

Sunday Service ~ April 27, 2025

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer

So, join with us this morning to praise God, remembering David's words from Psalm 117: *Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endures forever.*

Prayer. Dear Father, From the time we wake in the morning, to the time we go to sleep at night we have so much to praise you for. We are surrounded by examples of your majesty, power and love. Your creation stares us in the face as we see the majesty of the sun and the rain, of plants and animals, the wonder of the bodies you have given us. You care for us, provide food and shelter, friends and family for us.

Yet, despite knowing all this, we don't always feel like acknowledging you. In times like this, as we struggle with sadness, we often think more about ourselves than about you. Forgive us, help us to return to you and remember your constant love, your promises to never leave us, to provide the best for us. We know that you will renew our hearts and souls, that through your Spirit we can have peace, that you will draw us close to you. Help us this morning not to be distracted, but instead to have clear heads and humble hearts, ready to acknowledge you, to come close to you & to learn of your purposes for us. In Jesus' name. Amen

Song – Heavenly Father, Beautiful Son

[Heavenly Father, Beautiful Son - YouTube](#)

1. Father, You loved me
Sent Your Son to redeem
Jesus, You washed me
By Your blood I am clean
Spirit, You've opened these blinded eyes
And brought me to Christ

2. Father, You gave me to Jesus to keep
And Jesus, You love me
As a shepherd, his sheep
Spirit, You've given me faith in the Son
And made our hearts one

*Chorus: Heavenly Father, beautiful Son
Spirit of light and truth
Thank You for bringing sinners to come to You*

3. Father, You're waiting to hear my requests
Jesus, Your loving open hand is outstretched
Spirit, You're in me, You intercede
And help in my need

Bible Reading – Exodus 1:1-22 (NIV)

These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family: 2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; 3 Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; 4 Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher. 5 The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy[a] in all; Joseph was already in Egypt. 6 Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, 7 but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them. 8 Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. 9 "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. 10 Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country." 11 So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labour, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. 12 But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so, the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites 13 and worked them ruthlessly. 14 They made their lives bitter with harsh labour in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their harsh labour the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly. 15 The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose

names were Shiprah and Puah, 16 “When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.” 17 The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. 18 Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, “Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?” 19 The midwives answered Pharaoh, “Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive.” 20 So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. 21 And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own. 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.”

Announcements

Focus for Month: Easter. Just as we often forget to prepare ourselves for Easter, sometimes we move on from Easter too quickly as well. So, what spiritual truth did you learn or relearn this, Easter? Do you feel your relationship with the Lord deepened over this Easter? Has your love and gratitude for Jesus grown? And are there people that God has placed on your heart this month that you will need to follow up? Easter is not a one off celebration but a weekend that should affect the whole of our year!

Charlestown Church has moved! For the next 4-5 months we will be meeting at Charlestown Public School, on the corner of Smith St and Fredrick Sts. Please have a look around for the extra jobs that need to be done (set up, car park attendant, clean toilets afterwards, sweep floors, first aid office etc) and see if you can help out with something.

School Holidays. NSW school holidays end this weekend which means the regular activities of the church will start back again this week. That means Kids Church will run with a full kid's programme at the Cottage/Office starting 9:40am. Due to the Church/Hall not being available this term SPARKLERS will meet in the Cottage (as well Junior Youth) and IMPACT will be meeting with Mayfield Presbyterian at their hall. Any questions, just ask one of the ministers or the elders.

New City Catechism: Question 18. Will God allow our disobedience and idolatry to go unpunished? No, every sin is against the sovereignty, holiness, and goodness of God, and against his righteous law, and God is righteously angry with our sins and will punish them in his just judgment both in this life, and in the life to come. Scripture Proof – Ephesians 5:5-6

Outgrow Ministries. A few weeks ago, we hosted a seminar on the dangers of porn for both men and women, young and old. The next step is to run some small groups where those who would like some help in dealing with porn (or who want to know more about it to help someone else) can meet in a supportive environment. These groups will be mainly online and run across all the Presbyterian churches in Newcastle. If you are interested, please contact Lindon on 0479 167 333 or at linden@outgrowministries.org

Webbs Missionary Visit. Please note our link missionaries Chris and Karen Webb will be visiting us NEXT Sunday and also joining the Young Adults Bible Study on Tuesday 6th May @ 7:15pm and the Swansea Bible Study on Wednesday 7th May @10:30am. All invited. Please make the most of this opportunity to think through indigenous ministries.

Steve's Leave. Stephen will be on leave from Thursday 1st May until Wednesday 7th May. If you have any pastoral needs please initially get in contact with Audric.

RENEW Women's Conference. Saturday 31st May 9:15am – 12:30pm. At Metford Baptist. Greta Gaut will be speaking on 2 Timothy. For more information visit www.hgm.org.au/register or speak to Linda Small.

Pastoral Prayer

Pray for Syria (Population 24 million, Christians, 579,000). Syria's instability puts Christians at great risk of violence and displacement. Pray that God will bring peace from Islamist extremists, war, and natural

disasters. For God to give hope and healing to converts from Islam rejected by their families. That God strengthens the Church to strengthen the oppressed and weak

Pray for TEAR Fund. Tearfund asks us to pray for all those affected by the Myanmar earthquake (around 20 million people), particularly the most vulnerable. Pray that their needs would be met quickly, and their hope and livelihoods restored. Ask God to strengthen local agencies, including Tearfund's partners, and remove obstacles so they can reach those in greatest need. Pray for wisdom and courage for Myanmar's leaders as they navigate this crisis.

Praise God for the recent KYCK youth conference where there was good Bible teaching and a great respond to an evangelistic talk on the Saturday night (including from some of our youth). Pray that God will have planted the Holy spirit deep into the hearts of our young people. Pray that those who have come forward can be followed up and disciplined. Pray for our IMPACT group as the start meeting with Mayfield Presbyterian for the term.

Pray for the upcoming Federal election. Pray that the Lord will raise up Christian politicians that will represent not just their electorates but also the Lord. Pray for all major parties to acknowledge the sovereignty of God over all things & that His word needs to be obeyed. Pray that we will vote not according to what would be best for us but best for our nation. Pray that our nations might turn back to the Lord.

Bible Reading – Exodus 2:1-25 (NIV)

2 Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, 2 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. 3 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. 4 His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him. 5 Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. 6 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. 7 Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" 8 "Yes, go," she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother. 9 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. 10 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." 11 One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labour. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. 12 Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13 The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, "Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?" 14 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 known." 15 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. 16 Now a priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father's flock. 17 Some shepherds came along and drove them away, but Moses got up and came to their rescue and watered their flock. 18 When the girls returned to Reuel their father, he asked them, "Why have you returned so early today?" 19 They answered, "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock." 20 "And where is he?" Reuel asked his daughters. "Why did you leave him? Invite him to have something to eat." 21 Moses agreed to stay with the man, who gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage. 22 Zipporah gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom, saying, "I have become a foreigner in a foreign land." 23 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. 24 God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. 25 So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

Song – And can it be <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQeIGbKqiW8>

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. And can it be that I should gain An int'rest in the Saviour's blood? Died He for me, who caused His pain— For me, who Him to death pursued? Amazing love! How can it be, That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?</p> <p><i>Refrain:</i> Amazing love! How can it be, That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?</p> | <p>4. Long my imprisoned spirit lay, Fast bound in sin and nature's night; Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray— I woke, the dungeon flamed with light; My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.</p> |
| <p>2. 'Tis myst'ry all: th' Immortal dies: Who can explore His strange design? In vain the firstborn seraph tries To sound the depths of love divine. 'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore, Let angel minds inquire no more.</p> | <p>5. No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in Him, is mine; Alive in Him, my living Head, And clothed in righteousness divine, Bold I approach th' eternal throne, And claim the crown, through Christ my own.</p> |
| <p>3. He left His Father's throne above— So free, so infinite His grace— Emptied Himself of all but love, And bled for Adam's helpless race: 'Tis mercy all, immense and free, For, O my God, it found out me!</p> | |

Sermon – Saved from Slavery! (Stephen T)

Sermon link: <https://youtu.be/JhK44pZaB7M>

Binging. I have to admit that I have been a late adopter of binging TV programmes. I'm still old school. Too used to watching a show on the TV itself, allowing the story to progress slowly over the weeks and then waiting another 12 months for the next series to hit our screens. Only occasionally have I binged a programme. Watching one episode after another and going from one series to the next with hardly a break. But when you binge you get caught up in the whole story not just consumed by each individual episode.

Slide 2

So, when we get to the book of Exodus in the OT, it is a helpful for us to binge. Not to see Exodus as a stand-alone programme but part of the Pentateuch or the first 5 books of the Bible. For they are most probably written by the same author, Moses, and they tell us the story of how God has made the whole world but out of the people of every nation he chooses one particular nation, Israel, to be his chosen possession. Exodus, you see is series 2 of a story that starts with Genesis and ends with Deuteronomy.

For Exodus is not a book you just pick up & read just on its own & there is a hint reminding us of that in the original Hebrew that it was written in. It is not there in any of our English translations but it is there in the original. For it starts with the word "And". Now I was always told that you never start a sentence with "And" and I would never choose to start a whole book with "And" but that is what the writer of Exodus does. For he wants to build on the material he has already presented us with. It is like he is writing Episode 1 of Series 2 for a Netflix programme. For he keeps on referring back to the book of Genesis beginning with

Slide 3

1. The Sons of Israel (1:1-7)

“These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family.” Those first 9 words are a repeat of Genesis 46:8. Part 2 of the story is about to begin but before we get too involved in the action we need to remind ourselves of what happened in part 1 first. Verse 5. *“The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy in all; Joseph was already in Egypt.”* Now cast your mind back to the book of Genesis so you can understand the context.

Remember Joseph was sold into slavery, ended up being the prime minister during a massive famine and because of his intervention saved his family, even those who didn't deserve being saved. He did that by providing land and food for Jacob and his family and so he ensures that the people of God would not die out. But what happened next?

6 “Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, 7 but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them.”

Over the years Egypt proved to be a greenhouse for growth for the people of God. Just as God had plans for Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. Just as he saved Noah from the flood and after he got his feet on dry land was told him to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Just as God promised Abraham and his descendants in Genesis 12 and 35 that – “I am God Almighty, be fruitful and multiply.” So not only are the sons of Israel becoming fruitful but exceedingly fruitful. And not only are they multiplying but they are multiplying greatly.

Even in a foreign land, even away from the promised land, God is blessing his people greatly. His promises are being fulfilled in an even bigger way. So much so that God's people are filling the land of Egypt. This is good, very good. The first stage of God's plan for his people has now come to pass – they are a great nation. Now they just need their land & to bless the nations of the world. Hey, not so fast! Hold on to your horses. There is a twist about to come

Slide 4

2. From sons to slaves (1:8-14)

8 “Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. 9 “Look,” he said to his people, “the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. 10 Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country.” 11 So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labour, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. “

In a situation that has happened again and again throughout the history of the world, refugees driven out of their own land, due to war or famine, make it good in another land. After being initially welcomed, they prosper and that causes resentment and fear and so a strong leader comes along and decides to put them in their place.

Slide 5

And in quick succession we see three initiatives from Pharaoh that seek to control the sons of Israel. And the first one is to make them his slaves. So, Pharaoh oppresses them. He sets up labour camps and forces them to work in two occupations – construction and agriculture. He makes their lives hard, bitter even and treats them ruthlessly. They build store cities at Pithom and Rameses for Pharaoh. And those cities help us to give us a sense of historicity about this book, because we have dug up these cities. As well as that, they give us a date when these things take place, somewhere in 14th century BC.

Slide 6

Which means that the sons of Israel are now in bondage and it becomes extremely difficult for them to escape being slaves. Yet they still prosper. *12 “But the more they were oppressed the more they multiplied*

& spread; so, the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites 13 and worked them (even more) ruthlessly." Getting rid of God's people is not going to be as easy as just making them slaves. For God's people still flourish, even in the midst of hard conditions.

When I was studying to be a minister, part of my course was to do a country placement where I had to look after a Church for 2 months while the minister went away on leave. So, after first year finished, I was sent to Coffs Harbour Presbyterian where I had to preach, teach, visit, as well as look after the manse and all the ministry families' pot plants. I think I did Ok with the Church but I was a complete failure as a green thumb. I remember the family came back after 2 months in America and the young son yelling out, "he's killed my cactus!"

Slide 7

You see some plants, like cacti, thrive in difficult conditions and if you are too kind on them, as I found out, if you water them too much, they die. Likewise, often God's people do better when the going is tough than when it is too easy. When life is hard, we have to trust in the Lord. When life is good so often, we do things in our own strength. Here in Exodus 1, life was tough but God was still blessing them for they are still fruitful, multiplying & prospering.

Slide 8

3. So, Pharaoh sends them **even more suffering**. (1:15-22)

15 "The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, 16 "When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live."

Now that's pretty drastic, killing all the baby boys from a whole nation! But why kill the boys and let the girls live? Well it's a tactic that many oppressors have used, even in recent times like the Srebrenica massacre in Balkans conflict and the abduction of young girls by Boko Haram in Nigeria. Once you marry off the women to your own people, they can lose their own identity. So, to kill off the men means then the supply of Hebrew families will dwindle and the Hebrew women then become available to boost your own nation's numbers.

But I want you to notice that at the same time that Pharaoh's name is not mentioned, the names of the two Hebrew midwives who defied Pharaoh's orders are both named. And what lovely names have. Shiphrah means "Beauty" and Puah means "Splendour." It reminds me a bit of some of the names of the African women in our Church – Purity and Amazing – what great names! These midwives are celebrated and have their names in the Bible for posterity because *17 "The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live."*

Slide 9

Puritan William Gurnall put it so well when he said *"We fear men so much because we fear God so little."* We are often scared of what our bosses, our families, our friends, our country think of us because they are right in front of us giving us their opinion whereas God isn't in our line of sight. But if he was and we realised that everything we did was seen by him and one day will be judged by him, we too would fear God over fearing the people around us.

Slide 10

But here we see that the great Pharaoh is outwitted by two women. Actually, as the story goes on it is the bravery and faith of 5 women who defy Pharaoh's decrees and set in train the saving of God's people. Here we see the faith of the two midwives, then it is Moses' mother, protecting her child, after that Moses sister, Miriam courageously going up to the princess and lastly it was Pharaoh's own daughter all frustrate Pharaoh's evil plans.

In each episode you see God's unfolding story of salvation happening through women who are caring for young people, for their family, for the vulnerable, even those who can't look after themselves. Isn't that a

powerful lesson? God's greatest act in the OT, the exodus of God's people from Egypt, unfolds through a series of women who embrace the calling that God gave to them to care for their children, their little brothers and their families.

Slide 11

But what of Shiphrah & Puah lying to Pharaoh, does that make it OK in some circumstances to lie? Well, I am not sure we should base all our ethical teaching on lying from this one verse but let me say that in this case, there is no condemnation from the author of Exodus. *20 So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. 21 And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own."*

There is only blessing. So that might give us cause to think that in some circumstances, we might need to protect the vulnerable by being very careful about what we say. Here it seems that the passage doesn't condemn them as sinful. These girls are seen to be heroes. Which means that Pharaoh has to go plan #3. *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."* Which means, the Nile a place that is normally considered a source of life becomes a place of death

Slide 12

4. And that fourthly leads us to the birth of **a Saviour**.

"Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, 2 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. 3 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. 4 His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him."

This nameless couple see that there is something special about their baby boy. Isn't every child special in some way? And they find an ingenious way of obeying the strict letter of Pharaoh's law, don't they? They did in fact throw their child into the Nile, but before they did that, they providing him with a life raft, a basket lined with tar. And I think we are meant to notice that God's future saviour has been put in this place of death and yet will still live.

Slide 13

5 "Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. 6 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. 7 Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" 8 "Yes, go," she answered. So, the girl went and got the baby's mother."

Its brilliant, isn't it? Pharaoh's decree in this circumstance is foiled by his own daughter. The jokes on Pharaoh, as this little boy actually now will be raised in the palace and before that his own mum will be paid to bring him up. The irony is delicious, isn't it? But how does the princess know that it is a Hebrew baby? Well, the most obvious answer was he must have been circumcised, for the Jews circumcised their children and the Egyptians didn't.

Slide 14

But think about that for a second. That means in the midst of this terrible decree, Moses' parents show their faith in God by putting on their son the mark of being a Hebrew, being one of God's own people. They could easily have said, just this once let's not do this, because if we do it will be his death warrant. Instead in the midst of dire circumstances, Moses' parents trust in God's word and give their child the sign of the covenant. What a challenge for us today who live under the new covenant to put our trust in the two signs of the covenant, baptism and the Lords Supper, no matter what is happening all around us.

But this all means that Moses is raised in the palace. Brought up with the best training that the world of that time could give him. Which meant according to Stephen's speech in Acts 7, *"he was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action."*

Slide 15

Let's continue to hear what Stephen says about Moses in Acts 7, *"When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his own people, the Israelites. ²⁴ He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defence & avenged him by killing the Egyptian. Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not."*

This prince, raised in the palace, now identifies with his people. He knows that he has been placed where he is for a special task, to rescue his people and so his first act of rescue is to respond to injustice, like an Egyptian prince would. By being the judge, jury and executioner and so killing the slave driver. So, he becomes a murderer and when it seems his sin will find him out, he flees into the desert. For he has to unlearn the ways of the world & learn the ways of God before God entrusts him in what will be the most amazing picture of salvation in the OT. Moses must learn that God's work must be done in God's way, not his own way

Slide 16

But before he goes, he is not only rejected by the Egyptians but he is also shunned by his own people. And he finds himself all alone away from his people. As preacher James Boice, puts it, "Moses was forty years in Egypt learning something, and forty years in the desert learning to be nothing, and forty years in the wilderness proving God to be everything." That's good, isn't it? Forty years in Egypt being prepared for leadership; forty years with the Midianites, learning to be nothing, humbled. Before he could become the Saviour that pointed everyone to the fact that God was everything.

Slide 17

Listen to what the writer of the Hebrews says about Moses. ²⁴ *"By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶ He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward."*

Moses could have enjoyed the fleeting pleasures of sin but chose not to. He could have put his trust in the treasures of Egypt but instead regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value. What, he did something for the sake of Christ, some 1400 years before Christ came? Yes, because the OT saints, knew that one day there would be a saviour, a king, the Christ, who would be sent by God & even though they didn't know when or where or how or who they too were men and women of faith. It reminds us that we stand in an amazing tradition of faith and the call for us is not to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin but be willing to suffer disgrace for the sake of Christ because one day we will get his just reward

Slide 18

"Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well." And after looking after some women who were attacked by some greedy shepherds, Moses himself married one of these women and became a shepherd himself. And so, for the next 40 years he prepares to save his people and to shepherd his people by shepherding a mob of sheep around the Sinai desert. God is teaching Moses some hard lessons because he will have a very difficult task, of being Israel's saviour, when God's time is right.

Slide 19

5. Sovereign (2:23-25)

How do we know that? Because God who has been conspicuous by his absence all through Israel's time in Egypt, all through their slavery and suffering, all through Pharaoh's attempt at genocide, finally makes his first appearance for a very long time. And listen to what he does.

23 "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. 24 God **heard** their groaning and he **remembered** his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. 25 So God **looked on** the Israelites and was **concerned about them**.”*

God heard, he remembered, he looked on and was concerned. What a beautiful string of active verbs those are – filled with comfort for a suffering people. People like the Hebrews suffering under the oppression of Pharaoh, people today suffering under the oppression of unjust governments, even people like you and me you in our trials & difficulties can cry out to God & groan for his help. He hears, remembers, looks on and is concerned for his people.

Slide 20

And it is these last 3 verses that put these two chapters into perspective. You see these chapters are not really about Pharaoh or even Moses. And the Bible is not about you either as you find yourselves in the pages of Scripture. Its all about God. A God who wants to make himself known. And we will see that next week with the burning bush. But before we get there, we see that there is a God watching over his people. A God who cares about what is going on all around us. A God who remembers his covenant & will never forget his promises to us. This is the God we worship today & this is the God who wants us to respond to him in faith. You and I have not slipped God's mind and you and I are not without a Saviour either. Have you begun to notice the similarities between these two chapters and the story of Jesus?

Slide 21

You see in today's world there is still a clash between two powerful kings – Satan and the Lord and they both want to lead God's people. And Satan enslaves many with the pleasures of sin and it means we get to the point where we can't possibly save ourselves. So, God sends us a prince who is used to life in a palace who comes and become one of us. He identifies himself with his people. He comes to them as their shepherd, their good shepherd, who is willing to lay down his life for his sheep. He suffers in the very midst of his people and even gets shunned and rejected by his people. He is put in the place of death but he lives. And has done that so that he might become your Saviour & lead you to the promised land.

This is the Son of God. The same God who hears your cry that sin and sadness and sickness is too strong for you. And he wants to deliver you from all those things and give you a fruitful life full of blessing. This same God remembers his covenant with us and promises I will never leave you nor forsake you. This same God looks upon us, his eye is always upon us. And even if he is not answering your prayers, even if you are still in the midst of trial and tribulation, even if your hope is lost, your faith is growing weak and your love is ebbing away, he is always concerned about you. And will never let you go.

Slide 22

Friend, Church today is not about you. Worship is not for you. The word is not about you. It is all about Him. And if you can put him first in all that you do, in all that you say, in all that you participate in, then you will find yourself in God's good hands. And there is no better place to be. That to be a sinner who trusts entirely in their mighty Saviour.

Song – Never Alone

[Never Alone \(Acoustic Song Leading Video\) // Emu Music - YouTube](#)

1. We're not alone, for Christ is here
Immanuel our God come near
We're not alone, for to our world
Jesus has come, eternal Word.
And as he speaks, our souls laid bare
Naked, ashamed, sin is made clear
And yet he clothes us in his love
Never alone, Christ is with us, is with us.

3. The dawn will come, the sun will rise
Out of the grave we'll see hope's light.
Tomb opened wide, stone rolled away
Morning has come, a brand new day.
“He isn't here,” the angel said.
“He is alive no longer dead.”
Our hearts are lifted, souls raised high
Christ is with us, Christ is our life, he's our life.

2. The longest walk, earth's darkest day
The pressing crowd, his mounting pain.
A heavy load of grief and shame
Breathless that we should breathe again.
"Father forgive them," comes his cry
Silence from God blackens the sky.
A creeping dread in every heart
Lost in the world now God departs, God departs.

4. Never alone, is now our cry
In joy, in grief, in lonely sin.
Never alone, for Christ is ours
He lives in us, we live in him.
And 'til we reach that final day
When fears are gone, cast far away
We'll live secure, trust in his love,
Never alone, Christ is with us, he's with us

Benediction

"The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. 24 God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. 25 So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them." (Exodus 2:23-25)