



Unit .04

Session .04

God Hears His People

Scripture



Exodus 3:2-15; 4:1-5

2 Then the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire within a bush. As Moses looked, he saw that the bush was on fire but was not consumed. **3** So Moses thought, “I must go over and look at this remarkable sight. Why isn’t the bush burning up?” **4** When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called out to him from the bush, “Moses, Moses!” “Here I am,” he answered. **5** “Do not come closer,” he said. “Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” **6** Then he continued, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God. **7** Then the LORD said, “I have observed the misery of my people in Egypt, and have heard them crying out because of their oppressors. I know about their sufferings, **8** and I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them from that land to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the territory of the Canaanites, Hethites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. **9** So because the Israelites’ cry for help has come to me, and I have also seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them, **10** therefore, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh so that you may lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.” **11** But Moses asked God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” **12** He answered, “I

will certainly be with you, and this will be the sign to you that I am the one who sent you: when you bring the people out of Egypt, you will all worship God at this mountain.” **13** Then Moses asked God, “If I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what should I tell them?” **14** God replied to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you.” **15** God also said to Moses, “Say this to the Israelites: The LORD, 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; this is how I am to be remembered in every generation. ... **1** Moses answered, “What if they won’t believe me and will not obey me but say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you?’” **2** The LORD asked him, “What is that in your hand?”

“A staff,” he replied. **3** “Throw it on the ground,” he said. So Moses threw it on the ground, it became a snake, and he ran from it. **4** The LORD told Moses, “Stretch out your hand and grab it by the tail.” So he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand. **5** “This will take place,” he continued, “so that they will believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.”

Do you ever have trouble believing God hears you when you pray? Why?



99 Essential Doctrines

List at least two things we learn about God's character from His speech to Moses.

God is Transcendent

God's transcendence refers to the fact that He is distinct from and independent of His created world. He is transcendent over us in regards to His greatness and power as well as His goodness and purity. The implication of this doctrine is that God is inherently superior to humanity; His thoughts and ways are higher than ours (Isa. 55:8-9). When God saves us, He restores us so we can fulfill our human purpose; this does not mean that we become God or that distinctions between God and humanity are obliterated. Understanding God's transcendence evokes awe and wonder at His goodness and power.

Main Point

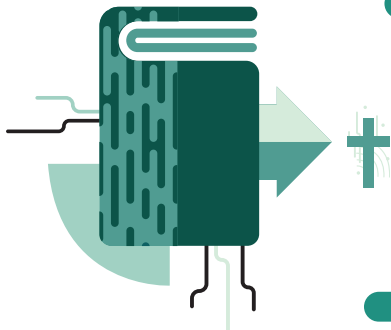
God sees and responds to the oppressed and suffering.

Which of these characteristics of God have you witnessed in your own life recently?

In groups of two or three, identify at least two other examples of God drawing near to His people in Scripture.

Why do you think it is important that God displays both characteristics? How does His transcendence and immanence offer you hope and comfort today?

How have you seen God's power manifested after taking a step in faith and obedience?



Christ Connection

God told Moses His name “I AM” as a revelation of His transcendent self-existence. Jesus is the eternal Son of God, the great “I AM,” who came to us to save us from sin.



Head

How does it comfort you to know God sees every sin committed against you? How does it challenge you to know God sees every sin you have committed against someone else?

How does it encourage you to know God hears the cries of the oppressed? How can we make sure we pay attention to injustice and oppression in our world so God can work through us?



Heart

What are some ways we can increase our sense of reverence for God?

What is the difference between being “terrified” by God and being “awed” by God?

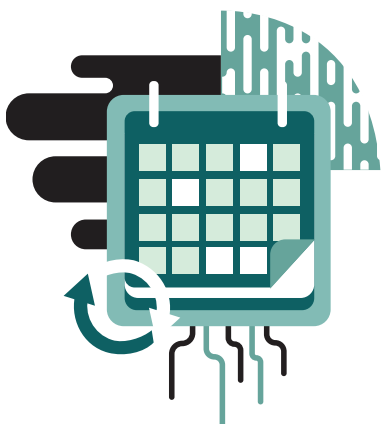


Hands

What are some areas where you feel unqualified or unable to do what God has called you to do?

What fears prevent you from speaking on God’s behalf? How can faith in God’s promised redemption help you overcome these excuses?

Daily Devotions



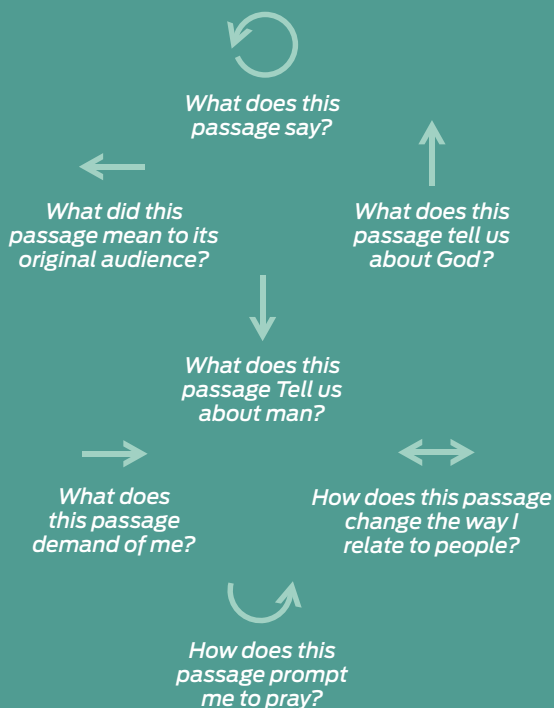
Day 1

Exodus 1:1-22

The disobedience of the midwives presents a fascinating and important ethical issue for believers. Were Shiphrah and Puah right to disobey Pharaoh's edict? If so, why? We know from this passage and others—Daniel's refusal to not pray (Dan. 6:10) and Peter and John's refusal to not abstain from preaching the gospel (Acts 4:19-20)—that we are to follow the laws of our nations unless those laws expressly violate God's law.

While this is important for us to know—and there may be times when we must put this principle into practice—for most of us it is more academic. Few of us will ever be in a situation where a law of the land is in direct conflict with God's law. But that does not mean this principle isn't relevant and helpful for us. It's relevant for a larger reason. Notice why the midwives knew what to do in this situation: They feared God. The same was true with Daniel, Peter, and John. The fear of the Lord is what gave them the wisdom to navigate what can be an ethical dilemma and follow God, even if it put their lives at risk.

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



What ways have you disobeyed God, been slow to obey, or obeyed with the wrong heart? Confess these to God and ask Him to help you fear Him.

Exodus 2:1-25

As you read through Exodus 1, you might get the impression that God was, well, absent. The God who was so involved in orchestrating Jacob's family coming to Egypt seemed awfully quiet, four hundred years later. Jacob's family was small, but powerful as Genesis concluded; then they became large and powerless. The Pharaoh of Genesis was kind to Jacob's family, but the new Pharaoh didn't even know of them.

But then, we read of a mother who placed her baby along the bank of the Nile out of desperation (Ex. 2). What happened after that could only be explained by God's hand. The baby was discovered by Pharaoh's own daughter who had compassion on him. If that isn't amazing enough, Pharaoh's daughter agreed to have Moses' mother nurse him until he was weaned (when he was about 3 or 4 years old). With this account opening Exodus 2, ideas of God being distant or disinterested in Exodus 1 fall apart. God may *seem* quiet at times, but He never *is* quiet. God was at work behind the scenes in Exodus, just as He is at work in our lives today—whether we see it or not.

What area of your life do you need to trust that God is working in and through?

Exodus 3:1-10

The burning bush worked; Moses was drawn to it, just as God intended. He had to go closer to see why it wasn't being burned up. This was exactly what God was guiding Moses to do. But there was another part of the equation. As Moses approached, God stopped him and told him to take off his shoes because he stood on Holy Ground. This is a picture of God's immanence and transcendence intertwined. God draws us to Himself because He is a personal God who wants us to be in relationship with Him. At the same time, He is holy and set apart from His fallen creation, including the rebellious people He loves. This is why Moses could come closer to God—even still in sin—but not too close.

This is what God does. He makes holy what He possesses. We see it here with a patch of ground. We will see it later with the tabernacle, namely the Holy of Holies. We also see it in our lives. As Christians, we are a holy nation (1 Pet. 2:9). Because of God's presence in us, we become holy at the moment of our salvation. Only through the ongoing work of God in us and through us can we live holy lives as an accurate representation of our new, true identities in Christ.

Why is it important to remember that God makes you holy and you cannot be holy on your own?

Exodus

3:11-22

We can't blame Moses for asking the first question he asked God, "Who am I to do this?" It's a question saturated with humility, so in many ways, a fitting question to ask God. But as you read God's response to this question, notice that God didn't answer it, at least not directly. God told Moses He would be with Moses and He gave Moses a sign of His authority. But within this apparent non-answer was the answer Moses needed.

God placed the emphasis on himself. So, God redirected Moses to the One he should have been focused on: God. In essence, God was saying, "Moses, you missed it. It's not about you. It's not about what you can do or might do. It's about Me. It's about what I can do and what I will do." That is what Moses needed to understand in this call, and it is what we need to understand as well. Christians' service to our King is not based on who we are. It's not based on how smart we are, how dedicated we are, or how talented we are. Sure, God has given us all those gifts to be used by Him—but that's the point. God is the primary actor, not us.

What are some ways you tend to rely on yourself instead of God?

Exodus

4:1-31

God had been so patient with Moses. But at some point questions and concerns give way to excuses. "Who am I?" was answered. "Who are You?" was answered. "What if they don't believe me?" was answered. "I can't speak well" was addressed. Then, Moses crossed the line. "Please, Lord, send someone else." He addressed God with a term of submission in "Lord," but his heart was far from submissive. He was out of questions, out of concerns. Now he put it on the table: He just didn't want to obey.

So God's anger burned against Moses. When we read this at the beginning of verse 14, we might be tempted to see God in the Old Testament as a temperamental, volatile God. But that notion is quickly put to rest in the latter part of the same verse. Even in God's anger, He continued to be patient and kind with Moses. He provided Aaron, who was already on his way to Moses, showing God's sovereignty and goodness.

What sincere questions might you be holding back from God? What excuses might you be offering Him?