



Exodus (Part 5) – Sojourner

Matt Chandler – September 18, 2016

[Video]

Female: From darkness to light, this is the story we all share as the people of God. He draws us out to draw us in. From the birth of Israel to the church today, God delivers and dwells with his people. He draws us out of our sin, our Egypt, and draws us into his presence, into relationship with him.

[End of video]

Well, if you have your Bibles, go ahead and grab those. We're going to be back in Exodus 2. We're going to look at verses 11-22 in our time together today. Then next week is Family Worship Weekend, so across all of our campuses we'll just look at two little verses next weekend. God sees; God hears. That will be what we talk about. After that, we're going to get moving.

The week after that is chapter 3. The week after that is chapter 4. Still 11 months in Exodus, but the pace will quicken. If you've been a little anxious, "We're in week five, and you're still in chapter 2, so I'm a little bit anxious. Is this years? Is this the gospel of Luke all over again?" I just want to allow you to breathe out and rest that the pace will quicken here shortly.

Last night, I came into the sanctuary before the 5:00 service to say hello to some people I know. Then I talked to one of our members who has been here a long time. I just said, "Hey, man. How are you?" He said, "I had heart surgery yesterday." I went, "What?" He said, "Yeah, I had heart surgery yesterday." It's like, "Well, what was wrong with your heart?" "Oh, I just had some blockage in an artery, so I had heart surgery yesterday."

Now, this makes me marvel at human ingenuity. This dude had heart surgery. Here is what humankind has thought up. You can take a wire, and you can run it up his artery to the exact spot that he has blockage, inflate a little balloon, and remove that blockage. Then they had the wrong

size balloon, so they had to pull it out and put in the right size balloon and then go back in. That took 17 minutes. Then he was here worshipping, and he's an active worshipper. Do you follow me?

If you have a lot of Baptist background, you're not what I'm talking about. If active worship for you is that you did this with your hands down here and felt uncomfortable about it, you're not... He sweats a little bit. He was just getting after the Lord. He had heart surgery Friday and is bouncing up and down and worshipping on Saturday. That's unbelievable.

Mankind... We've figured out how to build machines where we can fly. Have you ever thought about that? We fly in planes. That's incredible. Some of those planes go faster than the speed of sound. One or two of those goes into outer space. Then we could just talk at length about what certain technologies have done.

Right now, you can pick up your phone, and you can press a button on your phone, and your face and your voice can be on the other side of the world in perfect sync, having a conversation with someone who is a 30-hour plane ride away. That's incredible. Do you know who did that? Mankind did that. Humankind did that.

There is this scene in the Tom Hanks movie *Apollo 13*. I'm probably dating myself now. Some of you have probably seen it. Some of you haven't. He's out in the backyard, and he's looking up at the moon. They just had a party at his house, and everybody has left. His wife comes and sits by him, and he has the moon in his sight with his thumb, and he's kind of doing that.

He says, "You know the secret to us landing on the moon?" She was like, "What is that?" He's brilliant. She's thinking it's going to be this complex answer, and here's what he said. "We just decided to go." You know how we got to the moon? We just decided we were going to go. I won't take anything away from it. It really is a marvelous, beautiful thing what humankind has been able to do.

You think about skyscrapers. You think about the diseases we've been able to cure. You think about the advances in all areas of life, specifically in the Western world, because a lot of those advances are not in other parts of the world but the life you and I in our context enjoy. It's air conditioned. It's fast. It's pretty easy. By the world's measure, all of us live in luxury. By the world's standards... Maybe not by our context's standards, but by our world's standards, all of us live in luxury.

It's a stunning thing what human ingenuity, will, and creativity has been able to accomplish. Yet, underneath all of that, there's a bit of a dark secret. What I mean by that is because of the pace of ingenuity, we become numb to the fact that our souls are still so restless. There is a kind of humming in the deeper parts of our existence that all of that ingenuity has done nothing to solve.

I think the easiest place to see this right now... I think at different points in human history, there's another thing that really reveals the depth and scope of what is going on in the human soul and the human condition. Right now, I think the most clear place to see this is our cell phones. Again, I'm not anti-phone. I have one. I'm preaching from an iPad, so I'm not anti-technology. You saw a bumper video. We're streaming this on camera. I'm not anti-technology, but here's what we're learning sociologically.

In every study about the phone, despite the fact that we have more ways to be connected than we have ever had in the history of planet earth, we're more anxious, we're more nervous, we're more depressed, and we feel more alone than we ever have. There is this great ingenuity, there is this great tool for connectivity, for depth, to learn things we would never have been able to learn years ago, decades ago, yet in that ingenuity... With the iOS update 10 and, "Oh my gosh, heartbreak." With all of that, it numbs the fact that it's not working.

It blinds us to the fact that the progress we're seeing (and there is progress) has done nothing to change the human condition that makes a wreck of all of the progress. We live in a strange day in which there is a rally cry to end sex trafficking, but everybody thinks pornography is okay. Do you see the disjoint in that? Can we not see that one fuels and feeds the other in ways that are heartbreaking?

We say we have to end sex trafficking, we have to end the sex trade, yet pornography is accessible on all of our devices and is almost not embarrassing anymore. This is what happens. Ingenuity moves on, but the human soul is stuck and broken, and ingenuity is a good thing, but it numbs us from seeing, "Hey, something is not right here."

Jesus puts his finger on this in the first century. The disciples have grown up in a culture where the way to be right before God was tied to the law. If you obeyed the law and did everything that was right in the law, then you were considered right and you were considered in. God delighted in you and loved you and was for you because you were obedient to the law of the Lord.

Jesus comes, and he turns that on its head. He starts to say, "Your righteousness has to supersede that of the Pharisees," in Matthew 5, which is a radical statement because no one was more righteous than the Pharisees. They tithed on mint and dill. They were tithing out of their cupboard. The disciples get a little jostled by this new vision of what it means to be right with God, so they say in Matthew 19:25-26...

"When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, 'Who then can be saved?' Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'" That sentence right there encapsulates the issue with the human heart where ingenuity has been unable to touch it and transform it. With man, this will be impossible.

For all of our creativity, for all of our, "We just decided to go," for all of our willpower, and for all of our creativity, mankind will not be able to solve the problem of mankind, because mankind is the problem. We can smear it, but we can't clean it up. We're going to see quite a bit of that in today's text. I want to show you in the text how gifted Moses is, and then I want to show you that his giftedness is not going to be enough. Let's look at this, Exodus 2. We're going to pick it up in verse 11.

"One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand." He murdered him.

"When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together.

And he said to the man in the wrong, 'Why do you strike your companion?' He answered, 'Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?' Then Moses was afraid, and thought, 'Surely the thing is known.' When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.

Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and saved them, and watered their flock. When they came home to their father Reuel, he said, 'How is it that you have come home so soon today?'

They said, 'An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and even drew water for us and watered the flock.' He said to his daughters, 'Then where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread.' And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah. She gave birth to a son, and he called his name Gershom, for he said, 'I have been a sojourner [alien] in a foreign land.'"

Now, I want to highlight some things about Moses, the man out of this text. The first thing we know about Moses from the Scriptures is that Moses is mighty in word and deed. Here's how we know this. We know that when he goes out to look upon his people, the Hebrews, he's around 40 years old. We know that because the Bible tells us he's 40 years old in the book of Acts. Stephen, in his sermon, says this about Moses in Acts 7:22. "**And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.**"

Here's what we know. Moses is 40 years old at this point, and he has spent 40 years, according to the Bible, being instructed in all the wisdom of Egypt. He is a cultural elite in Egypt, of Pharaoh's household. There is no manner of education that he has not been coached on, trained in, and taught, and he has become mighty in word and deed. He is persuasive and can back it up. He is persuasive, and he can back it up.

He is of a ruling, elite class, highly educated in all the wisdom of Egypt. He's not specialized; he's generalized. He knows a lot about a lot. Most of us know a lot about something, but Moses knows a lot about a lot, and he is mighty in word and in deed. Whatever he says, he can back up. That's not the only thing we see about Moses. We also see in this text in particular that Moses is extremely courageous and compassionate. Let me highlight that for you.

One of the things we know from those who study really ancient history, ancient Near East history in particular, is that the Egyptians had a way of educating where very early on, they wanted to, in a very profound way, shape their ruling elite to consider people of the working class, and especially slaves, as being subhuman. Education and learning and non-calloused hands meant that you were far more human than workers.

Even in some ancient texts, slaves were considered like donkeys. It was said in many educational texts that have been found, not by Christians but by those who were studying ancient Egypt, that they were training their elite to consider their slaves as the living dead. I know you fans of *The*

Walking Dead are a little geeked up about that. They're living dead. They don't matter. You can do whatever you want to them. They don't have souls. They're like donkeys.

If Moses had been educated in all the wisdom of Egypt, he had sat under this teaching. This empire had tried to shape him as an elite by teaching him that his people were subhuman. Certainly, if you have been here for our first four weeks, this has been backed up with violence. This has been backed up with action. This has been backed up with rape. This has been backed up with... You name it. This is an oppressive empire that doesn't flinch at violence toward people.

Moses grew up not just hearing this as rhetoric but seeing it play out in front of him. With that said, how are we considering Moses to be courageous? In acting to defend this Hebrew, Moses challenged the basic foundations...social, political, and religious...of Egyptian culture. In the house of Pharaoh, he embarrasses Pharaoh by siding with the Hebrews.

Their whole educational system is, "These people are less than human. These people are like donkeys. They're living dead. They don't have souls." He rejects that and walks out of the palace and looks upon his people and challenges the edicts of an empire. That's courage. Here's what I know about us. We think that if we were in that place, we would have done the same thing. Don't we?

We think if we had the choice between power, comfort, position, fame, or righteousness, that we would be quick to go, "Forget all of that. Give me righteousness." I have some doubts about me. I'm glad you're confident about you. Here's what I think I would do. I might be able to use that position, power, and influence for their good. Here I am. I'm in Pharaoh's household. I have political clout. I am powerful in word and deed. I am persuasive. I am learned. I am of royal lineage.

Why don't I work for the Hebrews inside the system? Why don't I subversively... I just know me. I think that's where I would go. I don't think I would turn my back on all of that because here's what Hebrews says about Moses. Hebrews 11:24-25 says, "**By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.**" He chose to be mistreated.

He didn't stay in the machine for the good of the Hebrews. He turned his back on wealth, power, influence, comfort, you name it, and chose to be mistreated. Look at me. I just don't think any of us should be really confident that we know what we would choose in this moment. Yet Moses chooses

this. He's unbelievably courageous, and that courage is built on and birthed out of a supernatural compassion that I think he gets from his mother, his sister, and his stepmom, Pharaoh's daughter.

The reason I would say that is Moses' mom cannot bring herself to put Moses in the Nile, so she puts him in the basket. His sister can't just let it go, so she follows down, and his stepmom will not destroy this Hebrew child. In hearing his tears, her heart was melted. This empathy and compassion that Moses has I think came from his mother, his sister, and his stepmother. The Lord was weaving, by nature and nurture, compassion into the heart of Moses.

I think if you know Hebrew, Greek, those kinds of things, it certainly comes out in the Hebrew version of this word, watching over. It's translated as "looked on their labor," but the verb there is a verb that means "to watch" or "to look and see," but it doesn't simply mean "to look and see" but "to see with emotion."

It's also used in the text... If you're in the Genesis study, then they're not there yet, but they're going to get to this place where Hagar is thinking her son is going to die, and it's the same Hebrew word, that she looked on him for fearing he would die. It's to look with great compassion. It's to look and be moved by.

Moses, unbelievably courageous, filled with compassion, mighty in word and deed, rejects the palace and goes out to his people. Did you see while we were reading the first part of this text that within two verses, in two different situations, he identified with the Hebrews, not the Egyptians? Look back at your text, and let me show you this in verse 11.

"One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people." Although he has been educated in Egypt, he has been brought up in Pharaoh's household, he identifies, his heart is with, the Hebrews. His heart is with these people. He's willing to be mistreated to be with them than to enjoy the benefits of Egyptian life.

Can we just... Moses is a stellar man here. This is an incredible human being. God is in the background, right? God hasn't come to Moses and said anything yet. God hasn't said a word. Everything we've watched God do to this point is in the background, moving pieces around. God has not said anything to Moses. He has not come to Moses in any dream.

Yet Moses, in all of his learning, in all of his courage, in all of his compassion, begins to take on the, "I'm going to help my people," role. He takes matters into his own hands and launches the dumbest attempt at freeing people in the history of the world. The Bible says he goes out, and he's watching the people, and he sees a taskmaster. Not somebody in an elevated position even in Egyptian life. This Egyptian himself would have been working class.

In Moses's education, this guy would barely be human. He's certainly not an elite. This guy has callouses on his hands from bearing the whip, and he's beating a Hebrew. Moses, as we'll see throughout the book of Exodus, has a bit of a temper issue. It's going to get him in trouble repeatedly. In fact, it's ultimately going to cost him the Promised Land, but more on that in like April. You'll see his anger burn a couple of more times, but you'll see him lose out on the Promised Land in April, which is kind of a spoiler alert if you don't know the book.

Here you have Moses, who sees this, and he sees this injustice, and his blood boils. Here's his big plan: to kill this guy. What in the world is that going to accomplish? Not only does he murder this man, but he knows he shouldn't murder this man. Do you know how we know that? Because he looks around to see if anybody is watching. You don't look around to see if anybody is watching right before you do something really good.

The text clearly says that he sees this, that he is incensed and enraged, so he looks around, and when he doesn't see anyone, he kills the Egyptian and then buries him in the sand. Now, what does this taking matters into your own hands accomplish? Not only now is he fully severed from Pharaoh's household. Now, he has even antagonized and incited the Hebrews.

The very next day, he goes out, and he sees two Hebrews fighting, Hebrew-on-Hebrew crime. He says, "Why would you strike your brother? Why would you do that?" What was the Hebrew's response? "Who has made you prince and judge over us?" Do you know the answer to that question? No one had. Moses had made himself.

You're like, "Well, in retrospect..." We're not in retrospect. Don't jump ahead. We're in this moment. We can say, "Well, God is going to make him," but God hasn't made him yet. Now, he has positioned him, but we'll see all of that positioning melt as Moses tries to be God rather than trusting God. The Hebrew himself says, "You're no prince over us. You're no leader over us."

Moses really was a man with no home. He wasn't fully accepted in Egyptian life, and he certainly wasn't accepted by the Hebrews. Seeing himself as a kind of functional Savior, he murders an Egyptian, tries to break up a fight among Hebrews. This murder becomes known, and Pharaoh, who had to have been (conjecture) looking for a reason to get rid of this problem, now has what he wants, and he seeks out Moses to put him to death.

Here's what I think we see happening in this text that I think we need to consider. We need to consider this idea of taking matters into our own hands. In May, I preached a sermon (I don't know how many of you were here) on the sin underneath the sin, on what are called *source idols*. You have idolatry. "I have a football idolatry. I have a food idolatry. I have a whatever idolatry." Really all of those are kind of lesser idolatries attached to what we would call source idols.

There are four primary source idols. There is comfort, there is control, there is power, and there is approval. Those are the four source idols, those deep things in our guts that mold and shape, and if I were a betting man going into that weekend, I would have been all I had (a few hundred dollars) on the men and women of The Village Church primarily suffering with a comfort idol.

I have data that would back up that bet. I'm not the kind of man who bets without research. I don't bet, all right. I'm just making a point here. I would have said comfort all the way. Here's why. First, we're a church primarily in the suburbs. What are the suburbs but an attempt at utopia? I don't have to get out of my car hardly at all. Drive-through cleaners, drive-through restaurants.

The whole idea of the suburbs is sprawl, space, your own plot of land. Right? Then I think about the nature of The Village herself. The Village Church, on a given weekend, is going to have 10,000 or 12,000 people. That's us. Of those people, a whole bunch of them, the extent of their life with The Village is they attend on the weekends when they can, when there's not a soccer game or a baseball game, or the Cowboys don't kick at noon. Whenever everything lines up perfectly, they're there. That's a few thousand people.

Then the next circle in from that are those who come consistently on the weekend and have fought to find a Home Group. I use the word *fought* because finding a Home Group (I say this every time) is like finding a spouse. You're going to go on a couple of dates, and within 15 minutes of that date, you're going to be like, "Yeah, no. No, I'm not... Love you. God bless you. This just isn't... I'm not feeling it." Right?

Then there are some that you kind of date for a while, their crazy shows, and then you're like, "I'm out." Then finally you find a group of people who know you and love you and walk with you. Now, of this 10,000 or 12,000 people inside that first circle of just attending when they can, you have those people who attend often and are also plugged into group life at The Village.

Then finally, you have the inner circle of maybe 3,000 or 3,500 people, and those people attend almost every weekend, have found a Home Group they love, and they have also found a place they can serve. For them, The Village Church truly is the household of faith. They are known. If they're not here for a couple of weeks, people wonder. "Hey, they're not here. I wonder what is going on. Let's reach out. Hey, is everything okay? I noticed I haven't seen you. Oh, you've been out of town with work. Okay, I totally get that. We're praying for you. Anything we can do while you're in this season of life that is so crazy?"

For them, The Village Church is small, which is crazy to think about 3,500 people thinking the church is small. Yet, for those who are at that level of involvement, this truly is the household of faith. "This is the place I belong. This is the place where I serve the Lord and serve the saints." They take seriously the one-anothers of Scripture that would command them to serve and come alongside our brothers.

This means that outside of that 3,500, you have a lot of consumers who depend on that 3,500 to believe what they believe theologically so that the church actually works and happens. I know that about us. I know that, so I would have bet comfort. Literally, all of my chips would have been on comfort, and I would have lost every penny, because comfort wasn't even in the top two. Comfort was actually three.

The first *by far* was control, the second was power, and then, finally, was comfort. I would have lost the spread too, not just straight up. Let's just talk for a moment about this idea of control and taking matters into our own hands. I'm growing more and more and more confident as I get older that I can just boldly and not worry about the arguments around it say that you live life one of two ways. You trust God or you're trying to be him. There is no middle ground for you.

The second you try to move over into middle ground you've assumed he throne of God. If you're the kind of person who says, "I believe in Jesus. I believe in God, but I just don't believe everything. I don't think I have to submit fully. I think I'm smarter than God in some areas," what have you done

except ascended the throne? To say, "I will take what I want and reject what I don't," is to pretend that you are God.

Everyone in this room either trusts God or is trying to be God. When we talk about control and specifically control idols, we're talking about taking matters into our own hands. Now, if you have a control idol, here's what you want. You want self-discipline. You have standards, and you demand certainty. You have to have certainty. Your greatest nightmare is uncertainty, and the people around you most often feel condemned by you because they can never be good enough for your standards.

You have to control. You're going to control and manipulate and manage everything in your world, so how can anyone ever feel anything but condemned by you? Your greatest nightmare is uncertainty. Now, when this happens... Let me mark your life. That uncertainty plays out in one of two ways. I leaked this a little bit last week. People who struggle with control and power are going to really wrestle with anxiety or anger.

There is not another place for them to go with their control. Here's what I mean when I say anxiety or anger. You can't control. You just can't. You can't really control anything, but that will not stop you in your anxiety for trying all the more to control. The more you feel like you can't control, the more you seek to control. The more you feel like you have no power, the more you try to flex your power. When you do that and begin to realize that you are not God, you will grow more weary, you will grow more paralyzed with anxiety, or you will grow more angry.

See, that little exercise that we did back in May gave me a tremendous amount of insight into what is going on in our area. When I'm writing sermons and praying and preparing to preach, I don't care at all who is going to listen to this on podcast or vodcast and those things. I am consumed in heart with you and this area and what is going on here. If you want to know what really is behind the veil in this part of the world, ask police officers in this area the calls they respond to.

Do you know the number one? Domestic. The number one issue our cops are dealing with is men bullying and overpowering their wives because they're angry at...what? Their lack of control and what appears to be a lack of power, so they intimidate and they bully and they overpower and, eventually, they abuse. Why? Because we're all escalating sinners.

What happens when they just don't do what you say? You have to escalate. How do you escalate? Nobody starts out hitting. You don't. You just escalate. You kind of use your size to intimidate, because men are bigger. We just are. We're bigger, and we're physically stronger biologically. That's not a slight on women. I would hope, women, that you wouldn't want to be. "No, I want to be 6'5" and 250." Okay, but biologically, that's not usually the case.

This plays itself out over and over and over again, always in terms of escalation. "I'm going to control. I'm going to manipulate. I'm going to be conniving. I'm going to disorient you. I'm going to use my physical size. Eventually, in a heat of passion, there's a push. There's a hit. There's a..." Once you're there, then that becomes routine.

It wasn't until last May that I started to go, "Oh, okay. I see here now. It's not comfort at all. It's control and it's power." That leads to all of the kinds of things we see in this area. There are a lot of moms who are at home taking their kid's Ritalin to survive. This is control, this is anxiety, this is fear...all birthed in a desire to control and manage life.

Look, I want to try to free you. You're not God. You should probably take that weight off of yourself. You're not God. You should take that weight off yourself. You're not God, so you really can't control anything, and as terrifying as they might sound for you, that's one of the greatest news flashes in the history of mankind. You can just breathe. "I can't control. I'm not God."

If you have children, they should have taught you this. What do kids do except show you that you're not God? You might be able to rein in their behavior with fear for a bit, but ultimately, kids are going to show you that you're not God. That's freeing news. I lack power. Here's what I mean by that. I feel like I'm a decently strong man, just as a human being. I'm decently strong. I'm not all yoked up. I'm not on creatine. I work out pretty consistently. I take pretty good care of myself, and I play basketball with our 20-something-year-old interns every Tuesday.

I'm not a great scorer, but I can hold my own. I feel like I'm a decently strong man, but there are other mammals that would make me look foolish. My daughter has two horses. They can fling me around like I weigh 10 pounds. I'm limited in power, but you know who's not? God. He's just not limited in power. As we're even watching him undo the greatest empire in world history at this point, he's not weary or tired by it. He's not going, "Oh, I have to get in shape before I destroy Egypt." He just has all the power that is.

I'm limited in knowledge and wisdom, which means I know some things. I'm an avid reader and an avid studier. I know some things, but I sometimes misapply what I know, which means I lack wisdom. Not only do I lack knowledge, but I also lack wisdom. God lacks no knowledge, and he certainly lacks no wisdom. I could keep going. I am limited in time and space, which means all I know right now is what I can see in this moment in history. This is it. This is all I have, you and me right here.

Right now, even at the other campuses, I have no idea what is going on. I'm just right here with you. This is all I see. This is all I know, this moment right here. I have no idea what is going on in my house. I'm not quite sure where my kids are. I hope they're at home. They could be up here. I don't know. I don't know what's going on in my office. I have no idea. I am right here right now. This is all I know.

That's not like God. God is outside of time and space, everywhere at once, knowing all things and how all things play into all other things that create other things that finally form the tapestry of his glory and power that will be revealed on the canvas of the universe for eternity. Yet, even though I know those two things, I will oftentimes try to be God rather than trusting him.

From your pastor's heart, every time I find myself trying to be God, I can feel in me anxiety and anger growing, fear and rage growing. What we see Moses do here is take matters into his own hands, and it disintegrates into Moses being driven into what we'll call the school of hard knocks or the wilderness. Look back at verse 16 now.

"Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. The shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and saved them..." There's that compassion again. Moses cannot stomach injustice. He saw a Hebrew slave being beaten up, and he got in the mix and killed a man. Now, he's just sitting at a watering hole basically, and these beautiful women come up and start taking care of their sheep. Then these bully shepherds roll in, and Moses is one guy but doesn't care.

I think it's fair to say that Moses could handle himself. He was just probably a guy you don't want to talk smack to at a bar. He's not afraid to throw hands or at least intimidate. This is a group of shepherds. This is a group of buddies now who have rolled in and are pushing these women away from the well when Moses is like, "Hey, this isn't happening." These are guys who kill lions and bears with staffs and rocks for a living, and Moses steps up once again.

"When they came home to their father Reuel, he said, 'How is it that you have come home so soon today?' They said, 'An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and even drew water for us and watered the flock.'" Men didn't water the flock. That was woman's work. The fact that Moses stepped into this was even culturally a faux pas. "He even watered. He even did this." "What? And you left him out there? That is a keeper, ladies. Go get him. He did what? He watered your flocks? You'd better go get that man."

"He said to his daughters, 'Then where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread.' And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah. She gave birth to a son, and he called his name Gershom, for he said, 'I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.'"

I want to draw your attention to the fact that upon Moses taking matters into his own hands God pulls him out or drives him out to the wilderness. What we see... If you want a fun study when you get some space (because you should be in Genesis or Exodus right now if you're plugged in here, and if not, this would be a fun study for you), study the idea of the wilderness in the Scriptures.

The wilderness in the Scriptures is a place where people meet their God. That's what the wilderness becomes. It's a place where people meet their God. If you have a church background, you remember Sunday school felt board stuff where you're in one of the Genesis studies. I don't think you'll be in some of these yet, but you'll get there. It's in the wilderness that Jacob sees this stairway to heaven. In Genesis 28, it's in the wilderness, in the desert, that Elijah hears the still, small voice of God. That's 1 King 19.

It's in the wilderness where John the Baptist preaches repentance. In Matthew 3, it's in the wilderness where Jesus wins the victory over the Devil that Adam and Eve failed in Genesis 2. It's in the wilderness that Saul of Tarsus wrestles with the Old Testament Scriptures and finds Christ there. It's in the wilderness that God says to Hosea, "I will draw you into the desert. I will draw you into the wilderness, and there you will stop calling me master, and you will start calling me husband."

It's in the wilderness where there is this shift from, "He makes the rules. He's the boss. He tells me what to do," to, "He loves me. He's for me. I love him back," which creates a pretty massive problem for Western evangelicals who view the desert, the wilderness, and any difficulty as some sort of

anathema, something that must be fixed and repaired. No, it's in the wilderness, it's in the dark night of the soul, that we learn the compassion and care of God for us.

Even if we look back at this text, here you have a prince of Egypt who probably hasn't had to do a lot for himself. What is he going to eat? Where is he going to sleep? What happens next? What happens? In the grace of God, despite him working to be God himself, he finds a home. He finds a wife. He finds a son. He finds a family. The kindness of God, even in the wilderness, despite Moses' desire to be God, is stunning. It really is stunning.

Here's my question for you just to consider as we close up our time together. I think the question of where you're trying to be God versus where you're trusting God is a question that would be good for us to ask one another all the time and good for us to ask ourselves all the time. It's not one of those questions that applies to you early in your faith and doesn't apply to you later on in your faith.

There is a constant pull in us back toward wanting to be our own god and refusing to trust God. There are all of these justifications for why we wouldn't trust God. "Will he really come through for me on this one? What if this doesn't happen? How am I supposed to? Why would..." There are all of these justifications.

Where is it in your life where you're trying to be God? Where are you most prone to shift into that mode of operating? If you're like, "Man, I don't know. That's a real kind of ethereal, up in the sky kind of question," okay. What do you get most anxious about or most angry about? Can you answer that one? What do you get most anxious about and most angry about? I think if you can answer those two, that starts to give you some insight.

If you do something like this... I want to talk specifically to the men. If you do something like, "Well, I get most angry when she doesn't..." No, no, no. I have this conversation with my 10-year-old son. No one can make you do anything. You choose to do things. My son will get upset with one of my daughters, and he'll be like, "Well she..."

I'm like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa. I'm not saying... Listen. I know her. Brother, I know her. I have no doubts that what you're saying is true, but your behavior is on you, not on her. She can't make you freak out and throw something across the room. You chose to do that. She can't make you do that. You did that because you have a little wicked heart."

Here's the good news about wicked hearts. Be careful, brothers, and even sisters. I'm not saying that some of you ladies in here aren't the one who provokes and aren't the one, but the real game here is you worry about yourself. Brothers, if you're like, "Well, if she would just do what I say," I'm just wondering what text that is. I know this book really, really well.

I just haven't found the one that says she has to do what you say, but I have found the one that says you'd better humble yourself and use your strength, energy, and vitality to lift her up and make sure she becomes a well-watered vine. I've read that one. I've read that you're to love her like Christ loved the church. Do you know how that story plays out? Christ dies on the cross to ransom her and save her. Self-sacrifice, gentleness, being wrung out for. That's what God has called you to.

What makes you most anxious? What makes you most angry? Where is it that you're trying to be God? Where is it that you just can't seem to trust him? If you're in the wilderness right now, it just feels dry, and you're like, "Gosh, I just feel so disoriented. I don't know." Don't despise the desert. Don't despise it. The Lord is there. You haven't been abandoned. In fact, he does some of his most beautiful work in those spaces. You'll find out when you come out the other side. I promise. Where are you trying to be God rather than trusting him? Let's pray.

Father, thank you for your mercy and grace. Where we're relying on our power over and above yours, help us. Where we're leaning on our wisdom and understanding, forgive us. Help us trust and lean into your understanding. Help us in all of our ways acknowledge you. Thank you that you are everywhere at once and you are working a plan. You are not limited in time and space. Help us see that we are. We thank you that you are good when we are not.

I just pray, Holy Spirit of God, for a breakthrough on some of these issues relating to control and power, just knowing not just how they affect the men and women of this church but how this whole area seems to be marked by people who, even those who bear the name of Christian, are just struggling to just trust instead of control, struggling to not take things into their own hands but trust you to work, to rest, to be at peace as you move and we submit to your will. Be gracious to us, Father. It's for your beautiful name we pray, amen.