



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Exodus 2:11-25

Exodus

"The Preparation of the Deliverer"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Good morning. We are in the book of Exodus and we're in the second chapter, so turn with me for our reading of scripture to Exodus chapter 2, and we'll look this morning at verses 11-25.

"Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their hard labors; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. And he went out the next day, and behold, two Hebrews were fighting with each other; and he said to the offender, 'Why are you striking your companion?' But he said, 'Who made a prince or a judge over us? Are you intending to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?' Then Moses was afraid and said, 'Surely the matter has become known.'

"When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian, and he sat down by a well.

"Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came to draw water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. Then the shepherds came and drove them away, and Moses stood up and helped them and watered their flock. When they came to Reuel their father, he said, 'Why have you come back so soon today?' So they said 'An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and what

is more, he even drew the water for us and watered the flock.' He said to his daughters, 'Where is he then? Why is it that you have left the mandatory behind? Invite him to have something to eat.' And Moses was willing to dwell with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to mother. Then she gave birth to a son, and he named him Gershom, for he said, 'I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.'

"Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God. So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them."

Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank You that we have the opportunity again to come together this morning to study the scriptures, to sit under the word of God. This gift that You have given to us, this revelation, not only of the events that took place in the life of Moses that were the unfolding of the early history of Israel, Your ancient people, but events that Paul has informed us were done for our benefit. And so we thank You, Father, that You have preserved this record of truth for us that we might learn, and we pray that as we study through these verses this morning, You would instruct us and teach us. Give us principles that will govern our lives and that will help us to understand more about You that we might live in light of that and be a different people.

So we ask Your blessing upon us, because we begin with the acknowledgement that apart from Your grace, apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit who is our teacher, who illumines the page for us, who opens our minds to the truth, we would be in darkness. And so we ask that He would instruct us. We pray that the words that are spoken in this lesson will be accurate, they will be trustworthy, but we pray that all of us will be open to even deeper truth, that You will guide, direct our thinking, and enable us to take the principles of this passage

and apply it to our lives so we might live in a way that's honoring to You.

Bless those who are not here this morning. We pray that You would watch over them. If they be sick, we pray that You'd give encouragement. We pray for those on the calendar of concern and pray that You would encourage them and heal them, extend mercy to them. Bless each of us now as we look into the scriptures. And we pray that what we do would be edifying and glorifying to You. We pray these things in Christ name. Amen.

[Message] Last week we considered the providence of God and traced it in the birth and preservation of Moses, Israel's future deliverer. And we noted what an encouragement it is to know that God is controlling and directing all of the events that touch the lives of His people. And we saw how Moses illustrates that and illustrates the principle that Paul sets forth in Romans 8:28 in the verse that states God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

You'll notice in that verse Paul doesn't say that He causes some things to work together for good, or He causes most things to work together for good, He causes the big things to work together for good. He says He causes all things to work together for good, and that includes even our failures. In fact, if we're going to talk about all things, then most of those things will probably be our failures, because that so often characterizes our lives.

Well, that's the amazing thing about the sovereign grace of God. He even uses our shortcomings to His glory and He's able to turn those to our own good. He never stops dealing with His people, never. As Paul writes in Philippians 1:6, "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." At every point in our life, He is working with us, He is dealing with us.

Now, that may involve discipline and it may involve harsh discipline. And we may enter some spiritually dry seasons, periods of loneliness, for one reason or another, and that may not necessarily be

due to a particular discipline that we're going through, but that may be our experience.

But all of this is designed to draw us close to God, to teach us spiritual truths, to help us learn about ourself, to help us learn about Him, to long for Him, to thirst for Him. And often we see in scripture, and we see it also in personal experience, that people who emerge from their failure do so oftentimes with a newfound humility, with greater wisdom, with a sense of distrust in the flesh and greater dependence upon God. So He uses all of life's experiences to prepare us to serve Him and to glorify Him in all that we do. We see that in the last half of Exodus chapter 2, where God providentially puts Moses in a rough, dry, and lonely place in order to prepare him for his mission as Israel's national deliverer.

Last week we concluded with verse 10, where Moses, as a small child, entered into the house of Pharaoh as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. And according to Acts 7:23, verse 11 of Exodus 2 takes up the story some 40 years later after he's grown up, when he goes out to visit his true people and to look upon their labors, their slavery. So 40 years are passed over between verses 10 and 11. That's a long time. Well, it's the book of Exodus that passes over it, because when we go to the New Testament, it's not silent on those years. Stephen, in his speech to the Sanhedrin in Acts chapter 7 states that, "Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians and he was a man of power in words and deeds."

Other Jewish writers spoke on these silent years, or years at least they're silent in terms of the book of Exodus. Josephus describes Moses as a great warrior who led a victorious expedition against the Ethiopians as Egypt's commander in chief. Phylo credits Moses with proficiency in arithmetic, geometry, poetry, music, philosophy, and all branches of education. And so a number of legends we might say grew up around the memory of Moses, but not all of them are necessarily lack any validity. We know that a formal education in Egypt involved reading and writing and arithmetic, and there was a special emphasis

upon writing. And as the son of a princess, he would have received the best education that Egypt could offer. And from Stephen's description of him as a man of power in words and deeds, he no doubt stood at the head of his class. And it's not unlikely that he may have occupied a position as a commander in chief and led men into battle. He was a man whom he described as great in deeds.

He was certainly a young man with a bright future. He was a rising star in Egypt, whom the officials must have singled out for a high position in the state. And yet there came a time when Moses knew that he had to make a decision. He had to choose between the gods of Egypt and the God of his fathers. And the author of Hebrews talks about this in Hebrews chapter 11. In verses 24-26, we read, "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter" –in other words, he came to the point when he renounced his connection to her and he renounced his inheritance – "choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward."

Well, that's the fruit of the training his mother had given him at a very young age. For all the knowledge and skill Moses learned as an Egyptian prince, it was the training he received at home, the values and beliefs of his parents that were dominant in his life. And so with the world at his feet, he turned his back on Egypt, on its power, its gold, its pleasures, and he went out to his brethren.

That's where the story picks up in verse 11 and he arrived in time to see an Egyptian, probably a slave driver, beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he was so filled with anger at this injustice that after looking around to see if anyone was present, anyone was watching, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. He acted on justice, out of sympathy for his people, and he acted for their welfare. But he also acted on impulse and it would seem he acted unadvisedly, and it indicates something about Moses' character, that

he had a sense of justice. He had a concern for his people. And you see here this indication of leadership from the very beginning. He goes out to see his people and he intervenes on their behalf. He takes up for the oppressed.

But he was also an impetuous man. He was a man with some rough edges, and he was a young man. He had leadership qualities, but he was not yet, it would seem, ready to lead. And we can do, oftentimes, the wrong things with the right motives. And wisdom comes in to show us how to channel the right motive in the right direction, how to do the right thing in the right way. But wisdom takes time. It takes experience. It takes a life of patience. And Moses needed to learn that.

Moses went out, according to Acts chapter 7, but he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through them. So evidently Moses had some indication of his mission. We're not told how he knew this, but Moses knew that he was to be the deliverer of his people from Egypt. He had an indication of his calling and he'd gone out to the Israelites to make it known to them, but it was all premature, because, as Stephen told the Sanhedrin in that sermon in Acts chapter 7, Israel didn't understand.

Now, Stephen is using that as an illustration of Israel's later failure to recognize its Messiah Jesus Christ. And he's saying in that sermon in effect what we see today in regard to Israel's rejection, your rejection – pointing to the Sanhedrin – of Christ is the same spirit that was present when they rejected Moses. He was the deliverer, but they didn't understand. They were dull in their understanding, dull in their spiritual perception, and they rejected him.

And Moses learned how little his people understood when he returned the next day and he saw two Hebrews were fighting with each other. And so Moses again intervened and asked the guilty person, "Why are you striking your companion?" And the answer he got was, as one writer states, like a cold shower. He said, "Who made you a prince or a judge over us?" Now Moses had come out to reveal himself

as their leader, as their deliverer, as a man who had already built a reputation in Egypt as a man of power in words and deeds. And it seems from the event that took place the previous day that he was a man of some physical stature and some strength, because with one blow he kills a man. And we'll see later on in this passage when he deals with the shepherds in Midian. He himself is able to drive them all away. So he must have been a man of physical strength.

So here he is, a man who has this reputation as mighty in words, in deeds, he's probably a nice physical specimen, and all of this gave him some confidence to go out and present himself as the leader of these people, and yet they receive him as nothing more than a meddler. "Who invited you to interrupt this dispute? Who appointed you to be our leader?"

Well, he may have been willing to lead Israel and evidently thought that he was ready for that responsibility, but Israel wasn't ready for him. And there's a valuable lesson in that for all of us. The scriptures are full of exhortations to wait upon the Lord. And Peter gives good advice in this regard to young men when he writes in 1 Peter chapter 5, "Humble yourselves, therefore under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you at the proper time." There's a proper time for assuming those kinds of responsibilities, and Moses needed to learn this before he could lead Israel. He had much to learn. And to give him the instruction, the discipline that he needed, the Lord would lead him out of Egypt and into a school with a 40-year curriculum in shepherding.

He did this through providence, because as Moses was trying to arbitrate this dispute between these two Hebrews, the guilty man who challenged Moses' right to interfere asked him, "Are you intending to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" And when he said that, Moses froze and said to himself, "Surely the matter has become known." In spite of his caution, in spite of his concealment of the body, the matter had become common knowledge. It's hard to keep an indiscretion secret. As Moses would later tell the Israelites in Numbers chapter 32,

"Be sure your sin will find you out." And this had found him out. It had become known.

But it had its place in the plan of God. This indiscretion of Moses fit within God's program for him, because when Pharaoh learned of the incident, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses was one step ahead of him. He escaped and he fled from the presence from Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian.

The location of Midian is in some dispute. It's not exactly sure where it was, nor is it certain who the Midianites were. They really seemed to have been an aggregation of different tribes, but most think that Midian was probably east of Egypt located in the eastern part of the Sinai peninsula. And so he removed himself from Pharaoh's wrath, but also far from his people. And he must have wondered after he had arrived in Midian, after he was able to rest for a moment and begin to collect his thoughts and settle in, what went wrong.

He knew that he was the one who had been set apart to be the deliverer. He knew he had a mission and now here he was in Midian, far away from his people and the opportunity of being used of God to deliver Israel seemed remote at best, maybe even concluded that he was finished in God's service.

But God wasn't finished with Moses. This simply began the second part of his education, of his preparation. He needed two different educations to be the leader that God had appointed him to be. The first 40 years of his life needed to be spent in Pharaoh's house in order to learn how to organize, to manage people, how to learn the skills and techniques of writing of languages. He probably learned more than one language, the Egyptian language, and there was more than one Egyptian language. There was the language of the priest, the hieroglyphics, and the language of the people. And there were many other Semitic languages. And so he had to learn all of these things that go into making a man a great leader.

But he also needed to know the rough life of the desert. He needed to be hardened and disciplined in the ways of the desert in

order to lead Israel as a nation through it for some 40 years. And so God providentially lead Moses to Midian. And when he arrived he went to the well and he sat down. Well, that's the natural thing for a person to do who has been traveling through the desert to go to the well to get some water. But it was also, the well, the center of the community. We see this, for example, in John chapter 4, where our Lord meets the woman at the well. That's the place where people met and talked and exchanged information. And so it was the natural place, not only for a person to go after they've come out of the desert, or still in the desert, but also a natural place for a stranger to meet people, to find a place to lodge, to gain information about this community that he had had entered into.

And while he was sitting there seven shepherdesses, who were the daughters of the local priest, arrived to water their sheep. Now since this was a desert, there wasn't much water, and so to water the sheep or the goats, they had to draw it out of the well and then fill the trough with the water and that could take some time. And it was certainly an effort to do that, and so when the shepherds arrived with their sheep and they saw all the trouble that the women had gone to and they didn't want to go to that trouble, they just drove these girls off and then they used the water that these girls had drawn for their own sheep.

Well, Moses, who was sitting at the well, saw all of this and again he intervenes. He came to the aid of these women. He helped them, or literally, he saved them and then watered their flock. And so again we see something in Moses that will come out all the more clearly in the latter years of his life. He stands up for the oppressed. He does that for these girls, and following the incident, these girls return to their father to tell him what had happened.

Now, evidently what had happened at the well, with the shepherds coming and driving them away and giving them all kinds of problems was a regular occurrence, because when they arrived, their father was amazed that, as he says, they had come back so soon.

Evidently this is what they went through every day and it got them home late. And so they told him, "An Egyptian delivered us." That's the reason they'd arrived early. Evidently they were able to identify Moses as an Egyptian because of the way he dressed, or perhaps the way he spoke. Something indicated to them that he was from Egypt.

Their father's name is given in verse 18 as Reuel, which means "friend of God." He's also a priest. And when he hears their story, he was amazed that they hadn't invited the Egyptian, their deliverer, this one who'd saved them, to stay with them. And so he asked them, in verse 20, "Where is he then? Why is it that you have left the man behind? Invite him to have something to eat." In other words, extend some hospitality to him. Hospitality was very important in the east. In fact, it's still important today.

When we lived in Jerusalem – this is some ten years ago now – we lived in a small apartment near the campus of the Hebrew University and it really didn't have any furniture in it, at least not much to speak of. And so shortly after moving in we went to Bethlehem one evening, which is not very far from Jerusalem, and there we purchased a chair and a table from an Arab merchant. It was in the evening and there wasn't anybody else there except us and another couple who had gone there to purchase a chair and a table.

And after the transaction was completed, the man had us sit down and his wife brought some hot tea in. I was ready to leave, but he insisted that we stay, and so we sat there and he brought his family in and we all had to visit for a while and drink our tea, and then we left. But it was important to them that we enjoy their hospitality. He felt obligated to do that. That's their custom. And we see that here.

The priest of Midian, Reuel, wants to extend hospitality to this visitor, this newcomer, and this man who shown great courtesy and help to his daughters. And so he invites Moses to dwell with him, not just to eat with him, but to dwell with him. And he accepted and then Reuel gave him his daughter Zipporah for a wife. Now that is hospitality.

When I receive hospitality, it's only a cup of tea. Then I had my wife there and he knew that I was happily married and he didn't need to offer one of his daughters to me, but you see the hospitality that's extended. So now Moses has a wife, Zipporah, and Reuel is Moses' father-in-law, or so it would seem. And yet we read in verse 1 of chapter 3 Jethro is called Moses' father-in-law. And Numbers 10:29, Hobab is called Moses' father-in-law. He's also called Moses' father-in-law in Judges 4:11. So who's Moses' father-in-law? Is it Reuel, Jethro, or Hobab?

Well, that's something of a problem, at least at first glance. But I think as you read through the scriptures you find out that's not that much of a problem. It's not uncommon for men to have two or more names, and that may be the solution here, that they're all the same person, they just have different names. In fact, Jethro seems to be the name, a priestly name, maybe something of a formal title. Or it may be that Reuel is the grandfather of the seven girls, and Jethro, whose name is also Hobab, was his son and the girls' father.

Grandfathers and even more remote relatives were often called in scripture by the title father. The number of places in the Old Testament would have that, but even in the New Testament. In John 8:39, the Jews and their dialogue with Christ say that "Abraham is our father." Well, it wasn't their direct father, of course. They mean he was their ancestor. And so that may be the solution here. In fact, that seems to be confirmed by Numbers 10:29, where Hobab is said to be the son of Reuel the Midianite. And so perhaps we should understand this as Reuel being the grandfather and Jethro, who enters the scene next week in chapter 3, is the father and who is also Hobab, the father of Zipporah.

Zipporah was from Texas. You look surprised. Well, I can prove it, because her name can only be a name of someone from Texas, because it means "lady bird." So she was known around Midian as Lady Bird Moses. And this is who Moses married. And she conceived and gave birth to a son, who Moses named Gershom, and that means

something like a stranger there. And Moses named his son Gershom because, as he says, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land."

And so the naming of his son Gershom seems to be an act of faith. May have also been an act of loneliness, expressing his longing to be with his people. But I think it's an act of faith as well, because it was a testimony that he had not lost his identity. He knew who he was. Israel, throughout their history – in fact, this was the particular problem that Israel was facing in Canaan before God brought Joseph and then Jacob and his sons down to Egypt. They were in danger of assimilating into the Canaanites and losing their identity. Moses doesn't lose his identity. He hadn't lost it in Pharaoh's house. He would not lose it in Reuel's house. In spite of the hospitality he'd received, in spite of the home that had been provided to him, he knew he was an exile. He knew he belonged with his people, his true people, the seed of Abraham. So he had not lost his identity and over the long years he spent in the wilderness, he must have longed for his people.

He must have puzzled over the strange turn of events in his life, how he went from being a prince in Egypt to being a _____ in Midian. Perhaps he even felt like a colossal failure. In fact, I don't doubt that he did that. We see this in the beginning of chapter 3 when he's again called by God to take up his mission. He's incredulous. He's resisting. He's evidently – the boldness that he had at the beginning when he was about 40 years of age – over the next 40 years is lost.

So he must have felt like he was a failure, put on the shelf, so to speak, by God. And yet unknown to Moses, God was preparing him for his future work. It was a period of time that Stephen said lasted 40 years, roughly the span of time that the Pharaoh of that day, Tuthmosis III, reigned in Egypt. And I find it interesting that while during Tuthmosis III's reign, Egypt became a great empire, conquered nations, expanded its influence throughout the ancient near east, reached its zenith. The Bible passes over that with a statement in verse 23, "Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died."

The very subject that secular historians would find most significant the Bible doesn't even mention, just passes over enough to say that this king died, marking the time for Moses to return. What was really significant from the perspective of scripture, and so what is truly really significant, wasn't occurring on the throne of Egypt at that time. It was occurring in a remote corner of a desert, where God was quietly preparing His servant to do His work.

Preparation is essential for service. It's been observed that the history of the success of Christianity has been the history of gifted or educated people. Paul was the leading Rabbinical student of his time. Augustine as called the most learned man in the Roman Empire of his day. Luther, Calvin, and the other reformers were all men of the university. And that's not to say God can't use anyone. He certainly can, and he uses some that are not what we would not consider educated people to do some great things.

It was an illiterate man, or a man who is practically illiterate, that was used in Spurgeon's conversion. And in the life of Abraham Kuyper, the great Dutch theologian around the turn of the century, it was a simple country girl that influenced him to orthodoxy.

So God can use all kinds of people and we see this in the book of Judges, where he raises up men who are not necessarily educated people. But by and large He uses men who are prepared, and I think that's the principle that we should see here. Preparation is essential in the service of God and it took 80 years to educate Moses for the great task that he undertook. And so that should tell us that if we have a desire to serve God – and all of us should have that desire – He can use us at any level, and He will, but we should not be too anxious to take on great responsibility. We should be anxious to prepare ourselves, prepare ourselves with the means available, through study of scripture, through instruction in classes, and also prepare ourselves by submitting to the hand of God, humbling ourselves and waiting upon Him.

In all of this God was preparing Moses. It took him 80 years to do it, but He was preparing him. And at the same time He was preparing Israel for the work of Moses and its exodus from Egypt. And He did that through more hardship, through more difficulty. Israel may have hoped that with the death of this pharaoh life would be a little easier for them, some relief would come to them in the midst of this hard slavery. If so, their hope evaporated with this new king, who continued the cruel policy of his predecessors so that, we read in verse 23, "the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God."

Someone has written of one of the pharaohs. Every stone in the edifice, the edifices which he reared, was cemented by the blood of a human victim. And so the nation sighed. It cried out. It cried for help. And it seems that only now, after years of affliction, that Israelites finally turned to God.

Joshua much later would tell the Israelites that while they were in Egypt they served the gods of Egypt. In fact, he tells that generation that's entering to Canaan to put away those gods. So evidently they still harbored some of those gods, even that faithful generation. It must have been deeply ingrained in them. That's why there was a rejection of Moses earlier. They were a people who were blind, who were hardened in their sin. They had become very much like Egypt. They had begun to assimilate. That's why God had brought these difficulties into their lives, to draw them away from the attractions of Egypt. They were worshipping their gods, and so He brought all of this affliction upon them because they had accepted Egypt as their home. They had forgotten the Lord. They'd neglected the promises that He'd made and the covenant that He'd made with Abraham – all but a remnant – had become indifferent.

So God used the pharaohs of Egypt to humble His people and to turn them to Himself. It's a pattern that would be repeated throughout Israel's history. And that's what God does with His people. He does

not let His people go their own way. He does not let us go our own way any more than He would let them go their own way. He disciplines His people as a father disciplines his children for their own good, to bring them back to Himself. And so finally, after years of affliction, after years of hard labor, they cry for help.

And we read in verses 24 and 25, "So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them." So with this series of expressions that Moses uses here, these four different expressions: He heard, He remembered, He saw, He noticed – Moses uses the human terminology of that to express to us God's concern, His awareness, His readiness to help His people.

God will always be silent with a rebellious people. But His silence is not a sign that He's unaware of what's taking place. His silence is not a sign that He is not working. He is at work, on His people, among His people, through the silence itself, through the affliction that comes to them. And when His people respond to that and turn to Him, He always receives them, like the father of the prodigal son received him when he returned home humble and repentant. He's eager to receive His people. He's eager to receive the sinner that comes.

But the basis of the deliverance, the basis of the help that He gives, the response that He makes to His people, is the promise made to the patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – to bring them out of Egypt and to bring them into the land of Canaan, which He'd promised.

You'll notice He says, "God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." God made a promise and God honors His promises. He had to keep His word. God must keep His word to His people, and to do that, as a righteous God, He first had to chasten His people. He first had to lead them to the point where they would turn to Him. And once turning to Him, He then responds with help.

So ultimately the help they obtain was not due to anything in them. It really wasn't due to their affliction. It wasn't He looked upon them and felt sorry for them and had compassion upon them. He helped them because of the unconditional promises that He had made to the patriarchs. He doesn't deal with us on the basis of merit. He deals with us on the basis of grace, and we see that throughout the scriptures. We see that in Ephesians, for example, 2:8, 9. "For by grace you have been saved through faith." And not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. "Not of works, lest any man should boast." And then he goes on in verse 10 to talk about all the works that we do have as a consequence of grace that have been pre-destined to us.

So everything is a gift. He deals with us completely and solely upon the principle of grace. He did that here. It's based upon the promise, the unconditional covenant He made with Abraham. And we can be thankful that He deals with us in grace and not according to merit, because if His work with us was conditioned upon something in us, conditioned upon some merit, then we would be left helpless, because there's nothing in us to draw Him to us.

No, He deals with us on a basis of grace, unconditional love. He chastens us in love in order to bless us in love. And sometimes we drift. We sense our sin, but we're not willing to turn from it, and so God puts us under some hard labors until we look up to Him. But once we look up to Him, He receives us gladly. He never forgets us in the midst of our difficulties. No doubt they must have thought that He had forgotten them. But He hadn't. And in that last expression in this verse that reads in the New American Standard Bible, "took notice of them," literally is simply "He knew." He knew them. He knew their troubles. He knew all about their situation. We may think He doesn't at times, but He always our situation completely and thoroughly.

Forty years ago Moses was not ready to lead and the circumstances were not right for his leadership, so God took him into a far country to refine his character and fit him for service. He would emerge from that long education very humble. In fact, we read in

Numbers 12:3 that he was more humble than any man on the face of the earth. Perhaps he had not gone to his brethren earlier as a humble man. He'd gone as a man with great achievement, great strength. But after his extended education he becomes humble. He becomes a man who waits upon the Lord and sees Him face to face.

For years Israel had served gods of Egypt. Now they were crying out to God for help and He was ready to help them. And so through His providential care, through His providential leading and working with Moses, through His providential care with the nation and the affliction that He brought upon Him, He brought them to the place where they cry out for help and at the precisely proper time, God prepared for them a deliverer in Moses. So it all comes together at the right time. The king who was an impediment to all of this dies. A new king arises. Moses is prepared. The people are crying out. And so everything now falls in place for the exodus to occur. God's timing is always right and that's why it's good to wait upon Him.

Well, we learn from the experiences of Moses and from Israel that preparation is essential for service and God uses all of our experiences to prepare us and to shape our character. He never deserts us. He's never unaware of our need. And so we are to wait on Him. We're to look to Him in faith, to seek His will, not lean on our own understanding, not lean on our own sense of strength and abilities. God's schedule is better than ours.

And those who sigh under the hard labors of sin, maybe there's someone here this morning who's in that condition. Well, the solution's very simple. One needs to turn to the Lord, to turn from sin, to turn from rebellion, to seek help from Him. And He's always ready to receive the sinner and extend help.

So if you're here this morning, you don't know Christ is Savior, don't be like those ancient Israelites who rejected their deliverer Moses when he came out due to their lack of understanding, due to hardness of heart. Don't be like those later Israelites who rejected

Christ for the same reason, because of the hardness of their heart, their lack of understanding.

Turn to Him. Turn to Jesus Christ, the one whom Moses foreshadowed, the greater deliverer, the spiritual deliverer, the one who gives eternal life. And if you are in a state of rebellion, then may God give you no rest or peace until you find peace in Him, until you turn to Christ, whom to know is life eternal. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank You for the time we've had to study together and we pray that the principles we see here would be an encouragement. We recognize from the scriptures, we recognize from our own experience, that You are continually leading and dealing with us. You deal with us in unseen ways, but so often when we look back on our lives, we see how You did work things out so well, in ways that we never could never have imagined they would come to pass, and so we thank You for that.

But whether we see it or not in our own experience, we see it in scripture and we know that You do work all things according to the counsel of Your will. You work all things to the good of Your people, not because we deserve it, but because You're a God who's gracious and we thank You for that, thank You that You extend mercy to an undeserving people, to a needy people, and grace to a people that don't deserve it.

Thank You for that care, thank You for all that You give us. Thank You, most of all for eternal life in Christ. May we live as a people who enjoy that life and live in the confidence that You are our God and Savior. We pray these things in Christ name. Amen.