



Sermon Transcription

Title: Humble Majesty
Theme: God comes to His people in glorious humility.
Text: Exodus 3:1-15
Preacher: Erik Thoennes
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Good morning. Would you please open your Bibles to Exodus Chapter 3, as we continue to learn about who our God is. I just love that we sing a song that talks about a God who is awesome in power, and we get the whole time to say He's our God, affirming this very personal nature of God in the midst of His awesome power and other great qualities. But Exodus 3 is where we are.

As you've heard, we are reading through the Bible this year as a church, and preaching through it. I realize that we're all at different sorts of places and being on board with this or not, and that's okay. But this is what we're trying to do to give us a big overarching Biblical picture. We're all the way through Genesis and now Exodus 12 we're up to. And I'm really wondering and eager to hear, as I was so blessed by – in the first two services – what you're learning about God as you read. We need to be asking the right questions as we read the Bible. And the question of all questions is, who is God? So as you read the Bible, find out who God is. That's why the Bible is written, to know God, to enjoy God, to deepen relationship with God, to glorify God with our lives in all of that. So *the* question is, who is God? As you've been reading, if you have, what have you been learning about God? What have you seen about Him that's true. Talk to me. (Congregation dialogue) He's the Creator. That's where the Bible starts and that's really an important place to start. If He's the Creator, yeah, He calls the shots. It's all His, it's all for His glory. Good. He's the Creator. Can't emphasize that enough.

We're going to focus on Exodus 3 this morning. That's where we want to camp. Think about all the places we could have gone. And it's killing me not to go to so many of them, but this is where I want us to camp, because there are things going on in Exodus 3 that show us God's M.O. throughout the Bible. I want us to have big paradigms, big understandings of who God is and how He's working so that then we can understand the whole Bible better. And I think Exodus 3 is so vital for us in this regard. So before we dive in, let me pray.

Father, please help us to hear from you, by the Spirit's work, and out of the scriptures. We pray in Jesus name, amen.

Exodus 3, you know the story because you saw Prince of Egypt. At least I hope you know the *real* story. Here it is. You know, that movie was based on the Bible. Here it is, watch. Maybe you're old and you saw Charlton Heston, but here we go.

"Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian."

I just want to pause there. Moses has been in the wilderness, how long here? Forty years. Is there any doubt his life and ministry is not what he thought it was going to be? Forty years in the wilderness, tending sheep for his father-in-law.

Now you know that the Bible had to be able to fit in our hand, and so it focuses on the highlights of salvation history. You may not feel like it's a highlight when you're reading through a lengthy genealogy, but we're talking about thousands of years here, condensed into these few pages. And so it's sort of like Sports Center. You don't get the whole game, you get the highlights. You don't get the boring patches where you go and get food. You get these highlights like the burning bush. But it's so important when you look at the burning bush to not miss those little transitional things, like Joseph's life's end, his families insecurity and prominence, and then there was a pharaoh who didn't know Joseph. And that begins 400 years of Egyptian slavery. And for Moses personally, 40 years in the wilderness now, and realize that most of life is the 440, not the moment at the burning bush. You can get the false impression because it's highlights

that life is nothing but highlights. Life is mostly mundane, exactly. It's mostly really, really normal. *But with a God at work all the time.*

And when we have the dramatic like we're about to see in the burning bush, that needs to become a foundation for hope and confidence in the midst of the wilderness, in the midst of the difficulty throughout our lives, realizing that most of our lives are filled with difficulty, and at the very least mostly normalcy. So don't ever forget you're seeing major highlights here. It's a little like Sports Center, so here we go. Here we go.

He's tending sheep in the wilderness, flock, west side of the wilderness,

"...and came to Horeb, the mountain of God," --

-- very special place. Wish we had time to really unpack what a special place this is.

"And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed."

What? Makes no sense. That's not how reality works. But it's what's happening. The bush is on fire, but it's not being burned up.

"And Moses said, 'I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.' When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then he said, 'Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.'"

All right, we need to pause there, because this burning bush gives us a picture of the fundamental way God reveals Himself to us, and that He works. What do I mean by that? Well, we have here an image of fire. When you think about images or when you see images in the Bible, you quickly need to think *what attributes of God the Bible teaches, is this image showing us*, or else images could go in countless different ways, right? I was thinking of the Campbells. Their house burned down a couple of years ago, and when they think of fire, it's probably not an immediately positive response. I think they're in this service, right? You think of fire and you think, that's the thing that took my house. So I don't want the Campbells just saying, well, whatever fire means to me is what this must mean. I want them to say, well when the Bible talks about fire, what does it want me to think about, especially about God. So let's talk about that. Fire, biblically, what attributes of God does that show us? Talk to me. (Congregation dialogue) Okay, there's a purification. That's the affect, actually, of an attribute, which is what? (Congregation dialogue) Holiness, yes. That God is utterly and absolutely distinct from everything in creation and completely separate from moral evil. And so God's holiness has a purifying effect. So God in this fire is trying to show His holiness to Moses, and do what? What else does fire show us about God, biblically? (Congregation dialogue) Yes, power. Remember James, he talks about it and he says, you know the tongue is like fire. You can't control it. It's so powerful it just envelops everything in its path. So you hear fire in the Bible and you say, holiness, power. What else? (Congregation dialogue) Might. Might, yes. Might. The pillar of fire by night leading the Israelites soon. It's the way of seeing God's holiness, becomes a way for us to see reality and be led by Him. Good, light. Other attribute of God that fire shows us? (Congregation dialogue) Say it again. (Congregation dialogue) Okay, okay, He takes over. Good. Okay, so it shows His sovereignty. What else? Fire. When you think of fire in the Bible, what do you think of? (Congregation dialogue) Okay, the Holy Spirit who brings holiness and that purification we talked about. Good. You see how all the connections come out. What's another attribute? (Congregation dialogue) Wrath, yes. Don't miss that.

It's amazing to me how we think about hell independent from God, sort of the doctrine of hell. The punishment of sin and evil out of His wrath really needs to lead us back to say, wow, God really hates evil. He hates everything in opposition to Him. He'll judge it, He'll consume it, He'll express His wrath in light of that. It's amazing, people say, are you one of those hell, fire and brimstone preachers? Well, actually, you know who the biggest one was? Jesus. Let's not talk about hell fire like we're embarrassed about it. It's actually an expression of God's attribute of hating sin and evil. Do you hate sin and evil? I hope so. So how much more should God, who is perfectly pure and holy, hate it? So of course He's wrathful.

So think about that. God takes this image of fire and is revealing these mighty, majestic qualities about Himself to Moses, and he wants Moses to know, as he's about to embark on this massive challenge of taking on Pharaoh and the Egyptians and leading the stiff-necked people through the Red Sea and the wilderness, He wants Moses to know who He is, especially big, massive, majestic qualities like *holiness* and *wrath* and *sovereignty* and *power*. And he chooses to reveal that image and those attributes using a *bush*. And not even some big impressive, flowery bush at the Huntington Gardens, but a bush in the desert.

Anybody grow up in the desert around here? You guys did? Tell me your names. Brandon, Brett. Guys, where'd you grow up? (Congregation dialogue) Apple Valley. It's kind of desert-y there. Yeah. Would you give us some adjectives describing desert bushes? What's that? (Congregation dialogue) Salty. Do you eat them? How do you know this?

(Congregation dialogue) Oh, wow. So it's toxic in its saltiness. Yeah, what else, other adjectives? (Congregation dialogue) Brown. You say that with distain, Brett. Yeah. Keep going. (Congregation dialogue) No, adjectives to describe bushes. That's a place where they are, yes. (Congregation dialogue) Dry, brown, what else? Any other desert people? What's that? (Congregation dialogue) Ugly. I'm glad their not listening. Yeah, dry, brown, ugly, pretty pitiful looking. Somebody in the last service said pathetic. You wonder if they're even alive. Isn't it amazing to you that when God wanted to show His *wrath, holiness, power*, he uses a desert bush? Or couldn't you get a better vehicle for that image, Lord, than a desert bush that's so pitiful? I mean, in the dictionary, next to the word unimpressive should be a picture of a desert bush, right? About one of the least impressive things you can ever find is what God uses to reveal His *power, glory, wrath*, in. How strange. I'm glad this is the only time He does that.

As you've read through Genesis and now the beginning of Exodus, have you noticed other burning bushes, very humble things God's revealing himself through? Throw some out at me. (Congregation dialogue) Leah, yes. Nothing to look at. Old Leah. Yeah. Hagar, the one He sees, good. Other pitiful things that seem to have no worth that nevertheless God is somehow revealing himself powerfully through? Keep going. (Congregation dialogue) Rahab, yes, good. Who else? (Congregation dialogue) Oh, why don't we just cut to the chase, get right to the end there. *Let's build. Let's build to that!* Who said that? Yes. Well, yes, of course she said that. Yes, she's a trained theologian. Yes. Can we build to that a little bit? So where in Genesis? How about everybody? Starting with Adam and Eve and Abraham, come out of the Ur of Chaldees you nobody, wondering nomad. I'm going to make a great nation out of you. Think of everybody we've seen and every family we've seen. Does God use people because they're "all that"? No. He actually has this way of doing things where He chooses what's called *the foolish things of the world to confound the wise*. Why does He do that? Why is that His M.O.? (Congregation dialogue) So He gets the glory. So there's no doubt where the glory goes. And He actually has to remind His people over and over again, *wait, you're actually starting to think I chose you and I'm using you because of you*. Please remember, Israel, you are the least of all nations, puny, insignificant, nothing, nomadic people. It's not you that's important. *It's Me*. And whether it's Abraham or Jacob or Isaac – any of them, they're these burning bushes. A source of the glory, the power, the revelation of God, the usefulness to God is never found first and foremost in themselves, but in God and His ability to use them with his divine abiding presence. That's what He wants them to know, wants Moses to know, wants *us* to know, as He reveals Himself to him.

You've got to get this burning bush. It's this paradigm where God reveals Himself over and over again in this way, in the least expected humble ways where He has humble majesty, which is an oxymoron. There's no way *humility* and *majesty* go together, is there? Oh, yes, there is. God's been doing that all along. So we're setting the stage throughout the whole Old Testament of saying, no, not the oldest, most impressive in the family. Give me the youngest. Joseph, give me Joseph. He's the eleventh of twelve. Nobody's going to expect this one. And then *Joseph* doesn't even quite get that. Remember his father's blessing on the younger child. He's saying, no, dad, wrong one. No, something different is going on here, Joseph. Don't forget, eleven of twelve, buddy. And over and over again we see God using the least likely, humble one in ways to reveal His majesty.

So getting this burning bush is vital because it sets the stage for God revealing Himself in all His glory in the face of a carpenter, a blue-collar worker who was so unimpressive, when He started to talk about being the Messiah, the people in His hometown were offended at the suggestion. And why? We watched this kid grow up. We watched Him play with our kids in the streets. We saw him wipe his runny nose. There's no way He's God's *revelation*, the *Savior* of His people, because He's so humble, so normal looking. They hadn't paid close enough attention to their own scriptures to expect God's ultimate revelation to be in profound humility. Let's not get caught off guard like they were. Let's be able to see God reveal His great majesty in great humility. And think of this burning bush as a paradigm, a normative way God does this.

So He's revealing Himself, and then He goes on to unpack what this means as we go on. Verse 6, God says this:

"I am the God of your father, God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the Lord said, 'I have surely seen the affliction of my people.'"

There's that compassionate God, that attentive God, that personal God.

"I've seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their task masters. I know their suffering and I've come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of the land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey."

Now please, when you read that sort of description, as we go through the Bible, think oh, this is literally, historically true for Israel, but it is just laying the foundation for the Promised Land we find in Christ, that place of security and rest and shalom and reconciliation with God, which for them had a literal location and for us has it's ultimate fulfillment in heaven, where we finally are at rest. So when you hear these descriptions of the Promised Land, think oh, I'm heaven bound, I'm heading for Mount Zion to the heavenly city, that this is just a literal preparation for.

And so He's saying I'm going to get them home. But please also notice they are enemies along the way. The Canaanites and the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites. It's not going to happen right away, and it's not going to happen without a lot of fighting and casualties in opposition, but I'm going to get you home.

Verse 9:

"And now, behold the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

Can you imagine a more foreboding ministry assignment than going to the greatest, most powerful leader in the world and telling him, I would like to remove the very basis of your entire economic system by leading my people out. You may have some challenges in your life, but *that's* a big one. I'm not minimizing how big yours feel, but this guy needs some help here. He needs some perspective. He's desperate. So you can understand why he asks the question he does. It's not the right question, but it's an understandable question. Verse 11:

"But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?'" And God says this: He said, Moses, you're the man. Come on, man, you're all that. You've got skills. Let me show you your resume. I mean, he actually could have legitimately pointed to what Stephen actually mentions: He grew up and was educated in Egypt. He actually has, by God's sovereignty, some very practical basis for self-confidence. That's not insignificant. God planned that all along. And God gives you gifts and He gives you abilities and experiences that equip you too. But if that ever becomes the bottom line for you, the basis of your effectiveness for God, you're missing the whole point. And Moses is missing the whole point. So he asked the wrong question, who am I? So God graciously ignores his question, and does *not* say, ah, come on, Moses, feel good about yourself. You're special.

I may be stepping on toes or glass slippers, but I stay away from this princess stuff because I want my girls to feel special, but not more special than any other human made in the image of God, quite frankly. And so I want us to back up and say, God doesn't say, come on, Moses, take this gifts-assessment survey and you'll see how gifted you are for this. And again, you may have gifts God wants to use, but are they the bottom line for you? He doesn't say, here, take this personality inventory and you'll see you're a JEDPI, which is a perfect personality type to take on Pharaoh, because I've seen his personality inventory results and you're an excellent combination. He certainly doesn't say, you're Sagittarius, which is great for this job. He doesn't go any place like that. Where does He go? An entirely different question.

Moses says, who am I? What does God say? Verse 12:

"I will be with you..."

Oh. Different answer to a different question. And this divine abiding presence,

"...shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

Moses still doesn't buy it.

"Then Moses said to God, if I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?'" –

That's not an ask for letters and a word. That's a way of saying, who is He? Tell me of His character and whether or not He's *worthy* of this kind of radical, risking trust. Who is this God? Is he worthy of our faith?

"What shall I say to them? God said to Moses, 'I am who I am.'"

In Hebrew, Ehyeh asher Ehyeh. Linked to the first thing he says, "I will be with you," ehyeh, He's now building on that same idea and says, "I will be with you. And I am who I am." And He said:

"Say this to the people of Israel, 'I am,'" -- Ehyeh – "'has sent me to you.' God also said to Moses, 'Say this to the people of Israel, Yahweh.'"

He just turned the verb "to be" into a proper noun and name for Himself that becomes His name forever. He's emphasizing *presence* and *existence*. The most simple thing He could say about Himself and at the same time, the most profound thing He could say about Himself, because that's what Moses needs to know more than anything else. And it's what you need to know more than anything else, the essence of this one true God. And he says, "Tell them Yahweh, that's who I am."

"Tell them, 'Yahweh has sent me. Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob has sent me to you.' This is my name forever. And thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob appeared to me saying, I've observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt.'"

He is saying, Moses, you need to know who I am. Realize this M.O. of God. Moses is consumed with knowing who he is and whether he's able to do this, and God keeps taking his chin and saying, wrong direction. And Moses keeps going like

this, and God says, nope. Is it because He doesn't care about Moses? No. Is it because He didn't make Moses exactly who He wanted him to be? No, because Moses' gaze needs to be fixed on God.

And you need to examine your heart and see who you are and think about how God has gifted you and the experiences He's given you, yes, but not as the bottom line, ever. And so for every one look at yourself, take ten looks at God and who He is. We tend to have that reversed.

And so He says, I'm the great I Am. That's what you need to know about me more than anything else. Now what's He up to here? What's He trying to say? I think at least five things are going on. He's saying, Moses, unlike those gods in Egypt who people invented, I really exist. And I exist all by myself. Like this passage says up here. I am Yahweh, I'm *self-existent*. And Matthew Henry said, "The greatest and best man in the world must say with Paul, by the grace of God, I am what I am. But God alone can say I Am that I Am." God alone exists all by himself. Everything else owes its existence to God. And God is separating Himself not just from the gods in Egypt, but all of creation. That's why any religious way of thinking that makes God no different than the creation -- Eastern Religions -- is invading our culture in this way. And God is in the trees and I guess there's truth to that because He's revealing His glory in those trees He's made. But we take that to the point where He is not the great God who made everything and everything owes its existence to God.

And so He's the Great I Am, which means He exists all by Himself. And I think it means also He keeps existing by Himself. He's not just self-existent, He's *self-sufficient*. He is sufficient in Himself. He has no unmet needs. None. He doesn't depend on us or the rest of creation for anything. And that, please realize, is what enables Him to show the grace that He shows us with the kind of freedom He does. He is *never* seeking to meet His needs when He does *anything*. You want to talk about a way He's different than we are. He has no unmet needs. He's never motivated to get His needs met. Oh, yes, to glorify Himself because He loves His creation that He created to declare His glory, and He wants our best which is to see His glory, and declare it with Him too and reveal it with our lives. But He doesn't need *anything*. So He's able to freely love and show grace the way He does.

It also means that He is the God who is *eternal*. He's always been this way. All these things overlap and add up to who God is. He's eternal. He's always existed, always will. He's in no way ever bound by time. And this leads us to this conclusion: He's *immutable*. He's unchanging. He never changes in who He is, or what He's going to do, or what He's told us He's going to do. He can be trusted. That's why He's faithful, because he's able to be because of who He is. And God is saying to Moses, you need to get grounded in who I am, in my character. You spend your whole life trying to get to know me better. That's what really matters. And again, it doesn't mean practical skills and wisdom and all those things don't get used by God, but the bottom line is, they're used *by God*. Or not. They're never the bottom line. And so He wants Moses to know who He is. And please realize here, that as we watch Jesus subtly and wisely teach, He is showing us over and over again that *He* possesses all of these same attributes. Probably the most stunning thing He ever said in His earthly ministry is in John 8:58 -- oh, and unchangeable, yes. See what He says in Malachi 3. Let me just back up.

"I, Yahweh, do not change, so you descendants of Jacob are not destroyed."

See He doesn't change because of their unfaithfulness and wipe them out. He stays true to His Covenant because the bottom line is it's not their faithfulness, but His.

And so he's unchangeable. And realize Jesus says this in John 8:58:

"Before Abraham was born, I am."

What did He just do? He reached all the way back to the burning bush, Exodus 3, that they all knew. And He took that sacred, divine name that becomes the name of God, Yahweh, this Great I Am, and it's used of God almost 7000 times in the Old Testament. The next closest is Elohim, that's 2800 times. It's not even used 3000 times. This is the sacred name, the Great I Am, the self-existent, self-sufficient, eternal, unchanging God. And Jesus says, that's who I am. I'm equal with the Father and these divine qualities. No wonder -- because they didn't believe that was true -- they picked up stones to throw at Him. That's the height of blasphemy to use the divine name, the Great I Am, about yourself, and at the same time affirm that you're eternal. Abraham was looking for me. I was before him. I Am. He claims that divine name for Himself. And that's why Jesus becomes for us, as Christians, *the* revelation of God. He doesn't just get us to God. He *is* God. And so Jesus becomes this great source of revelation and reconciliation, because He doesn't just come pointing us to God, but he makes a way and He is the Way. Because He's the Great I Am too.

So God is majestic and humble. But I don't want you to miss what God continually, so intentionally keeps reiterating the whole time He says He's the Great I Am. Did you notice as we read through that what He repeats over and over again? Did you hear the refrain when He describes Himself regarding who He is, what He keeps saying? Did you notice? What is it? What is it? Throughout this whole revelation, there's one thing He keeps saying over and over again more than anything else. It starts in verse 6. Do you see it? Talk to me. (Congregation dialogue) Yeah, I'm the God of your

fathers. I know them by name. Moses didn't forget their names, but God wanted to make sure Moses knew He knew their names, and He knew them *by* name. And He knows Moses *by* name. Moses will actually say that later. Okay, you know me by name, but are you going to go with us? Later on he says this.

So He knows them by name. He's the God who knows Moses by name and his father and his grandfather and *his* grandfather, and He *knows* them. What kind of language is this in the Bible? What do you call this kind of language? It's something God establishes. Talk to me. What's that? (Congregation dialogue) Yes! Who said that? Yes, Deb, yes. Biola educations are worth something. Yes, yes. It's *covenant* language. God in the midst of saying I'm the great eternal, Great I Am, is saying, and I'm also the God who's always been here. Not just passively disinterested, but actively pursuing and establishing a covenant of intimate, personal relationship that's so intimate and personal I compare it with a marriage and call myself the husband of my people.

So in the midst of God's greatness, majesty, let's not miss that He is so present with us and actively working for us all the time. He's the God of our fathers, the God of the Covenant, the God who stays true to His Covenant. God is not just majestic, he's wonderfully present and with us. And this Covenant – look for it. Look for it as it develops and expands and gets reiterated and reestablished throughout the whole Bible. And watch Jesus become the great fulfillment of this Covenant we see being worked out, starting with Moses. And actually we're starting with Adam and Eve and then we see it reestablished with Noah, and then we start the nation with Abraham literally, and then we see it reestablished and recommitted in Joseph and in all the patriarchs. All the fathers get this reiteration and this reestablishing, because they're so fickle and forgetful they need to know it over and over again. And it keeps expanding and deepening until it's ultimately fulfilled in Jesus. So go looking for the Covenant as we read through the Bible now.

Genesis 17, God says:

"I will establish my Covenant, an everlasting Covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants."

That's what He's doing. This God of profound relationship and *that's* why He's saving because He's true to His Covenant, not because they so deserved to be brought out, but because He's so faithful. Exodus 2, the Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God.

"And God heard their groaning" – and listen – "and He remembered His Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob."

So God looked upon the Israelites and was concerned about them. And what we're finding here is that this God is able to do whatever He determines He will do. And He really *cares*. You need *both* of those. God is able. God really cares. He's really compassionate. Never doubt any of those things about God. This is unique to the God of the Bible. This is unique to the God of the Christian faith, because He is the Great I Am. Jesus is, as the son. And what do we find out? That not only in the covenant does God enter into time and space and relationship with His people with intimacy, in Christ almighty, eternal, infinite God enters into what? Talk to me. (Congregation dialogue) A baby. Enters into humanity itself. And relates and sympathizes and represents as much as He possibly can. And as much as we needed Him to.

And so this Jesus is the literal and spiritual embodiment of this Great I Am who is present with His people, to save and redeem and restore. That's why Jesus says:

"I will be with you always, even to the end of the age."

And why He says:

"I will never leave you or forsake you."

And oh, friends, I know so many of you are in the wilderness, feeling in the prison, in the oppression and in the bondage, and the seeming silence of God in your life. But it's at *those* points that we need to rest in the Great I am, who is also the God who is our Father and the Husband of His people. That's our confidence. That's why we need to do what God is getting Moses to do, polarize off ourselves, and gaze on the greatness of the glory of God. And that's what we desperately need more than anything else and what we need to be getting out of the scriptures this year, more than anything else. To see God for who He is so we can see Him in Christ, and have the kind of rest and security and peace in Him.

Oh, I know many of you feel like your life is even harder than being in an Egyptian bondage, maybe in eternal conflict and pain, maybe relational, family pain, maybe financial difficulties, maybe dashed dreams and hopes, maybe rebellious children who show no appreciation for the years and the tears and the prayers. But God is with us like He was with Joseph in prison. And with His people. And He hears their cries. And He's the God -- as you have all said -- who is with us and cares and is more than able to save in His time.

Father, help us, help us to see you as you are. Help us to behold your glory and base everything there. Forgive us for how so often we're distracted and pulled away from you and inclined to focus on ourselves and just our

circumstances. But please, Lord, help us to be increasingly focused on you and your glory and dependent on you and the advancement of your glory, which we can be sure of. And use us in that, we pray, in Jesus name, amen.