

# **ST. ANDREW'S, BLACKROCK & BRAY - 27TH JUNE 2021**

## **OUT OF & INTO; THE LIFE OF MOSES PT.1 - THE BIRTH OF MOSES (EXODUS 1&2)**

*"Welcome to our 'Church at Home' transcript for the 27th June 2021. Today we begin a new series called 'Out Of & Into' looking at the life of Moses in the Bible. Today's message on the Birth of Moses comes from Exodus 1 and 2, and reminds us of God's promises and plans when we face problems."*

*- Rev. Andrew Gill*

### **Call to Worship – Psalm 30:1-5**

*I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up,  
and did not let my foes rejoice over me.*

*O Lord my God, I cried to you for help,  
and you have healed me.*

*O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol,  
restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.*

*Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones,  
and give thanks to his holy name.*

*For his anger is but for a moment;  
his favour is for a lifetime.*

*Weeping may linger for the night,  
but joy comes with the morning.*

### **Opening Prayer**

Almighty God,  
you have taught us through your son,  
that love fulfils the law.  
Grant us grace to love you  
with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, all our strength,  
and to love our neighbour as ourselves;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **Reading - Exodus 2:1-10**

*Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him for three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.*

*The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. 'This must be one of the Hebrews' children,' she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?' Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Yes.' So the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, 'because', she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'*

## **Sermon - 'The Birth of Moses'**

As many of you know Julie and I are expecting our first child in November, and we are very excited first-time parents. Every stage is absolutely amazing to us. This week we felt the baby kick for the very first time, and then that's all we did for the rest of the evening, both our hands on the bump waiting to feel it kick again. Julie has been documenting the journey with a pregnancy journal, and every week she diligently writes her thoughts and feeling of what has happened. I was flicking through it during the week, and at the end there is a space for you to write the 'birth story'. And I got excited to think about what words would fill that page. Today I want us to look at an amazing birth story that we find in the Bible. We are beginning a new series looking at the life of Moses, and his birth story is one of the most famous birth stories in

the whole world. It is absolutely amazing, full of twists and surprises, and when you look closely, you can see that behind the scenes God is at work bringing about his salvation plan for the whole world.

Exodus chapter begins with two Israelites living in Egypt. Their ancestor, Levi, moved with his brothers during the time of a famine, at the invite of the pharaoh at that time. The wife becomes pregnant, and gives birth to a son. She looks at her baby, and thinks he's absolutely beautiful. But her joy quickly turns to fear, and she hides him. Why? Normally when there is a birth it is announced it to as many people, so why does this mother keep it a secret? To understand her reasons you need to look back at the context in chapter one, because this family, and all of Israel's descendants have a problem. In 1:8-10 it says, *“‘Look,’ the King said to his people, ‘the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, they will join our enemies.’”* Over the generations the Israelites had multiplied, and the Egyptians are now worried that they will take over. So they decide to oppress them as we see in verse 11, *“So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor.”* Israel has a big problem but God has made a promise.

Long ago God made a promise to Abraham, and he said that he was going to bless him, and that he would make him into a great nation, and that his descendants would be too numerous to count. Here we see the working out of that promise, Abraham's descendants have become a great nation but they are going through a dark time of trouble. But their problems do not nullify the promise, in fact it is just the opposite. In verse 12 it says, *“But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread.”* The more Pharaoh tried to push them down with problems, the more God lifted them up with his promises. Sometimes people, mistakenly, think that being a Christian will make life easy and simple. But having God's promises does not mean that we will never face problems, in fact there has never been a

generation of God's people that have not had to live through times of difficulty. God's promises do not eliminate all our problems in life, but our problems can illuminate God's promises to our life.

One of my favourite Bible verses is Joshua 1:8, *"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."* That is not my favourite Bible verse because life has always been easy, but because of how it has encouraged me in the times of difficulty and when I've had to face challenges. I think of when I moved to London to go to Bible college, and how I spent that first weekend all alone sitting in my room in this big city where I knew no one. That is when the comfort of God's promise to always be with me shone into my life. Or when I went through a season of uncertainty, seeking guidance, but all I got were closed doors and disappointments. That is when the hope of the promise that God will be with me shone into my life. Or when after just six months of being the minister here we had to close the doors because of the pandemic, and overnight rediscover how to do church. That is when the power of the promise that God will always be with you shines into your life. God's promises do not eliminate all our problems in life, but our problems can illuminate God's promises.

Israel had a problem, but God had made a promise. However Pharaoh was determined to stand in opposition to what God was doing, and when slavery does not work to stop them growing, he turns to murder. *"Then Pharaoh gave the order to all his people: 'Every Hebrew boy that is born to you must be thrown into the Nile, but let every girl live.'"* (1:22) So there is this dark shadow hanging over this birth story, and the baby does not receive a birth cert, but a death sentence. So that's why his mother hides him for as long as she can, but after three months she cannot hide him any longer, so she puts him in a basket, and puts the basket in the river. But the river turns out not to be his death, but to be his deliverance. The basket is found by Pharaoh's

daughter, she names him Moses, and adopts him as her own son, guaranteeing his safety. Moses finds protection from the order to take his life in the palace of the very king who set it. And even though God is not mentioned here, we can clearly see his hand at work. God rescued Moses, he brought him out of danger, out of slavery, and into the household of Pharaoh. But God lifted out the one, so that he could then be the liberator of many. As we will see over the next few weeks, as we follow this story, God has a plan, and he will draw out the Israelites from their problem. When we face times of trouble, we need to know that God has a promise to sustain us, and a plan to save us. What God does here for Moses, he will do in the chapters that follow, for Israel as he brings them through the waters and rescues them from slavery.

So what has this got to do with Jesus? In Luke 24:27, while on the road to Emmaus, Jesus explains that the story of Moses speaks about him. So what does this story speak about Jesus? Well, it comes back to these themes of God's promises and God's plans for human problems. All of us are born into slavery. Like the Israelites in this story, we are born into the slavery of sin, and under the shadow of death. But God has made promises, and he has plan to free us from that. Abraham was part of that plan. Joseph going to Egypt was part of that plan. So was Moses being raised as Egyptian royalty. So was the passover, the exodus, the covenant, and the ten commandments. The whole way through the Bible we see God's plan of salvation slowly unfolding until it was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus, like Moses, was born under a death sentence set by a fearful king, yet lived. And as Moses was drawn out of the waters of death to become the ruler and liberator of his people, so too Jesus was raised up out of the grave to be our Lord and saviour.

I'm going to call this series looking at the life of Moses 'Out of and into' because that's what the book of Exodus is largely about. It tells the story of the people of God being taken *out of* slavery to an evil king, and being

brought *into* the worship of a good God. I believe that today God wants to take us out of our problems and bring us into his promises. Maybe this morning you came to church with the problem of loneliness, but God wants you to go home with the promise that he will never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5). Maybe today you came with the problem of worries about the future, but God wants you to go home with the promise that all things work together for the good of those who love him (Romans 8:29). Or perhaps some of you came to church this morning with the problem of guilt, but Jesus wants to assure you of the promise that if you confess your sins he is faithful and just and will forgive you your sins and purify you from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9) Even if today you came here with the problem of facing death, there is the sure promise of the hope of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:16) No matter what your problem may be, no matter how big it looks to you right now, God's promises for you are even greater! He has a plan for us. Jesus wants to take you out of your worries and fears, and bring you into a place of faith and worship.

### **Closing Prayer**

Father God,

We thank you that no matter how many promises you have made, they are all “Yes” in Christ. Thank you that before the creation of the world you had a plan to redeem us through the precious blood of Jesus.

Lord, now in a moment of silence I bring before you my problems and ask for the grace of your help...

Come, Holy Spirit.

Fill us with the hope and the peace that comes from the promises of the Bible. Help us to hold unswervingly to the faith we profess, and to trust that one who promised, is faithful.

Amen.