

Deliverance

The Story—part 4

October 2, 2016

DAY 1: The Story, so far “Clip and save” today’s devotional *****

1. We’ve studied God’s creation, and the creation of man (Genesis 1, 2) the fall of man (Gen. 3), the nature of sin (Gen. 4; Abel), Noah and the ark, the tower of Babel, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, and Joseph. Each episode provides God’s promises of, and hints of redemption.

2. God’s Story has provided insightful looks into four categories:

a. Who is God? He is the Trinitarian God who desires people to enjoy the kind of joyful relationship He already enjoys. Giving that joy away, relationally, is what defines happiness.

b. Who is man? Gendered, and made in God’s image to enjoy and give love, felt relationally. When we give love away as primary, we reflect something of the wonder of God.

c. What’s wrong with man? Man has turned in upon himself, curved inward, where his needs primarily drive and determine his living and relating. We live as if we don’t need God and our real needs take priority. The truest happiness of giving love as our primary purpose is lost.

d. How can man be fixed? Not by himself. Man needs what only God can provide in order to start and deepen the process over a lifetime to restore what was lost at Eden; the possibility of other-centered love, and the joy of giving it away relationally, as our primary purpose, and thus to find unexpected happiness.

2. For each of the following questions, jot down where your mind goes (thoughts) or your heart goes (what stirs inside you):

3. Can you see the joy of the Creator in His creation of the world, and especially people, in question “a”?

4. Can you see the deep connections made possible in God’s design of human beings as reflected in question “b”?

5. Can you more easily identify that which is wrong in you and all of us in question “c”?

6. Can you sense the good hopelessness we all should face in our futile attempts to fix ourselves as reflected in question “d”? Felt hopelessness is a good thing! It is meant to spur us on to God and the only available solution there is fixing us, and moving us from misery to deep connection with God and others!

Summary: What strikes you most as you review God’s Story?

DAY 2: God's new nation is in danger of annihilation, but God's Story marches on

1. Four hundred years have passed since the time of Joseph. The Israelite “nation” of his day numbered seventy. They had become so numerous that Pharaoh sensed danger.

Exodus 1:8 Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt.

⁹ "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become much 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."

2. Pharaoh unleashed his cruelty over the Israelites by “working them ruthlessly” and “using them ruthlessly” as slaves, forced labor, oppressive work conditions and to build giant store cities.

3. But even those measures to control the Israelites would not stop the potential threat of what we would call a revolution, so Pharaoh instituted cruelty beyond measure. He ordered the immediate death of every new-born Hebrew baby.

Exodus 1:16 "When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live."

4. If you had been living then, what would you have thought about God's Story?

5. Time after time, God sovereignly moves through the worst man can throw against Him ...

Exodus 1:17 The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live.

6. Did these 400 years of slavery take God by surprise? No. God had revealed to Abraham that this would happen.

Genesis 15:13 Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions.

7. Does it seem that one way we can be anchored in God's Story is to see (1) the LENGTH of His story, but also STRENGTH of His story. It *cannot* be stamped out.

8. Do you face a situation where you are tempted to doubt God's story?

DAY 3: God reveals His name, meaning, His nature; launching the deliverance of Israel

Exodus 3:1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

² There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.

³ So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight--why the bush does not burn up."

⁴ When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am."

⁵ "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

⁶ Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

1. What do you learn about God from these verses?

2. As you think about God meeting Moses in this way, what do you make of this?

Exodus 3:7 The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.

⁸ So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey--the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

⁹ And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them.

3. What strikes you about the heart of God?

4. Now, we see the beginning of God's "underwhelming" (from a human point of view) solution.

Exodus 3:10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." ¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" ¹² And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."

5. What do you make of Moses' response to God's command to go to Egypt?

Exodus 3:13 Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" ¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

6. "I AM WHO I AM" indicates the always-existent or self-existent God.

7. How did God answer Moses' fear? How did God not answer Moses' fear? Would God's answer have been "enough" for your question?

DAY 4: God reveals his power in the 10 plagues against the gods of Egypt. Exodus 7-13.

1. In Moses' time there were no atheists. People believed in a god or multiple gods. The key question was "Who is the most powerful god?"

Exodus 6:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country."

2. What might you assume about how this will be done and how soon it would be done?

3. Turns out that the process would not be finished without ten plagues! When you get impatient with God's timing, what do you usually do or think?

Exodus 6:6 "Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.'

*Exodus 6:7 I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. **Then you will know** that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.*

4. If Pharaoh had changed his mind after one plague, people in every generation would have sloughed it off as a freak of nature. The purpose of the plagues and Pharaoh's hardened heart was that **everyone would KNOW** that God set them free!

Exodus 6:8 "And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD."

5. The first nine plagues include (1) the Nile River turning to blood, (2) frogs everywhere! (3) gnats, (4) swarms of flies, (5) diseased livestock, (6) boils, (7) thunder and hail that devastated crops, (8) locusts, and (9) darkness across the land.

6. What does it say about human nature that not even these devastations cracked the hard heart of Pharaoh?

7. The culmination of the plagues is Passover, when the death angel "passed over" the homes where the blood of a lamb was painted over the Israelite doorways, and the death of every first born creature in Egypt was killed.

8. Passover is God's clearest foreshadowing or "type" of what is to come in the death of Christ, blood spilled, the death of an innocent lamb, and costly to the Father.

DAY 5: Deliverance!

1. Read Exodus 14, God's deliverance of two million people through the Red Sea!
2. What visceral responses do you have as you read this chapter? How is your heart stirred?

3. What thoughts run through your mind?

4. What did you notice about God and His intervention in their desperation?

5. One of the message of the bible is the impossibility of man saving himself. The deliverance and exodus are foreshadowing of things to come! What parallels are suggested by how God delivered His people and got them out of Egypt?

6. We started in DAY 1 with four central questions. I've copied them below. Read each question, and think about what the Exodus adds to your understanding? Jot down your thoughts under the questions:
 - a. **Who is God?** He is the Trinitarian God who desires people to enjoy the kind of joyful relationship He already enjoys. Giving that joy away, relationally, is what defines happiness.

 - b. **Who is man?** Gendered, and made in God's image to enjoy and give love, felt relationally. When we give love away as primary, we reflect something of the wonder of God.

 - c. **What's wrong with man?** Man has turned in upon himself, curved inward, where his needs primarily drive and determine his living and relating. We live as if we don't need God and our real needs take priority. The truest happiness of giving love as our primary purpose is lost.

 - d. **How can man be fixed?** Not by himself. Man needs what only God can provide in order to start and deepen the process over a lifetime to restore what was lost at Eden; the possibility of other-centered love, and the joy of giving it away relationally, as our primary purpose, and thus to find unexpected happiness.