of every Egyptian. That if their Hebrew neighbor has a baby boy.

Then they've got to be thrown into the Nile. This is not some. Faction of militants. Breaking into a school. This is state sponsored terrorism.

[4:16] To ensure that the Hebrew nation. Is utterly decimated. Things have changed overnight. It would be something akin to what we saw in Rwanda.

Where on the 7th of April 1994. These two communities. That got along side by side. Suddenly. The Hutu majority turned on the Tutsi.

Minority. And in a hundred days. A million people were killed. If Egypt had 24 hour.

Scrolling news. It would read something like this. More countless Hebrew boys killed today. With the video of the Nile.

And Hebrew babies. Just strewn across the banks. Some fat crocodiles. Circling. Utterly horrendous.

[ 5 : 16 ] Channel 4 documentary. One drowned every minute. BBC. Drama. Don't bother calling the midwife. Utterly repugnant.

Repugnant. And if you're a Hebrew in Egypt. Where is God in all of this? They are literally taking away our future and our livelihood.

Where are you? Why won't you do something? What is going on? Abandoned. Bereft. Hopeless. Helpless. Yes. And pretty much every Hebrew. Is in mourning. You may not have had tragedies like this in your life. But I'm sure you've asked this question.

Where is God? What is he doing? Why am I so alone? And as we come to chapter 2. It's not like it says. And then God showed up. And it was all alright.

[ 6 : 15 ] In fact chapter 2 takes 80 years. And God's only mentioned at the very end. By name. It's hardly like international rescue is on the way.

Yet I think what we see when we really dig into this verse. These verses. Is that God is always working.

God is always working. And we're going to see that so profoundly today in the life of Moses. Jesus. We're going to see that God is moving his pieces around the board.

In order that the greatest rescue the Old Testament ever saw happened. We're going to see that God. Though he may not be front and center blatantly obvious doing his work.

He is behind the scenes. And he's about his business. We see that God is always working. And let me show you. In the first 10 verses.

[ 7 : 19 ] So make sure you've got a Bible. Look with me at chapter 2 verses 1 to 10. Let me read them. Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman.

And she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child. She hid him for three months. But when she could hide him no longer. She got a papyrus basket for him. And coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it. And put it among the reeds. Along the bank of the Nile. His sister stood at a distance.

To see what would happen to him. Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe. And her attendants were walking along the river bank. She saw the basket among the reeds.

And sent her female slave to get it. She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying and she felt sorry for him. This is one of the Hebrew babies she said.

[ 8 : 16 ] Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter. Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you? Yes go she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her.

Take this baby and nurse him for me. And I will pay you. So the woman took the baby and nursed him. When the child grew older she took him to Pharaoh's daughter.

And he became her son. She named him Moses saying I drew him out of the water. It's probably the most famous story in Exodus isn't it?

Moses in the bulrushes. It always strikes me. That one of the things that expectant parents need to buy is a Moses basket. And what goes into my mind is that none of the things you're buying are seaworthy.

And I just have visions of you floating your newborn baby and abandoning them down the water of leaf. What we see in this section is the floating Moses.

[ 9 : 17 ] And I want to show you where God is at work. And I want to show you it through four pieces of delicious irony that we see all over this passage. Here's the first one.

Out of the river of death is drawn life and deliverance. Out of the river of death is drawn life and deliverance.

There's this Levi couple. They have a baby. They managed to protect him for three months. But they can't hide him any longer. Do you know when the neighbors come round? Is that a baby crying?

Oh no, that's the cat. Is that the baby crying? Oh no, that's the wind. And it gets to the stage where they just need to get him out of the house and trust that God knows what he's doing.

And so they build this basket, this literally ark. And they float him down the river. And I think they do it quite strategically because I guess where Pharaoh's daughter bathes is quite a well-known place.

[10:23] And they float to him. And she finds him. I love the great irony here that Moses' mother is paid to look after him. It's like the beginning of the welfare state in Egypt.

But do you see this great irony? The river Nile that had now become synonymous with the death of babies is from this Nile that Moses is drawn out and with him life and deliverance because God is working.

God is doing something. God is doing something. God is doing something. Second great irony is this. Pharaoh's order and Pharaoh's daughter. Out of Pharaoh's house goes this horrible edict that Hebrew boys must be thrown into the Nile.

And yet it's into Pharaoh's house that this baby Moses is brought as a haven against that hostility. It's an incredible irony showing that God is at work.

And the third delicious irony is like what God is always up to. Weak women and a baby versus the most powerful man in the world. Women in this society are not valued.

[11:39] They're not treated as equal. They're very much seen as possessions. And you have Moses' mom, Moses' sister, the female slave and Pharaoh's daughter.

And they all work together. The most underwhelming rescue team you've ever seen. And it's through their efforts that Pharaoh's downfall begins.

It's an incredible truth. And it's true, isn't it? We get so familiar with artists. So if I show you these paintings, you'll be able to guess who painted them.

Van Gogh or Van Gogh, depending on where you come from. Or this one. Picasso. Good old Pablo.

We just get used to how he works, how he draws. We see his hand in everything. One for the younger people. Banksy.

[12:46] The stencil graffiti artist. We just know how he paints. We can see his hand at work in situations. And I think when we really get in to Exodus 2, we see that God's hand is all over the place.

And these amazing ironies that he is working. Though it's not front and center, blatantly obvious, God is at work. That brings us to our fourth great irony.

The crushing hand of oppression from Pharaoh is going to be thwarted by the gentle hand of providence as God does his work. God is always working.

If we've got eyes to see what he's doing, we'll see that he's doing it. And he's doing it all the time. So often we miss providence because we're looking for miracle.

God has two hands. He has a miraculous hand and a providential hand. And his miraculous hand blows our mind. But his hand of providence working through the mundane and the mediocre should blow our minds as well.

[14:00] Jesus says, doesn't he, my father is always working. He's always doing something. He's not slumbering. He's not sleeping.

He's in control and he's making sure that his purposes work out. That's true in Exodus 2. That's true in your life. That he is like the master craftsman working.

In order that you might be part of his family and conform to his likeness.

He's working in your life. He's working in your life through the life of others. He's providing good things that you enjoy. He is working in the world. And he's at it 24-7, 365.

Doing it all the time. God is at work. He's doing it all for his glory. John Piper says this. God is always doing 10,000 things in your life.

[14:59] And you may be aware of three of them. You see that God is working to make his mediator ready. God is working in order that his purposes will happen.

Look with me at the second half of the chapter and we'll see. That he's not only at work in preserving Mercer's life. But he's at work in preparing Moses for his job.

Chapter 2 verse 11. One day after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people.

Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. The next day he went and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?

The man said, who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian? Then Moses was afraid and thought, what I did must have become no.

[16:04] When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well. Now a priest of Midian had seven daughters and they came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father's flock.

Some shepherds came along and drove them away. But Moses got up and came to their rescue and watered their flock. When the girls returned to Reuel, their father, he asked them, why have you returned so early today?

They answered, an Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock. And where is he? Reuel asked his daughter. Why did you leave him?

Invite him to have something to eat. Moses agreed to stay with the man who gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage. Zipporah gave birth to a son and Moses named him Gershom. Saying, I have become a foreigner in a foreign land. During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out. And their cry for help, because of their slavery, went up to God.

[17:11] God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them. You have to say, God has worked quite well in preserving Moses' life, but it seems a little bit pathetically slow.

Hebrew babies are being killed everywhere and God's answer is, let's preserve the life of one baby. Seems really slow. By the time we get to Exodus 2 verse 11, Moses the boy is about 40 years old. And he thinks he's ready to be the savior of his people. So he sees this fight going on and he kills the Egyptian.

And he buries him and thinks he's got away. He knows he's doing something wrong because the writer clearly says he looked this way and that. He knew this was wrong and therefore he did it in such a way that he might not get caught.

But the word got out and the next day the Hebrew people that are fighting confront him saying, we know what you did yesterday.

[18:21] Do you see how privilege has led to pride? Moses has had the most privileged upbringing you could ever imagine. Growing up in Pharaoh's house, he wanted for nothing.

Yet do you see he also knew that he was a Hebrew. He calls them my people when he says Hebrews. One of his own people. And therefore the privilege that he had led to his pride thinking, I know what.

I can solve my people's problems. He takes matters into his own hands and he kills the Egyptian. Rash, foolish, proud, arrogant.

And when word gets out, he knows that Pharaoh will have his head. And so he flees to the desert of Midian. Midian would be like Alawa.

It's just like the back of nowhere. There's nothing going on. Every time I mention a place in Scotland, there's always someone from here and I spend the rest of the day apologizing to them. There's nothing going on there.

[19:28] Moses thinks, I've really messed up. He flees because he was rash and tried to take matters into his own hands, thinking that he had all the answers to his people's problems.

Proud, arrogant, conceited. But we're going to see that God uses this mistake to prepare Moses's character.

That God was working in the first place to preserve his people. Now he's preparing his mediator. And the first thing that happens is remarkable.

Seven daughters of the priest of Midian get some hassle from some local shepherds. Moses. And Moses' attitude in their rescue is completely different to what he does in Egypt.

Do you see how he's humble? He has absolutely nothing to do with these women. And yet he steps in. He rescues them and he goes above and beyond because he says, do you know what?

[20:30] I'll water your flock. Take it easy. And he's done it really well because their dad is surprised that they're back so early. Do you see where proud arrogance was his problem, he now shows real humility.

Where it was proud arrogance, he now exhibits humility. God is at work. Moses thinks he's made a mess, but God is preparing and working in his life.

And produces mediator. Eventually, he marries Zipporah. And they have a son. And they call him Gershom or Gershi for short.

And that name means foreigner in a foreign land. Do you see that God has not only been at work to humble Moses. He's now given him empathy as well.

Moses knows that his people, the Hebrews. Moses are foreigners in a foreign land. But he knew nothing of it. He grew up at the Pharaoh's table in the Pharaoh's house wanting for nothing.

[ 21 : 43 ] And yet here in Midian, God works through this mistake. So that finally he can empathize with his people. God is at work.

He's working on Moses' character now. So that his mediator will be ready. It takes a long time. Forty years in Egypt.

Forty years in Midian. And not one day God isn't at work to prepare his mediator. To preserve him and then to work on his character. Do you see though?

That Moses is now a great go-between for the job that God has for him to do. God needs someone to mediate between Pharaoh in Egypt and the Hebrew people.

And so what happens? He spends 40 years learning all about the Pharaoh and the Egyptian people. And then he spends 40 years empathizing with the Hebrews who are in slavery.

[ 22 : 48 ] That seems like a great mediator to me. Somebody who understands both sides. And yet we read in the book of Hebrews. That Moses is only the second best mediator that the world has ever seen.

Because the best mediator the world has ever seen. Is somebody who's able to mediate between a holy God and sinful people like you and me. And yet God wasn't working on Jesus' character.

Jesus was perfectly fit for the job. Somebody who was, as Hebrews 1 says, fully God. And somebody who was, as Hebrews 2 says, fully human.

The perfect go-between for sinful people is the Lord Jesus. Fully God, fully human. Perfect. Says also in Hebrews that he's able to sympathize with us.

He knows exactly what we're going through all the time. And he says more than that, I'm able to help. He says, I'm able to represent you to God and God to you. He says, I'm a friend forever.

[ 23 : 58 ] I am someone who made you, who likes you, who's with you, who's for you. And because of my death and resurrection, we'll be with you. Even into eternity.

We all need a mediator. We've got merit to come before God. We've got lives that are soiled before God.

We've got lives that have fallen short before God. We don't have a leg to stand on. And yet there's this one. This mediator like Moses. Who gets us.

Who loves us. Who knows us. Who's done everything possible to forgive us. And he says, you're welcome because of me. Jesus is a perfect mediator.

God is always at work. Look at verse 23. You get kind of a summary at the end of this section. Still really tough for the Israelites.

[ 25 : 01 ] Verse 23. They groan and cry out. Isn't it amazing that after 80 years they finally decide praying might be a good idea? And it would be silly for us to think that it's on their prayers that God finally does something.

I'm so pleased that God doesn't wait for me to pray before he does work. It's really reassuring. I'm so pleased that the power of this sermon doesn't depend on how long that I prayed before I stood up here.

Because God's always at work. He loves to hear our prayers but he's been no means dependent upon them. God's plan is gaining traction.

He's preserved his mediator. The mediator is now ready. Having exhibited godly character that now he's going to be useful to God.

What do we learn in Exodus 2? He's always working. He's working in your life and my life and our lives together. And he's doing it all for his glory and his plan.

[ 26 : 03 ] I was really struck by this this week. And here's some ways I think we can respond to what God is always doing. The first thing I think it reminds us of is that God is really interested in our character.

He's really interested that we're those that exhibit servant hearts, humility, and empathy. And therefore I wonder whether this week you wouldn't take a whiteboard marker and on your bathroom mirror you wouldn't write the fruits of the Spirit.

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, self-control. So that every time you look at yourself in the mirror you see that character imprinted on your face. And every time you clean your teeth

you'll go, actually God's really interested in the character I'm exhibiting in my life.

Make sure it is a whiteboard marker because if it's a permanent marker it'll be with you for the rest of your life. Life, which would by no means mean a bad thing. Secondly, to really trust that God knows what he's doing.

Though I don't know what many of you are facing at the moment. But one thing we do read in God's word that he's working all things together for the good of those who love him and are called with a purpose. So we can trust him.

[ 27 : 22 ] And when difficult things happen we're so ready to go, why God? Why don't we shift that question? And go, how? How God can I walk through this in a way that makes you look good?

And then the what question. What are you trying to teach me through this experience? Not the why question, this is unfair. But the how question.

And the what question. Thirdly, write a list of all the ways that God is working in your life. Because you'll so easily forget them. And the number four, pray.

Pray that what he's doing would be to his glory. Pray and pray and pray. That God might be at work in your life.

Obviously they're all things you're going to do if you're a Christian here this morning. But what if you're not a Christian? Somebody who doesn't know the Lord Jesus. Or perhaps you're here at a point in your life where you don't know where to turn.

[ 28 : 26 ] You think no one really gets me and I've got no hope and nowhere to turn. Can I say that you've got a friend forever who wants to help in the Lord Jesus? A friend forever who wants to help in the Lord Jesus.

You never know, he might have even brought you here this morning. As a way to be at work in your life. Do you know, God is always working.

He's always doing something. And if we get with his plan. And look out for it every minute of every day. Then it will be for our great blessing and his great glory.

Why don't we pause. Take some time to pray through this ourselves. And then I'll pray. And then we'll sing. Father God, thank you that you're always working.

Father, that you never give up on us. But you're always shaping us and molding us and transforming us. In order that we might be conformed to the image of your son.

[ 29 : 36 ] Father, I pray for my friends in this room. Whether they know you or not. Be at work in their lives. Father, thank you that you've ultimately worked. Through the person of your son.

That he is our mediator who fits us. For heaven. Who forgives us our sins. And that our lives are now hidden. With Christ in God. Father, I pray that you would be at work.

In the rest of our service. Father, you would be at work. As we share coffee and tea afterwards.

Father, you would be at work. Around the dinner table. You would be at work.

This afternoon. You would be at work. As we all gather back. This evening. Father, you would be at work. On Monday and Tuesday. Father, be at work. In our lives.

Father, be at work in my life. I pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.