

TRANSCRIPT

CMCC Summer Sermon Series

June 20 – August 1st, 2010

Series Title: “Lifting the Veil: The Self-Revelation of Our Amazing God”

Today’s Sermon Title: “Lifting the Veil: Our Guardian God”

OUTLINE

Introduction

This series on the story of Moses is to show the character of our amazing God. Hopefully, as believers, our number one pursuit in this life is to mirror and take on the character of God. As we read about our Master and Lord in the Old & New Testaments we see a glimpse of Who our Heavenly Father is. I think He is waiting for us to join Him in Heaven where He’ll reveal Himself completely to us. Until then we see these portions of Him through His conversations, actions in nature, His prophets as mouthpieces, through dreams and signs and wonders, through the written word (through His people). Scripture tells us God never changes – his character in the past is his character today and will be in the future. (Heb 13:8)

Let’s read today’s passage which is found in Exodus chapters 1 & 2.

[\(READING #1 – Exodus 1 & 2\) Main Text](#)

Prayer

Father thank you for your word the Bible and the stories written in it. Help us to make the message of this book penetrate our hearts and minds so that our character may mirror the character of God. Thank you. Amen

I’ve entitled this message “Lifting the Veil: Our Guardian God” because as we examine this afternoon’s text will see 3 distinct character traits of how God attended to the Israelites as a loving Guardian. Think about what a guardian is and roles your guardians have played in your life. And if you are a guardian in the life of a young person right now what role do you play in the life of that young person. This passage shows:

- 1). that God makes good on his PROMISES (He’s a promise maker)
- 2). that God PROVIDES unexpected miracles to make good on His promises (Jehovah Jireh – our provider), and
- 3). that God PERCEIVES our deepest longings

Historical Context

I want us to see the different ways the character of God is portrayed in this passage. Before we do that I’d like to give some historical background from Genesis. For Exodus is the second book in a set of 5 books called the Pentateuch (Greek) or Torah (Hebrew). They are the first 5 books of the OT – Moses is said to be the author of these books.

At this moment in the story of Israel the nation has inhabited the land of Goshen in Egypt for the past few generations. You’ll find the account of when the Israelites move from Canaan

(the land where the country of Israel is today) to Egypt back in Genesis chapter 46. That's where Jacob and his family moved to Egypt because of a famine. And it so happened, that God had placed Joseph (a member of their family) as second in command to pharaoh – which made it easy for the Israelites to move. Goshen was the most fertile land in Egypt at the time.

With this family comes a promise from God. God made a covenant with Abraham, Jacob's grandfather, back in Genesis 12. This is known as the great Abrahamic covenant. It is great because not only did God promise Abraham descendants as numerous as the stars, but that his family would greatly bless all other nations of the world. Ultimately, Jesus was a descendent of Abraham – the One who died for the sins of the world for all time and made a way for each of us to go to heaven when we die. We must always bear in mind as we read through the Old Testament, that God had set apart the family of Abraham to bless the nations. For those of us who are following Jesus today are helping fulfill that part of the covenant – to bless.

Introduce Points

- 1). The Character of God – The One Who Promises (makes good on his promises)
(Gen 12; Ex 1:7, 9, 12, 20)

The first point in this passage is “God is the One Who Promises”. God's covenant with Abraham is not actually in these two chapters of Exodus – it is part of the worldview that the people of Israel have while they're living in Egypt. Please turn with me to Genesis 12 and let's read the covenant that God made with Abraham:

[READING #2 – Genesis 12:1-3](#)

For hundreds of years the Israelites relied on this covenant made between Abraham and God to back their legitimate claim as God's chosen people. They believed God would take care of them. And indeed He did. The specific promises are amazing: that God would make Abraham's family into a great nation, that God would bless this family and make the name of this family great. That God would make this nation a blessing to the other nations of the world. God would bless the nations who blessed Israel; and curse the nations who cursed Israel.

This promise was made approximately 200+ years before Israel moved to Egypt. God had been taking care of them all this time according to the promise.

Notice how numerous Israel had become. They were a tribe of 75 people (when Jacob moved to Egypt from Canaan) to what is estimated to be 2 million while in Egypt. Later in Genesis chapter 15 God reiterates His promise to Abraham: “Look up at the heavens and count the stars – if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” That is a direct fulfillment of God's promise. It's a miracle when you remember that Abraham started out as a husband in his 90's with a wife who was barren – to descendants (through Isaac and Jacob) in the millions. God keeps His promises. What an amazing God we have!

The only person who seemed distressed by Israel's prosperity was this new pharaoh in Exodus 1. ([1:7, 9, 12, 20](#)). He decides to enslave the whole nation and put them to hard labor. Imagine going from a people who are distinguished guests during Joseph's time to

being slaves. Harsh treatment for any people to face. Then to make a harsh situation even more harsh, pharaoh demands that all newly born Hebrew males are to be killed or thrown into the Nile River. But the author of Exodus triumphantly declares in v.20 that despite pharaoh's treatment of Israel – God kept His promise – they continued to increase in number.

Let us also not forget how God has blessed all nations as a result of this covenant with Abraham. Exodus 1 & 2 it doesn't mention this part of the covenant, but we have the luxury today of knowing the rest of the story. Jesus Christ – our Savior and Lord was a descendent of Judah, son of Jacob, son of Isaac, son of Abraham and who became the ultimate blessing for all nations – that if you confess with your mouth “Jesus is Lord” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead – you will be saved.” (Rom 10:9) Now we have the promise of salvation and eternal life in heaven – a blessing that all nations of the earth can enjoy.

As the One who keeps His promises He proves Himself to be an excellent Guardian.

2). The Character of God – The One Who Provides (Jehovah Jireh) unexpected miracles to make good on his promises (moves his people to Egypt, prospers them, allows pharaoh to enslave them, leads them back to the Promised Land)

Because of the covenant God made with His people, He provides for them. This is my second point. As their divine Guardian, He knows of His obligation to provide and sustain his people.

When Jacob needed food for his family during the famine – Joseph was in Egypt with the leadership position and food to feed the family.

When Jacob needed a place to stay, the pharaoh instructed Joseph to have them settle in Goshen – the most fertile land in Egypt.

When pharaoh decreed the Israelites were to be enslaved, God put into motion the life story of Moses. He provided Moses' parents (Amram & Jochebed), his sister Miriam, and Pharaoh's daughter. Moses received the best academic, military and leadership training through the Egyptians. God provided a place of escape for Moses when he fled Egypt. He went to Midian, found a protector in Jethro, married Zipporah and became a father of two boys - and became a shepherd for 40 years. God is a Provider.

This was a difficult time for the Israelites and for Moses. The promises repeated by their forefathers didn't seem to be anywhere in sight. Moses was banished from the place of his birth only to be an unknown shepherd. How were all the pieces going to come together? What miracles or signs could possibly free their enslavement and Moses' life of obscurity? At this point in the story...it is an uncertain outcome!

Moses had so much potential. He was raised in the royal family of Egypt. He had a heart of justice and compassion for his fellow Hebrews. Then he finds himself banished as a shepherd for 40 years. Moses may have considered his life up to this point a waste. But we all know

that nothing is wasted in God's economy. But can you see how God was providing life experiences for Moses and developing him into the future leader of Israel?

Our God is the One who promises and makes good on his promises. He is the One who provides - He's an excellent Guardian.

3). The Character of God – The One Who Perceives (who sees and hears His people's crying / groaning)

At the end of our text it says *“The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. 24 God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. 25 So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.”*

Moses' life has plateaued – it's not going anywhere. Moses has fled Egypt after killing an Egyptian slave master and I think expects to live out the rest of his days in obscurity in the Midian mountains. The Israelites – his people – continue in their enslavement to a harsh pharaoh. The text says the Egyptians “...made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their hard labor the Egyptians used them ruthlessly.” (1:14) Where is God in all this? What about the covenant God made with Abraham – that they'd be a sovereign nation of their own – beholden to none?

If we can learn anything about God's character we can know that God is always at work even when we don't see what He's doing. We've all experienced those desert times when we're not growing, when God seems distant, when the work we're doing seems unfulfilling, that our lives are on a plateau.

God still promises today – What promises do we rely on today? “He will never leave us nor forsake us” “all things work together for good to those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.” He still keeps His promises today.

God is a Provider – God perceives our needs and hears our cries today. He provides what is needed to fulfill His purpose in our lives. Like Moses and the people of Israel we don't always see God's big picture and how He's working out His Sovereign plan.

We may think God is taking too long to act; we may think God has forgotten about us; we may question how God is working out a situation in our lives. But remember... God's character doesn't change.

I want to end this message with a story of a Hmong pastor and family living in Nan province. This pastor's name is Sawan, his wife's name is Pink and he has three daughters. Pastor Sawan is a pastor in the Hmong District of the Gospel Church of Thailand – the sister arm of the Christian & Missionary Alliance. This past December they were preparing a Christmas feast in their village. While cooking in the kitchen pastor Sawan's middle daughter, 3 year old Sophia, was playing nearby. Suddenly, Khun Pink heard a scream from Sophia who had fallen backward into a pot of boiling water cooking over a fire. Quickly Khun Pink pulled Sophia out

of the water and to safety – but not before 33 % of Sophia’s body was burned with 1st and 2nd degree burns. Pastor Sawan and Khun Pink rushed their daughter to a nearby clinic. It was determined by the doctor that Sophia should be moved to the burn unit at Suan Dok Hospital here in Chiang Mai.

This was one more event in Pastor Sawan’s ministry that caused him to question his God’s call on his life. Prior to this event villagers had threatened Pastor Sawan’s life unless he stopped conducting some of his evangelistic ministries. There were several other traumatic events that occurred last year as well. And then Sophia had her accident. The family moved to Chiang Mai to care for Sophia’s burns. Pastor Sawan or Khun Pink was by her side 24 hours a day to try and relieve Sophia’s constant pain from her burns. One night while Pastor Sawan sat near his whimpering child he asked the question, “God where are you?” What is happening to the ministry? Why are these things happening to me?” He didn’t understand. He was tired, Sophia was in constant danger of infection, his congregation back in Nan was leaderless, and he didn’t know how he was going to support his family. Shortly after they arrived in Chiang Mai Sophia’s story was told at Grace Int’l. Prayer went out throughout the Christian community and around the world. The request for funds to cover hospital costs was sent out. Prayer that God would heal Sophia’s skin and enable her to walk normally again went up. God heard the cries of His people for this pastor and his little girl. Four months and several surgeries later Pastor Sawan, his family and little Sophia all came walking into Friday chapel at Grace Int’l. They wanted to thank the Christian community for all the love and support they’d received. Sophia was not supposed to walk again. But there she was in a pretty pink dress walking next to her mommy with a smile on her face. She still has many plastic surgeries to endure as she grows and her skin needs to grow with her. But she can walk and play normally. Pastor Sawan was overcome with thankfulness not only to the generosity given by God’s people (his brothers and sisters in Christ), but also that God had heard his cry for the plight of his family. Recently, we heard that Pastor Sawan has been given another pastorate in a nearby city so Sophia can continue receiving the medical attention she needs.

As we learn to take on the character of God we have to learn to trust Him, trust that His Holy Spirit can transform and renew us into His holy people. The Israelites were a chosen people and through their descendents came God incarnate, Jesus Christ. Jesus established a new covenant – a broader covenant that is for all people on earth. Forgiveness and salvation are available through faith in Christ.

He was a Promise Keeper, Provider & Perceiver in the life of Moses and He still is in my life and yours. He’s an excellent Guardian! Let’s pray...

Close in Prayer

READING #1

Exodus 1

v. 6 Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, 7but the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them.

v.8 Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. 9“Look,” he said to his people, “the Israelites have become much too numerous for us. 10Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country.”

v.11 So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. 12But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites 13and worked them ruthlessly....

v.15 The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives... “When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.” 17The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live....

v.20 so God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

v. 22 Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Every boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live.”

Exodus 2 – The Birth of Moses

v.1 Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, 2and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. 3But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. 4His sister (Miriam) stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

v. 5 Then Pharaoh’s daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the river bank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her slave girl to get it. 6She opened it and saw the baby. he was crying, and she felt sorry for him. “this is one of the Hebrew babies, “ she said.

v. 10 ...She named him Moses, saying, “I drew him out of the water.”

Moses Flees to Midian

v.11 One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. 12Glancing this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, “Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?”

14The man said, “Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?” Then Moses was afraid and thought, “What I did must have become known.”

15When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well. 16Now a priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came to draw water and fill the troughs to water their father’s flock. 17Some shepherds came along and drove them away, but Moses got up and came to their rescue and watered their flock.

18When the girls returned to Reuel (Jethro) their father, he asked them, “Why have you returned so early today?”

19They answered, “An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even drew water for us and watered the flock.”

20“And where is he?” he asked his daughters. “Why did you leave him? Invite him to have something to eat.”

21Moses agreed to stay with the man, who gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage. 22Zipporah gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom,^b saying, "I have become an alien in a foreign land."

23During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. 24God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. 25So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

READING #2

Genesis 12:1-3

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. 2I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."