

Title: A Savior who needs to be Saved
Text: Exodus 2
Theme: The rescue of Moses
Series: Exodus #2
Prop Stmt: Christ is a Savior who does not need to be saved.

I read an article this week about the level of abuse that college basketball fans are heaping upon players from other teams. Behind the jumping crowds in the stands are words and actions that amazed me. Before a recent game, the cell# of an opposing player was circulated so the fans could text message and voicemail him abuse, which they did with ferocious hate, detailing the types of things they were going to do to him, his family, etc.

The actions of these fans are part of a larger picture. Some of the sports heroes have made themselves easy targets with their well-publicized police records. It seems that we have to go a ways in order to find a hero who does not have a girlfriend beating rap, a steroid-accusation, a recruiting violation or a gambling problem. We are an interesting group of people. We desperately want a hero, but we spend so much time exposing their faults that we end up with none. When every savior you know as to be saved himself, it makes it difficult to trust anyone, doesn't it?

Read text:

Chapter 1 ends with "you must throw every boy into the Nile but let every girl live." What is going to happen to God's people now? What is going to happen to the promises that God made to this nation? That's the tension. This phrase comes at the end of scene #1 where a showdown between Pharaoh's shrewd dealings and God's providential hand is being staged. In this corner we have the might of the Egyptian empire and army vs. the slaves of Israel. On paper, there is no contest. Pharaoh has given the orders that all the boys that are born to the children of Israel must die. He is going to destroy the threat. In spite of the initial success of the Hebrew midwives, Pharaoh's plan will not be foiled. He is determined to win. Every boy must die.

The children of Israel need a savior. They are in a situation from which there appears to be no escape. Only a miracle can save them now. Remember, every boy born to the Hebrews is to be thrown into the Nile River. Chapter 2 begins the story of a Hebrew family that does just that. They put their newly born son into the Nile. But, it is more than the story of a boy. Chapter 2 is the story of a savior. Once again, the fingerprints of the providences of God are all over the place. Instead of this boy being drowned and forgotten chapter 2 tells us the story of this Hebrew boy being raised in Pharaoh's house. Instead of being killed, he is living right under Pharaoh's nose, eating at his table and learning from the teachers on his payroll. The very thing that Pharaoh fears is the very thing he is unwittingly helping to accomplish. But there is more. Pharaoh gives the order (at the end of chapter 1) that the girls get to live, and it ends up being the girls who play such a strategic role in this chapter. Frankly, it is a feature that carries over from chapter

1, where the earthly heroes are heroines. But, in this chapter, the writer, (Moses) focuses upon girls; “daughters” to be more precise.

You can see it from the literary devices that Moses uses. The chapter begins with a man and a woman (daughter of the Levi family) getting married and having a son. Toward the end of the chapter, a man and a woman (daughter of Reuel of Midian) get married and have a son. In both cases, the son’s name is given and explained. In between, two other daughters are featured, with one being the biological sister of Moses and the other being the biological daughter of Pharaoh. Reuel, interestingly enough has seven daughters, and daughters is a word that Moses uses 7 times in this chapter. The story is not only fascinating, it is stylistically intriguing. Even in the telling of the story, the writer uses key words that are repeated at various junctures that give us little surprises all along the way. But, this is more than an interesting, well-written story. This is His story, which is the story of God’s establishing a people for His kingdom. What kind of people does God pick for His kingdom? He picks helpless and hopeless people who need to be rescued because they cannot save themselves. So, into this hopeless situation God sends a redeemer. God sends them a savior. This savior, in many ways, looks like another Savior who will come. The events surrounding his birth are eerily similar. And the reaction to his saving activity is sadly similar as well.

The chapter breaks down into four parts. The first three focus on the life and changing situations of Moses. The one who is born to rescue, must first himself be rescued.

1. **A Savior who is saved** (1-10)

The world does not know it yet. The children of Israel do not know it yet, and certainly this young, yet unnamed couple do not know it yet, but the third child born to them is going to pull off one of the most incredible events in the history of the world. But, before we get to that part of the story, we have an immediate problem. The problem is, Pharaoh has ordered that all boys born to the Hebrews are to be thrown into the Nile river.

Three times in these opening verses we read that “she saw.” She saw that he (Moses) was a fine child. This was a beautiful baby. This was a healthy, strapping lad. And perhaps by the age of three months, his cries were impossible to keep muffled. Perhaps there were some close encounters with Pharaoh’s soldiers. Perhaps some of the neighbors were threatened with the death of their children if they did not reveal to the authorities which families had babies born to them. Those details are left to our speculation. But the details that we do know about are that this mother takes matters into her own hands, as far as she can. Did she know about Pharaoh’s daughter? There is nothing in the story that suggests that. Was she hoping to sneak the child back home at the end of the day? Was there a step 2 to her plan? We don’t know all of that. But, we can imagine the fear and faith that together drove this mother to make this basket; the tears that rolled down her face as she silently cried to God for protection while she wove the reeds together and then used a tarry pitch-like substance as a means to waterproof it. Where was God? Why was He allowing this to happen? This boy was such a healthy boy too. It was all that she could do, but it was what she could do. Would she ever see

him again? I imagine that on that day, something in her heart wanted to die. What she did not know is that in some unusual way, God's plan for the rescue of his people rested on this little, helpless child floating in a basket on the Nile River. Like one family floating in an ark upon the waters of the flood years before, now one baby floats in a tiny ark on the mighty Nile. Of all the things that have happened who would have thought?

Moses, who at this point is not named, is being watched over by his older sister. Miriam is another girl who is featured in this story. To see her running breathlessly back into the village when she was supposed to be watching over her brother could only mean bad news, wouldn't you think? But her words were no doubt beyond anything that this mother had ever expected to hear. This mother wasn't the only one "to see." Pharaoh's daughter came to the River to bathe. "She saw" the basket and she "saw the baby." Her sympathetic response occasioned some conversation which no doubt had to do with, how can we care for this child? Miriam's quick-thinking was brilliant. She could find a Hebrew woman to nurse the child for the Pharaoh's daughter. The offer is not only accepted, but it is accepted with payment! Not only is the life of this boy saved, not only is this mother's heart saved, but she is going to be paid to nurse her son. No more fear, no more hiding, it is incredible. The daughter of the man who ordered the boys killed has providentially affected his rescue. This savior is saved. He is not only saved from death, he is saved from a life of slavery, and with exposure to some of the world's greatest teachers he is saved from ignorance. We are reading the evidence of this boy's literacy training.

To you artists here, who are looking for a scene to paint, perhaps for a project or portfolio may I suggest either verse 9 or verse 10? These verses speak of the two meetings that took place between the real mother of Moses and the one who would raise him as her own. In verse 9, Moses is given back to his mother, in verse 10, he is given back again to the Pharaoh's daughter. What did their eyes say to the other? And regarding all of those details, we are told nothing. But we know this. The incredible story of the first three months of his life is only the prelude to something incredible that is going to follow. He was born into suffering, slavery and certain death and was delivered from all three. God is up to something big, we can only hope.

Which Pharaoh was this? Was it Thutmose III, which would explain the naming of this boy Moses? If so, was this daughter the famous Hatshepsut whose famous temple still stands as a monumental statement to her power and authority? We don't know because Moses does not tell us. Those details were not important to him and are really not pertinent to the story. Hebrews 11:25 tells us that at some point he refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. When did that take place? When did Moses realize who he really was? Was he mocked by the other children in the palace? What was it that made him aware that he did not belong in the palace? What made him know that the kingdom of this world was not his kingdom? At some point, he knew and he saw things as they were. Between verse 10 and verse 11, about 40 years pass. What would happen to this fine child? How would his training and environment ruin him? What would he be like? We do not have to wait too long to find out, do we?

2. A Savior who is rejected (11-15)

In these verses it is Moses who sees. He sees the hard labor. He sees the mistreatment of his own people, and he sees his own people mistreating each other. In this text we begin to see not only a man of action, but a man of justice. He cannot bear to see his own people being treated so badly. Whether this had been a reaction that had been building for some time, or it was a reaction in the heat of the moment, we don't know. But what we do know is that at that moment, when he was watching one of his own being beaten, Moses crossed a line. This was the Rubicon for Moses. This was the point of identification. This was his baptism. This was when he was publicly identifying himself as one of God's people. He knew that there could be consequences, which is why he looked "this way and that" before he rescued his own. He defended the helpless. He protected the hopeless. He rescued one who could not save himself, and then he buried the ruthless one in the sand. Did a sense of justice assure his spirit that this was the right thing to do? Was there an unspoken look of thanks, and another unspoken look of mutual recognition that from now on, things were going to be different? I don't know. But the very next day, Moses is back and he is ready to do a little more saving. He has assumed the role of Savior, and he is going to, somehow rescue his people. Only, it does not go, quite like he planned.

In these verses there are three questions. The first is asked by Moses, the second and third are asked of Moses. Actually, the second and third are accusations thinly disguised as questions. Moses asks why. "Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?" The wording itself makes it clear that while Moses does not identify himself with the Egyptians, he knows that the Hebrews do not identify with him. That point is painfully driven home by the two questions asked of him. Who made you ruler and judge? Are you going to kill me like you did the Egyptian? The response is clear. We don't want your pity. We don't want your help. This isn't the last time he will hear this reaction. You don't belong to us. And now, he doesn't belong to Egypt either. At this point, he doesn't belong to anyone. So he runs for his life.

At the end of verse 15, the savior is a failure. His own people don't want him and he has to run for his life because he killed a man. He was a murderer. What promise he had. What an incredible story his birth was, and now, he has ruined it. What a waste. So, he runs. He runs east past the Red Sea and into a region known as Midian. Along that lonely path, perhaps living off the land or off of side work he did for some Nomadic tribesman in the area, he probably replayed the scene a thousand times in his mind. Was it arrogant to think he could rescue these people? Someone had to do it, didn't they? But, who was he to think that he could do this all by himself? But, look at how they responded! Nothing hurts so deep than to be rejected by the people you die to save.

3. A Savior who still saves (16-22)

The third story within the story of this chapter takes place in Midian. Moses would naturally have to find wells in order to stay alive in that region of the world. And on this day, he observes a situation that he interferes in again. Seven daughters of one man bring

their sheep to a well in order to get them water. Other shepherds don't want to wait their turn and drive the girls away. Moses, just can't stay out of a fight when someone is being wronged. Whatever self-talk he may have had with himself about not interfering, is all thrown out the window now as he jumps into the middle of this one. Of course having seven unmarried girls sitting in the bleachers, cheering for you is not bad motivation either – is it? He rescues the girls, he waters their sheep and they get home early. Their description in v.19 sounds excited, animated and happy doesn't it? He RESCUED us, he EVEN drew water for US and watered the flock. Wow, what a man! What a hero! What a Savior! So...dad asks, where is he? Oops.

Meanwhile, back at the well, Moses is probably wondering, what good was that? I did not even get a meal out of it. But all of that was about the change. The one who saved them, was himself saved again. The one who had no where to go, to place to belong, no family and no people is brought in, given a place at the table and pretty soon, given a wife, who presents him with a son.

It is interesting isn't it to see how many marriages are arranged at a well? Isaac's wife Rebekah is found by his servant at a well. Jacob falls in love with Rachel at a well and now Moses ends up finding his wife by an encounter at a well. It sounds the ANE version of e-harmony.com. At the end of this section, the man without a country finds a place to belong. The name he gives his son makes it clear that this issue rests heavy upon his heart. He thought he was the one to save his people. He thought his rescue and training and subsequent choice to turn his back on all of that would somehow be rewarded. This man raised in a palace, now spends long days in pastures. Watching sheep gives you time to think. Caring for sheep teaches you a lot about people. Many times, they do not know what they really want, nor what they really need. Was this what God had in mind for him? A quaint little life with a nomadic family where he did not have to answer too many questions; was this it? Up to this point in the second chapter, the name of God does not appear. God is closer than anyone imagined.

4. **A People who need a Savior** (23-25)

The chapter ends with a postscript. These three verses are noticeable for their verbs.

The king died.

Israel groaned and cried out.

God heard, remembered, looked and was concerned.

Day to day, life for the Hebrews in Egypt was as bad or worse. But God's time for action was coming. His leader was ready, the winds of change were starting to blow a little stronger.

1) What does this have to do with Christ?

The birth of this unusual child in the midst of a time of national crisis makes it clear that this child was thought to bring hope. Moses' mother "saw that he was a fine child" (uses

the same language for “good” in Genesis – “and God saw that it was good.”). The birth of this boy was a re-birth for God’s people. This was a Savior. The rest of the text sounds like a preview of the life of Christ, who also had to run for his life from a deranged and threatened king. Both were born in poverty and both ended up in the desert before their public work. Both faced humiliation and exaltation. Like Israel, Christ was called out of Egypt, and while every detail is not exactly parallel, the portraits are very similar. But, the difference is enormous. The savior in Exodus 2 is a flawed hero. The savior in Exodus 2 has to have his own life saved, even from himself. The savior in Exodus 2 does not last beyond Deut. 34, while Christ is yesterday, today and forever. Christ is the I AM that I AM whom we meet in the next chapter. Again, we are like the people of Israel, we have a problem that we cannot solve. We need to be rescued but are blind to our own Savior. We live in a world that uses the name of Christ as a curse word, because if He were physically walking on this earth, they would try to kill him again. We cannot save ourselves, we need the Savior, but in order for him to save us, we must submit ourselves to him.

2) What does this have to do with you?

There are three things I want you to think about as you consider what needs to change in your thinking and in your living. Like Moses, you have to figure out, whose side are you going to be on? Whose child are you? Moses had to come to grips with that. When I ask you that, I am not speaking of your biological parents, I am speaking of your eternal status. Whose child are you? Are you a child of God’s through Christ, or are you a child of this present darkness and the prince of the power of the air? Moses refused to be identified with this present world’s kingdom. Turning his back on the riches of Egypt, and the pleasures of sin, and the power of a throne, he accepted the call of God upon his true identity.

Who are your people? Who are the ones to whom you are eternally related? How do you care for them? How do you help them?

What kingdom are you going to live in? How do your actions and reactions show those who are the closest to you whose kingdom you are in? Do your children respect you or fear you? Is your spouse safe with you, or still wincing from your evil and angry accusations? Do your conversations reveal that you are in the kingdom of light, or the kingdom of darkness? As we will see, this whole book is really about that issue. God made us in order to tabernacle with us, but He only lives with the humble, because only the poor in spirit are in His kingdom.

Memory verse: Hebrews 11.24-25 “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 pleasures of sin for a short time.”