

Exodus
A Rose Through Concrete- Week #1
Small Group Notes
August 6 and 9 (include Thursday)

Main Point: God draws us out to draw us in to show us how the journey to the fulfillment of God's promises will always go through wilderness and valleys.

Introduction:

What are some of the first things that come to mind when you hear the word "freedom"?

Why is freedom such a valued concept in our culture? Do you think freedom can be misused? How can it be used properly?

How do you respond when you believe your freedom has been oppressed or abused?

In the sermon, Pastor Nick had the illustration of a locked box. Let's think about his first question: What bondage do you find yourself in that you are now allowing the gospel to unlock?

Context:

- In the Book of Genesis, Joseph's jealous brothers sold him as a slave to Egypt. In God's providence, Joseph rose to a leadership position in Egypt and saved countless lives from a coming famine. People from all over the world traveled to Egypt to buy grain (Gen 41:57).
- Joseph's family ultimately traveled to Egypt because of the famine, and they were reconciled to Joseph and moved there to escape starvation (Gen 46).
- For a time, the Hebrews were treated well in Egypt and multiplied in number. But after Joseph's death, a time came when a new Pharaoh came to power that had no relationship with Joseph. The number of Hebrews in Egypt perplexed him.
- As a result, Pharaoh oppressed the Hebrew people with heavy workloads and sought to have their male children killed at birth. The

Hebrews' freedom to live and thrive in the land of Egypt was seriously threatened, as their lives were in danger. But God saw their suffering and put a plan in motion for their freedom.

Discuss:

1. Read Exodus 1:1-13

- In the midst of the valley, growth still happens.

Explain: Pharaoh's fear was two-fold. First, he feared the growing number of Israelites could align with Egypt's enemies and defeat them. Secondly, he feared they could band together and be strong enough to escape from the region. Either case would have disastrous results for Egypt. But the Pharaoh's shrewd tactics backfired: the more he oppressed the Hebrew people, the quicker they multiplied in number.

How would you have responded if you were among the oppressed Hebrews?

Why did the Hebrew people continue to multiply in number despite the fact that Pharaoh was attempting to reduce their number?

Recall times when God came through on His promises to you in the past, even in the valley. Why are you not trusting Him now in the midst of hard times?

Read Hebrews 12:1-2. How can this verse help renew our focus during difficult moments?

2. Read Exodus 1:14-22

Explain: God used the midwives to outwit the Pharaoh: they spared the male infants and told the Pharaoh that the Hebrew women didn't wait for their services, but delivered the babies on their own. This is the first instance in Scripture where we witness an act of civil disobedience. Clearly, the Bible teaches all Christians to obey earthly authorities (Matt 20:21-25, Romans 13, 1 Pet 2:11). Yet our obedience to earthly authorities should never violate our conscience (Rom 13:5). When the laws of man violate the law of God, we must always obey God (Acts 5:29). God saw that the

midwives revered the Lord, and He rewarded them with families of their own (v. 21).

- When determining who to follow, look for **the** Crown!
- There is no one who is less than in the Kingdom of God!
- We now go and do as the King has done!

Read Acts 4:18-20. What did Peter and John show what was more important in this situation? What example does this show you today?

How would you respond if you were asked to do something that violated your conscience? What would you have done if you had been in the midwives' situation?

Would you be willing to suffer consequences from man to obey God? Explain why you feel the way you do.

Read Luke 6:35-36. What is a step you can take this week to be a conduit of freedom?

Do:

How do you handle seasons of persecution or difficulty when God's moving may be imperceptible to you? What are some ways we can prepare now to face those challenges when they arrive?

How would you explain the difference between obedience and convenience? What does today's story teach us about the difference between these two things? What does that look like in your life today?