

EXODUS 1 - 2:10

I HAVE SEEN THEIR SUFFERING

BIBLE STUDY



STARTER:

How do people in 21st century Croydon tend to feel about promises nowadays? Do you think promises are still taken seriously? Why or why not?

What about you: Have you ever had to rely on someone's promise? What about their character made you trust they would keep it?



Read Genesis 12: 1-7 | Genesis 15: 1-21 | Genesis 17: 15-22

(If time is short, split group in three to read the passage and answer the questions, and report back)

- What were the promises made by God in these passages?
- Who did he make them to?
- What do we learn about God's character from these promises?

**AS WE START THE BOOK OF EXODUS
WE READ ABOUT ABRAHAM'S GRANDSON, JACOB.**

Look at Exodus 1: 1-7 - How are the promises God made in Genesis being fulfilled at this point?

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Read verses 8-21

- The Israelites, now in slavery to the Egyptians, must have felt like God had forgotten them and his promises. Are there times in your life when it has felt like that?
- Throughout this passage, we see Pharaoh becoming desperate and more violent in his attempts to stop the growth of God's people.
How do we see God at work behind the scenes in this passage to thwart Pharaoh's destructive plans? **(Look at Exodus 1: 12, 1: 20, and 2: 5-10)**
- Can you think of other examples in the Bible where God is seemingly silent in the face of persecution, but has been working behind the scenes?



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Read verses 15-18

We read about the brave Hebrew midwives Shiphrah and Puah:

- Why do you think they didn't obey Pharaoh?
- What was the risk in not following his decree?
- Why do you think their story is included here?

Can you think of ways in which we might be called to "fear God" (v 17) rather than the society around us?

Did the midwives tell a lie in verse 19?

"The midwives gave an answer that some have called deceptive. It is uncertain that their reply is, strictly speaking, untrue; nor is it clear whether this is all that the women said. The narrator simply commends the women for refusing to comply with Pharaoh's murderous scheme.

Some would argue that, with such an evil plan, Pharaoh had forfeited any right to expect obedience (or complete truthfulness). Exodus, however, reports these events without any moral evaluation, its purpose being to help its readers rejoice that God had wonderfully preserved his people").

ESV Study Bible notes

EXODUS 1 - 2:10

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REFLECT & PRAY

- Pray that in the times where we feel like God isn't there, we would trust that he is working behind the scenes.
- Pray that we would have boldness to stand up for Christ (like the midwives did) even when it costs us
- It is International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church on 6th November. Research a country where there is a persecution (see the Open Doors website - <http://www.opendoorsuk.org/>) and encourage your group to pray for that country.



EXODUS 2 : 11-25

I HAVE SEEN THEIR SUFFERING

BIBLE STUDY



STARTER:

If you asked your non-Christian family, friends, colleagues or neighbours what they think God is like, what do you think they might say?

Read Exodus 2 : 11-25 and then re-read verses 23-25

- The Israelites were oppressed by the Egyptians for a 'long period' (v23) - probably several decades later.

How must they have been feeling about God and his promises (of being a great nation, in the promised land, enjoying his blessing) at this point?

- We're told that when the 'king of Egypt died' the 'Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out...for help' to God. Presumably they hoped that the new king would be different - but he continued to oppress them and so they cried out.

Why is it good for us to know that we can cry out to God when we are suffering?



- Is there anything you want to cry out to God about?

Please feel able to be honest in your group so that we can cry out to God together when we come to pray later.

EXODUS 2:11-25

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There are four verbs that are used to describe God's character in verses 24-25. What are they?

1. God **heard** their groaning'
2. God **remembered** his covenant
Note: 'he remembered his covenant' does not mean that God had forgotten it. Rather, it means that he was ready to take the next step.
3. God **looked** on the Israelites
4. God was **concerned** about them'
(literally he 'knew' them and their suffering))



EXODUS 2:11-25

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IN VERSES 11-22, WE SEE TWO MOMENTS OF DELIVERANCE WHICH ARE PICTURES OF HOW GOD IS GOING TO DELIVER HIS PEOPLE FROM SLAVERY IN EGYPT

Moses 'saw' the affliction of his 'own people', just as God 'has seen the affliction' of his people in Egypt

(Exodus 3:7 and 3:9)

Moses 'saved' ('comes to the rescue') Reuel's daughters from the shepherds. The same word is used about God bringing his people out of slavery - 'The LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians'

(Exodus 14:30)

How do these pictures of deliverance show God caring for his people in the ways verses 24-25 describe?

*(God remembers his covenant by raising up Moses to be the deliverer for his people.
This shows us that God is not distant from the world. He cares about the details of our lives.
We know this most of all because he sent his Son Jesus as the promised deliverer for us)*

EXODUS 2:11-25

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BIBLE STUDY



How might you use verses 23-25 to answer a non-Christian who says that God must be a distant or uncaring God because of the suffering in the world?

Read Hebrews 11:24-27

Explain to your group that this shows us how Moses chose to identify with the people of God in their suffering and therefore lost all the privileges of his royal status. He left behind 'the fleeting pleasures of sin' in order to be faithful to God.

(If anyone asks about verse v 27, it's helpful to know that this probably refers to when Moses bravely comforted Pharaoh and brought the people out of Egypt, not to when he fled to Midian after killing the Egyptian)



Are there any areas in your life where you need to leave behind 'the fleeting pleasures of sin'? Why do these sometimes seem more permanent than the promises of God?

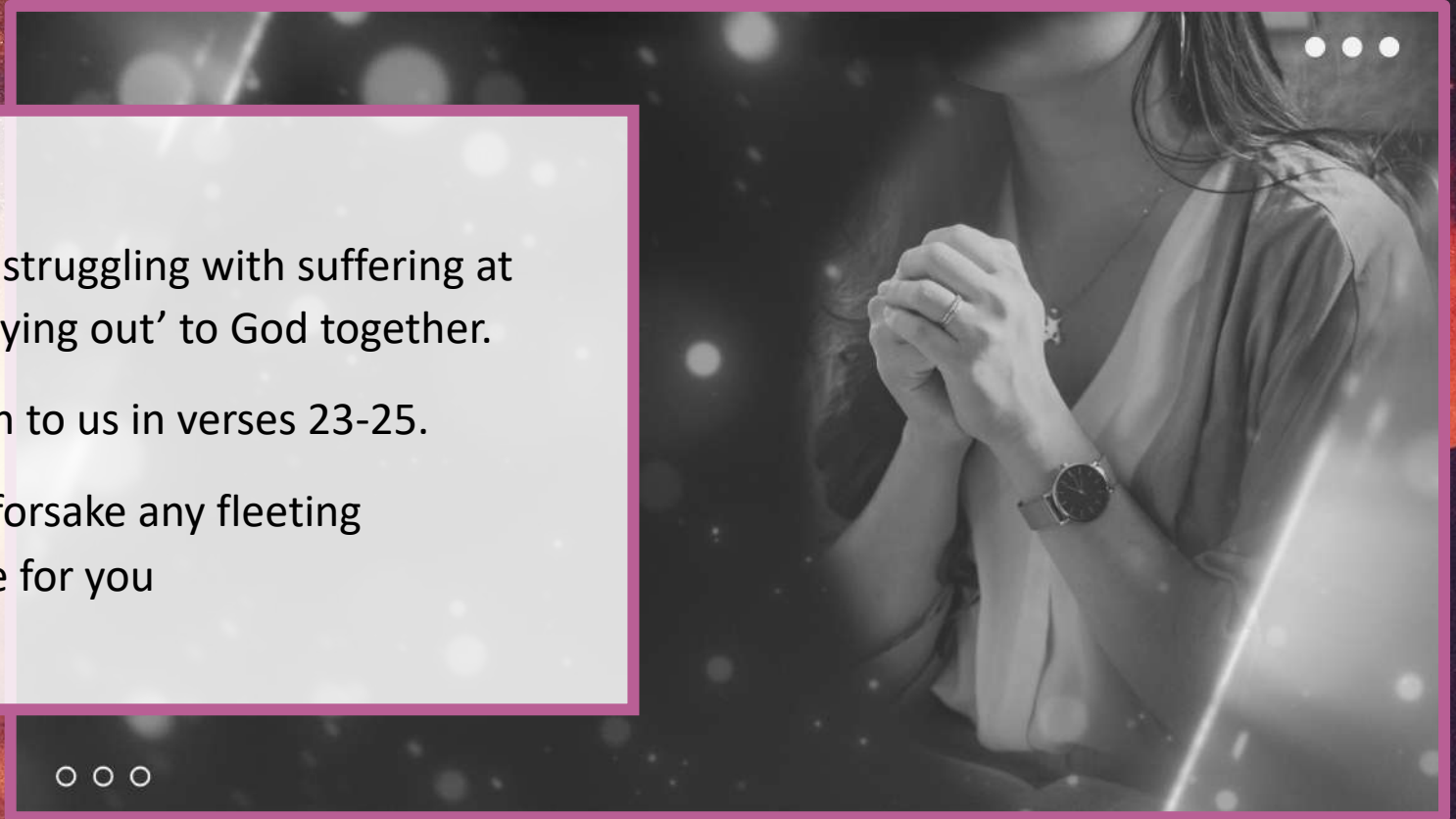
(If people in your group are comfortable to talk about this together, great, or suggest that they dwell on them quietly for themselves)

EXODUS 2:11-25

I HAVE SEEN THEIR SUFFERING

REFLECT & PRAY

- If any members of your group are struggling with suffering at the moment, spend some time 'crying out' to God together.
- Praise God for his character shown to us in verses 23-25.
- Pray that you would be willing to forsake any fleeting pleasures of sin that are a struggle for you



EXODUS 3

I HAVE SEEN THEIR SUFFERING

BIBLE STUDY



STARTER:

Do you know what your name means? Why did your parents choose your name or why did you choose your children's names?

Names are very significant in many cultures, and the Bible lays huge importance on names.

Moses' own name means 'drawn out' (the Princess called him this as she pulled him out of the river), but also is significant for how he would help to lead his people out of Egypt.

In today's study, he hears a name of God that reveals who he is and what he is like.

Read Exodus chapter 3

- Spend a few moments looking back over verses 1-15. What words or pictures could summarize these verses?
- Because of God's Holy Spirit living in us, we are always in God's presence/always on 'holy ground'. What difference would it make to our life this week if we thought of every place where we went as 'holy ground'?
- Share any reflections you've had on how that's made a difference to your week so far

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We've been thinking about God's promises as we look at Exodus. Look at the following verses to discover what God promises Moses in this chapter:

Verses 7-10
(also v 17)

Verse 12

Verse 18

Verses 19-22

Look at the following verses and talk about what we might learn about what God is like, and his character, from what we read.

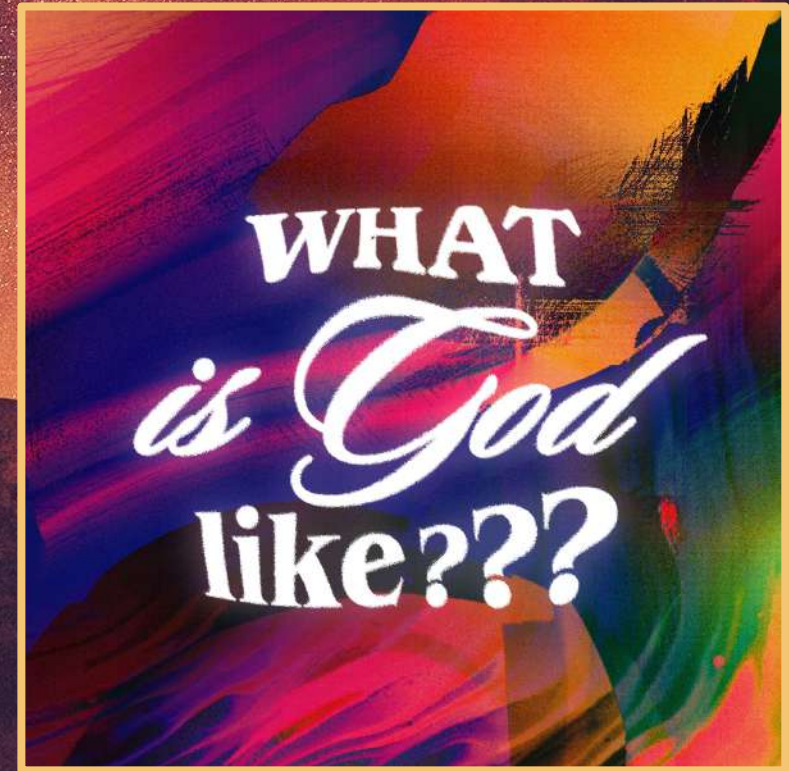
Verse 2

Verse 5

Verse 7

Verse 12

Verse 15



EXODUS 3

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Now look at **verses 14 and 15**. The name that God gives to Moses in **verse 15** is Yahweh.

In our Bibles, this name (Yahweh) is written 'the LORD'. The Hebrew for LORD/Yahweh sounds like and is related to the Hebrew for I AM in verse 14. Therefore this name 'LORD'/Yahweh is essentially interchangeable with what God has just said about himself in verse 14 - 'I AM WHO I AM' / 'I AM')

- This name is one that deserves some time in discussion. His name reveals his character, reputation, and attributes. In Hebrew, the verb 'I am' can be used for past, present, and future. What might this teach us?



EXODUS 3

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BIBLE STUDY



Moses' question 'What is your name' was a way to try to understand God in terms of categories he already understood. But by saying 'I AM WHO I AM' God is effectively saying to him: 'There is nothing outside of me to define me. I am the very essence of being'.

- In what ways do we sometimes try to limit who God is in our minds? In what ways does it challenge and encourage us that we can't fit God into our limits of understanding?

I AM
WHO
I AM

EXODUS 3

I HAVE SEEN THEIR SUFFERING

BIBLE STUDY



- How does God promise that his character as the LORD/Yahweh will be revealed by his actions? See **v 12**, and also look at **verses 16-22**.
- **Look at verses 11-12.** What is Moses' concern and how does God answer this concern? What do you think of God's response?
 - What do you think we can learn from God's response about how we might pray when we are feeling inadequate?

God effectively answers Moses' objection in verse 11 - 'who am I?' with the response 'what matters is who I am!' Focusing on him will help us not to focus on our own inadequacy, but on his adequacy - another way that the name 'I am who I am' can bring us comfort.



EXODUS 3

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- In **John 8:58**, Jesus says “Very truly I tell you...before Abraham was born, I am!” In this way Jesus is saying that he is God.
- **Look back over your answers to the question of “What God is like”.** Those things are all true of Jesus as God. How does that compare to how you tend to think of Jesus? How should that encourage us to praise Jesus all the more for who he is?

*What is
JESUS like?*

EXODUS 3

I HAVE SEEN THEIR SUFFERING

REFLECT & PRAY

- How might we allow our identity to become too influential - gaining confidence from how we feel and what we do?
- What have we learned about our God today that we can take away into the coming week?
- Do you feel as if there is something you are struggling with that you could share with a trusted friend and ask them to pray with you about?



EXODUS 4

I HAVE SEEN THEIR SUFFERING

BIBLE STUDY

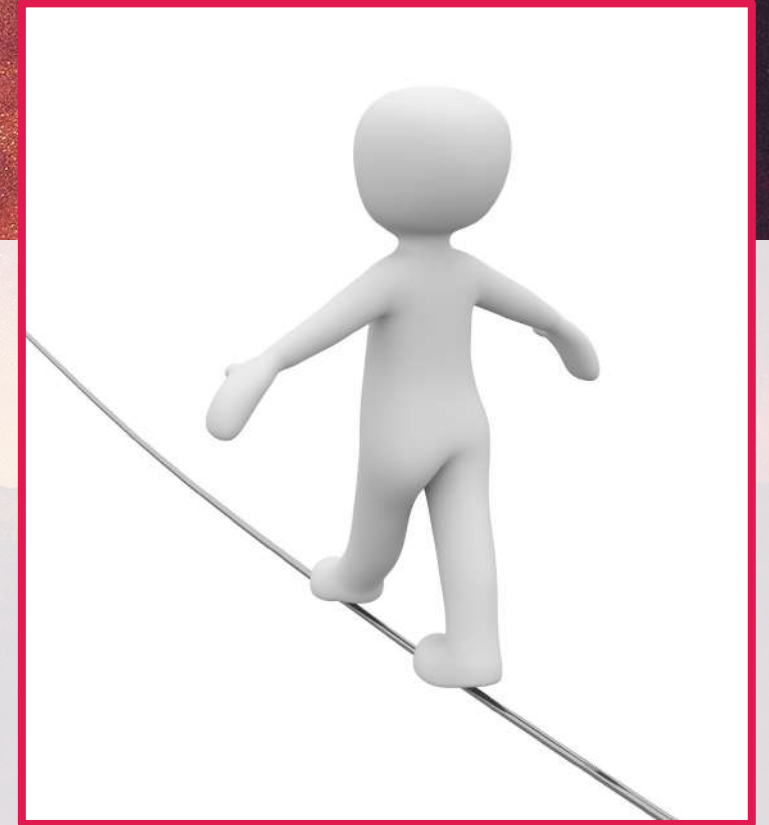


STARTER:

Can you think of a time when God asked you to do something that you found incredibly nerve-wracking, but which ultimately you managed to do?

Read Exodus 4 : 1-17

- Look back at **chapter 3 : 11-15**. What were Moses' first two objections to what God had asked him to do, and how did God answer them?
- Think back to the times when God has asked us to do things we've found hard. How could we testify that God has been 'with us' (as in 3:12) in these situations?
- What is Moses' third excuse (4 : 1)?
- The signs that God gives to Moses in reply to his third excuse are given to show him and the Israelites in slavery that God was, much more powerful than Pharaoh, and able to deliver them. In the rest of chapters 3 and 4, in what other ways is Moses reassured of God's power despite his weakness?



EXODUS 4

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- Moses' 4th excuse (**chapter 4 : 10**) is that he isn't gifted enough for the mission God has given him. There may be areas of Christian service where you think you are not gifted enough. How does the passage below from **2 Corinthians 12 : 9-10** encourage you to step out in faith?

"But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

- Moses' 5th excuse (**chapter 4 : 13**) shows that the root of the problem is that he doesn't want to do what God has commanded him. Can you think of times when you have used excuses with something that you know God's word commands you to do?
- Is there something you feel God is nudging you about at the moment where you are responding in one of these ways?

THEREFORE I WILL BOAST
ALL THE MORE GLADLY OF
MY WEAKNESSES, SO THAT
THE POWER OF CHRIST MAY
REST UPON ME.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

EXODUS 4

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REFLECT & PRAY

- As you reflect on Moses's story, turn your thoughts towards Jesus and take a few moments to compare Jesus' willingness to follow the Father's will with Moses' reluctance. Do this by reading the account of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane in **Matthew 26:36-44**.
- How might reflecting on Jesus' willingness (in Gethsemane) to go to the cross for us help us to step out in obedience to hard things God has called us to do?
- Pray about your thoughts and all that has come up in your conversations.

