Series: Steps to Freedom

March 4, 2018

Message One:

**God’s Got a Plan**

Exodus 1:1-2:10

**Intro:** Last month, we focused four messages on Exodus 6:6-7.

We talked about the Four Cups that are celebrated in the Jewish Passover celebration and how they represent the four purposes of our church -

* The Cup of Sanctification speaks of how we have been Set Apart for the purposes of God. God wants us to Know Him.
* The Cup of Deliverance speaks to how God wants us to experience Freedom beyond Forgiveness. Once He forgives us, He wants us to be free from our past! We find this freedom in life-giving relationships with one another - that’s why we have so many small group opportunities.
* The Cup of Redemption speaks to how God gave His best for us to be in a relationship with Him. We have been purchased with the blood of Jesus. Thus, we should respond by discovering our value - discover the gifts He has given us so that we can serve Him in return.
* The Cup of Praise reminds us that praise is more than singing songs in the service - we drink this cup by living a life of praise - finding out what God’s purposes are for us and living those purposes - then we are Living the Dream!

Today we are going to begin to dig deeper into this book of Exodus. Over the next few months we are going to walk through this book. This book is the story of God’s people coming out of slavery into freedom.

So, as we look at the beginning of this book, this month, we are going to see Steps to Freedom.

God wants us to live in freedom! He will forgive you upon your confession … but there are some steps we need to take if we are going to be truly free from our former lifestyle, the mentality of that lifestyle, and the pain and destruction that lifestyle brought us.

One of the first steps we can take is to realize that

**Big Idea: God’s got a plan for your life!**

Are you living life just as it comes to you? Is your life just a series of random events over which you think you have no control - and you don’t even think about God giving daily guidance either?

Or, do you believe God has a plan for your life - are you seeking that plan - are you pursuing that plan?

God called Abraham - I’m going to make of you a great nation -

Abraham had Isaac - Isaac had Jacob - when Jacob made his full commitment to God, his name was changed to Israel - prince with God. He had 12 sons, one was sold into slavery by his brothers, but he submitted his life to God’s plan which led to him becoming the ruler of Egypt, the world power of that time - he was second only to the king.

The rest of the family came to Egypt to escape a famine and survive and over 400 years they thrived and the descendants grew so great they did become a nation - they became a nation that the successive leader of Egypt came to fear, and so he enslaved them.

This nation God created became slaves - and God’s desire was to set them free - just as it is His desire to set you free.

Exodus 1:11-22 - So the Egyptians made the Israelites their slaves. They appointed brutal slave drivers over them, hoping to wear them down with crushing labor. They forced them to build the cities of Pithom and Rameses as supply centers for the king. But the more the Egyptians oppressed them, the more the Israelites multiplied and spread, and the more alarmed the Egyptians became. So the Egyptians worked the people of Israel without mercy. They made their lives bitter, forcing them to mix mortar and make bricks and do all the work in the fields. They were ruthless in all their demands.

Then Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, gave this order to the Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah: “When you help the Hebrew women as they give birth, watch as they deliver. If the baby is a boy, kill him; if it is a girl, let her live.” But because the midwives feared God, they refused to obey the king’s orders. They allowed the boys to live, too….

20 - So God was good to the midwives, and the Israelites continued to multiply, growing more and more powerful. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Throw every newborn Hebrew boy into the Nile River. But you may let the girls live.”

**> There is an enemy that wants to destroy your life.**

This enemy wants to destroy your life because he wants to destroy the plan of God, and your life is part of the plan of God!

Satan fell from heaven … took angels with him …

He wanted to destroy this nation, because this nation was in the plan of God.

Jesus would come from this nation to give forgiveness and freedom to the world.

Satan was trying to destroy this nation right now!

This is no different when Jesus was born, Satan motivated Herod to kill all the babies in Bethlehem … he found out about the prophecy … he was more concerned for himself and his kingdom than the kingdom of God.

**Often, we have a problem living out the plan of God for our life when we are more concerned about what we want instead of God’s plan.**

That puts our attitude more in line with the devil than with Jesus. Satan got kicked out of heaven because he wanted his plan more than God’s plan.

We have an enemy that wants to destroy our lives!

Ephesians 6:12 - For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

2nd Corinthians 10:3-5 - We are human, but we don’t wage war as humans do. We use God’s mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.

Thank God, He has given us the means to win over this enemy! We are not in this fight alone!

**> God has people in place to help you - the Church.**

The midwives represent the Church. These ladies saw their nation as their family. They believed this was God’s nation and that God wanted to preserve this nation, so they worked for the growth of God’s people.

The Church today is God’s people. Together we believe that God has a plan for us and we work together for the growth of God’s people.

If these midwives were only thinking about themselves what would have happened … the boys would have been killed and God’s plan would have been thwarted.

When we think only of ourselves - what God can do for us - what others can do for us - what the Church can do for us - we are going to be unhappy people.

If life is all about you, you will always be unsatisfied. Get your eyes off your own circumstances, your own needs, and start seeing how you can serve others.

“But pastor, you don’t know how bad it is for me!”

These ladies were defying the king of the world! They were risking their lives! Don’t tell me how bad it is for you!

If you want everything that happens here to be just the way you like it, you will never like it here. You will never be satisfied here.

I believe these midwives to represent our church. I believe God wants our church to be like these midwives.

Our mission is to save those that are dying -

That means, if letting people who have never been in church before don’t understand the cultural preference of not bringing coffee or food into the sanctuary - and that’s just a cultural preference - then we are going to let anyone bring coffee and food into the sanctuary - we are not going to stop people at the doors and check their pockets - we are going to say - “Come in! I don’t care what your hair looks like! I don’t care if you are wearing a hat! I don’t care if you have holes in your jeans - rings in your nose - I don’t care how many times you have been married - I don’t care who your boyfriend or girlfriend is.”

We recognize that there is an enemy that wants to destroy precious lives that God wants to be part of His family - so we are going to defy the enemy and do everything we can to bring these people to life!

We will do everything in our power, short of sin, to bring people to life in Jesus! If it’s not spelled out clearly as sin in the Bible, and if it will help save lives - I’m open to it!

Cultural Christian preferences have gotten in the way of bringing more people to life in Christ and we have to be a little counter cultural like these midwives were.

Sometimes, our preferences, what we think we are supposed to do, not only gets in the way of our saving lives, but it gets in the way of our helping one another.

These ladies were helping those among their own people.

Again, are you living for yourself, primarily concerned about yourself, or are you concerned for others?

God has called us a family - let’s love one another like family.

I’m going to repeat these verses -

John 13:35 - Your love for *one* *another* will prove to the world that you are my disciples.

Ephesians 5:21 - And further, submit to *one* *another* out of reverence for Christ.

Hebrews 10:24 - Let us think of ways to motivate *one* *another* to acts of love and good works.

1st John 3:11 - This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love *one* *another*.

Ephesians 4:32 - Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving *one* *another*, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Philippians 2:2 - Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving *one* *another*, and working together with *one* mind and purpose.

2nd John 1:5 - I am writing to remind you, dear friends, that we should love *one* *another*.

Hebrews 10:25 - And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage *one* *another*, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

1st Peter 4:10 - God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve *one* *another*.

1st John 3:23 - And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love *one* *another*, just as he commanded us.

1st John 4:7 - Dear friends, let us continue to love *one* *another*, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God.

2nd John 1:6 - Love means doing what God has commanded us, and he has commanded us to love *one* *another*, just as you heard from the beginning.

There is an emery that wants to destroy God’s plan for our lives - wants to keep us from experiencing God’s freedom - but God has given us to each other - to walk together - to help each other to live in freedom -

This is why our church revolves around the Growth Track & Small Groups - we find out how God has designed us, how He has gifted us, and we connect with one another to help each other live out God’s plan for our lives.

**> We must pursue this plan.**

Exodus 2:1-10 - About this time, a man and woman from the tribe of Levi got married. The woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She saw that he was a special baby and kept him hidden for three months. But when she could no longer hide him, she got a basket made of papyrus reeds and waterproofed it with tar and pitch. She put the baby in the basket and laid it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile River. The baby’s sister then stood at a distance, watching to see what would happen to him.

Soon Pharaoh’s daughter came down to bathe in the river, and her attendants walked along the riverbank. When the princess saw the basket among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it for her. When the princess opened it, she saw the baby. The little boy was crying, and she felt sorry for him. “This must be one of the Hebrew children,” she said.

Then the baby’s sister approached the princess. “Should I go and find one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?” she asked.

“Yes, do!” the princess replied. So the girl went and called the baby’s mother.

“Take this baby and nurse him for me,” the princess told the baby’s mother. “I will pay you for your help.” So the woman took her baby home and nursed him.

Later, when the boy was older, his mother brought him back to Pharaoh’s daughter, who adopted him as her own son. The princess named him Moses, for she explained, “I lifted him out of the water.”

God obviously had a plan here -

* The nation he promised would bless the entire world is in slavery.
* He’s got a plan to get them out of slavery
* That plan involved Moses.
* The king is trying to kill all the boys.

The midwives could just sit back and go with the flow.

Moses’ mother could just sit back and go with the flow.

No - pursue God’s plan - they didn’t know what would become of Moses, but they knew it wasn’t in God’s plan for him to die.

She took steps to preserve his life - hid him - put him out into the Nile River - has his older sister watch out for him -

God sent the King’s daughter to come save Moses -

God can put powerful people in your life to help you live out His plan!

Moses’ sister pursued God’s plan by jumping out when the princess picked up her brother - she arranged for Moses’ mom to nurse him - they even got paid by the regime for raising their own son for that time!

God can turn anything around!

How do I pursue God’s plan?

I pray - Come Kingdom of God … don’t let me miss your plan for my life …

Then - I live as He leads me -

* That is according to His Word - the Bible is the primary means of guidance.
* We do this together - we don’t do it alone.
* I find out what my gifts are - then I serve others - with others - in His name!

First step - realize God has a plan for your life - first is to Know Him …

What’s your Next Step?

* Know Him - Be baptized -
* Get in relationships with other believers
* Find out what your gifts are
* Serve others