



## Exodus (Part 4) – Drawn Out

Matt Chandler – September 11, 2016

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[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]

If you have your Bibles, go ahead and grab those. If you don't have a Bible with you, there should be a hardback black one somewhere around you. We're going to read 10 verses together today. I think whether you have a church background or not, you will know those 10 verses. While you're turning there, I just want to address the fact that this is the fifteenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the United States of America.

It's a strange thing to think that ninth graders have no memory of a pre-9/11 world. It was on 9/11 that I think the United States of America got brought into the chaos that the rest of the world really operates under and in, and really from that day forward, we have seen and experienced in some ways as a country kind of the chaos and brokenness of a fallen world.

It's a right, good thing for us to remember how horrific that day was. Many of us remember exactly where we were, exactly what was going on. We found ourselves trying to explain it to our 10-year-old, who has no memory of it and why it was such a huge deal on that day. Yet, the lessons we've learned the last four weeks out of Exodus have to bear their weight on even our experience of 9/11 today.

What we've said for the last three or four weeks is we've looked at this really dark period of human history that is being unpacked in the book of Exodus, and we watch in that that God has a plan, and

that that plan is good, and God is working that plan, and it doesn't look like anyone thinks it should look.

Our confidence, even in the midst of what appears to be chaos everywhere that really for us as Americans started that day, when we really became aware of just how nasty the world is... We might have been aware, but it was way back in our conscience in a way that now is front and center.

What we are confident in as Christians, even as we mourn and remember the loss of 9/11, is that God is good, that he is not panicked, and that he is under control. We mourn as those who have hope that a sovereign God of the universe is working things to his glory and our good pleasure ultimately, even as we can't make sense of things now.

That's okay that we can't make sense of things now, right? If God is infinite and we are whatever age we are, there are going to be some things that he sees more clearly than us. I don't pretend to be able to understand that or put all of that together for us other than to just say our Bible is filled with this: God at work in the mess. As Christians, we just kind of cling to this fact.

We cling to the reality that not just 9/11 but all of the chaos and heartbreak that was birthed after 9/11 is somehow, like Pharaoh's decrees, playing into God's endgame to bring glory to himself and joy to the hearts of mankind. That's where we're going to camp out as the people of God. That's where our confidence is as the people of God. As we rightly remember today, I want you to be built up and rooted in what we've been learning about the nature and character of God as it relates to the affairs of men. All right?

I was at Village Chiropractic a couple of weeks ago. I'm long. At times, I just need to be straightened out. I was getting straightened out. One of the women who works there, when I got to the church... It'll be 14 years next month for me as pastor of The Village Church, which is crazy for me to think about. I think she was like a fifth grader when I got here, so this is starting to happen to me now, where this fifth grade girl is now a woman who has a job.

She said... You always have to be careful when somebody starts like this. "Hey, I'm not trying to be offensive, but what do you do during the week?" It was like an honest question. "What do pastors do during the week?" Everybody knows what we do right now, but during the week, what do we do? What was fun for me was I hadn't seen her for about six weeks on the weekend, so I said, "I'll tell you what. I'll unpack my week if you tell me what you're doing on the weekends."

We had a fun little moment there. I don't want that to make you nervous about seeing me out and about. "Don't make eye contact with him," right? It was fun. I know her family, and it was a fun little conversation. What I thought I would do to get us into this very well-known text, whether you're a Christian or not, was talk about this.

There are 180-something staff people at The Village Church. Now, that's at a church of over 10,000 with five locations. There are kind of two sides of The Village Church. There is the organizational side. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit entity, which requires certain things by law, certain ways of dealing with finances, certain ways of building systems.

There has to be a board. That board has to be made up of... There can't be a situation where the board is somehow benefiting from the decision it makes financially. There are all of these rules that we have to operate on. There is an organizational side to the church. Then there is the pastoral side to the church. The pastoral side is far more organic than it is organizational.

The pastors of The Village Church exist to serve Christ by loving, encouraging, and walking alongside the people of The Village Church, primarily her members. What we do during the week besides play golf and rest (I don't play golf) is we enter into impossible situations, and we have a front row seat to watch God work and move in those situations.

It is not uncommon for our ministers to sit across from those who are mentally ill or just found out they have a family member who is mentally ill, to sit across from moms and dads whose children seem bent on destruction, to sit across from those whose financial situation is so precarious that they're almost homeless and trying to unwind the damage of foolish spending. It's a long-term project and not a short-term project.

We are at the hospital a lot. We are at the funeral home a lot. This is a big place. It's not uncommon for us to sit across from our group leaders and coach them and try to serve them as they try to faithfully serve the men and women who are in their groups. On and on and on I could go. We (and I count it a privilege) get a front row seat for lives in a fallen world leaning into Christ or trying to make sense of what God is up to in the mess.

I say that because I want to show you what I think is an unbelievably impossible situation, but God is at work in the situation. With that said, let's look at this, Exodus 2, starting in verse 1. Now,

remember that Exodus is book two of five books all telling one story. The best way to think about this in 2016 is like they're movies. They're five movies telling one story. Think *Star Wars*, right? Five movies telling one story.

We're just in the second story, which means he's going to say things at times that actually go back to Genesis, or he's saying things that are setting up what we're going to read later on in Deuteronomy and Joshua and Numbers and those books. I'll try to point those out where I can, just knowing that's not ultimately the point of today's sermon, but let's look at this, Exodus 2, starting in verse 1.

**"Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman."** Now, that is huge, and I'm going to tell you all about that in March. It's going to be awesome. Just file that away. I will say, "On 9/11, I told you that Exodus 2:1 was massive. Do you remember?" You'll blankly look at me, and I'll go, "I said..." I'll just keep plowing through because it won't be the point at that point either. Let's go to verse 2.

**"The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank.**

**And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying.**

**She took pity on him and said, 'This is one of the Hebrews' children.' Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?' And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Go.' So the girl went and called the child's mother."**

Moses's mom ends up being the Hebrew woman who nurses Moses after Pharaoh's daughter pulls him out of the Nile. I just love the Lord's sense of humor and irony, that Pharaoh's daughter is about to have a Hebrew son. The edict that goes out that sons of Hebrews should be killed is actually circumvented by a Hebrew becoming part of Pharaoh's household. Verse 9:

**"And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages.' So the woman took the child and nursed him. When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, 'Because,' she said, 'I drew him out of the water.'"**

Now, there are all sorts of ways we could go with this text. In fact, I tried to cut off some of them last week when we talked a little bit about how God uses the weak and the powerless to overthrow the powerful and mighty. We see once again these women at work. The one threat that Pharaoh is not worried about is daughters, and daughters are his undoing.

The empire is toppled by the power of God through this group of women who are dedicated to the Lord, fear his name, and topple the greatest empire the world has ever known to this point in history. In fact, even now, the Savior of the Hebrews has made his way into Pharaoh's household. The very home in which the edict came out... By the way, with Pharaoh's daughter, the apple has fallen far from the tree.

Dad is a psychopath who has ordered the genocide of people, and you see a Hebrew child and feel compassion. She saw a crying baby and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." The servant girl could see that her heart had gone out, so the sister of Moses says, "Hey, do you want me to fetch a Hebrew wife or mom to nurse the child for you?" "Go."

Now Moses goes back to his mom, untouchable, belonging to the household of Pharaoh. There are these things at work against Moses that make the story of Moses so improbable if not absolutely impossible. Moses has these three epic things pointed against him that make the percentage chance of his survival to be really slim. Here's what they are.

The first thing that really sets its face against Moses's little life as a 3-month-old is the edict from the king himself. Because we're Americans, because we belong to a democratic republic, and because we have three branches of government... I don't want your conspiracy emails right now. Those three branches of government are designed to hold power in check so edicts can't happen, so not one person can say, "This is now the law of the land."

Now, I know. Again, please save me your Facebook link. I know. I'm just saying that the three branches of government for the United States are meant to cull that. We don't quite know what it

would be like for one person to hold all the power, to be able to make edicts, and for nobody to be able to do anything with that.

On top of that, the Egyptians would have seen Pharaoh as divine, as a god. It wasn't just a king but a god that was commanding them. We saw last week that he used political shrewdness based on fear. We rejoice that we don't have to worry about that anymore, that men don't act like that anymore. We saw that he used secret manipulation. We saw that he used the law, he used intimidation. He used violence. He used oppression.

In all of this, the weight of the empire in this, the power of this king has its might set on destroying Hebrew children. That's pretty hard to survive when the edict of the king, the divine king of Egypt has now declared that you're supposed to die. It's not just the king. In fact, what the king was able to do was pretty spectacular because he swayed or severed the conscience of a nation.

Not only does Moses have Pharaoh, king of Egypt, hell-bent on killing him and any other one like him, but the people themselves now, the conscience has been severed, and the people themselves have been invited into this genocide. I mean, if you remember back to Exodus 1:22... If your Bible is open, you can see it.

It's the very last verse of chapter 1. **"Then Pharaoh commanded all his people..."** The command goes out, not to a gestapo, not to some sort of secret police, but it goes out to the people. **"Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live."** Now, I want to show you this. Here's my Bible right here. I'm going to leave it here. I'm going to walk over here.

This is where we'll just do conjecture. It's not in the text, but we want to use our sanctified imaginations. I have a hard time believing... Again, we're over here. We're not over here. We're over here. I have a hard time believing that mothers are giving birth to sons and then taking that son and going, "Oh, well the law says..." and throwing that child into the Nile.

There's a phrase. I don't know if you've heard this phrase. It's called "mama bear." It's what happens when a normally steady woman loses her mind and becomes psychotic because you jacked with her kid. A normal, reasonable woman, not prone to wrath, never wants to fight anybody, all of a sudden snaps and is willing to physically harm someone. That's called mama bear.

That's not helicopter mom. That's just a whole different thing. That thing just needs to hover away and let the kid grow up. Mama bear is violent. It's not just checking things out from a high view and trying to manage and control. No, no, no. Mama bear will rip your face off, and Dad can't do anything about it. Don't make eye contact. He's not getting in there. You did this. You don't look at a man and go, "Are you going to do something about this?" What he's going to do is get out alive. You did this to you.

This is this idea. We know just from what we know that moms aren't going, "Well, the law says..." and going out and throwing their babies in the Nile. That means hundreds if not thousands of times a day, doors are being kicked open and women are screaming as their infant sons are ripped from their hands and flung into a river. Dads have to make the crazy choice as to whether or not to hold their wives and pin them down or fight the people who are kicking in the door.

This appears not to be the job of some gestapo force but rather the people of Egypt who are so hardened and seared in conscience that they're participating in this genocide of people where this reign of terror exists and this pressure and fear exists in the Hebrews' lives that makes life almost unbearable. What I thought of as I was preparing this for the last couple of weeks is *The Diary of Anne Frank*. I don't know how education is working right now. I have a 13-year-old now in eighth grade. She hasn't hit *The Diary of Anne Frank* yet. I hope they're still doing that.

Anne Frank was a German Jew whose family hid from the Nazis during the Holocaust. She was eventually captured and sent to a concentration camp and died there. Her dad was actually the only person among the Frank family who made it out of that camp. Yet, Anne Frank had this really exhaustive diary that she wrote about while being hidden. You couldn't ever be found. You got real nervous if someone sneezed. If you sneezed, and someone heard that, that means you could be rounded up and sent off to a concentration camp and killed or just shot there.

The diary is filled with a kind of stress and fear and constant worry that plagued the hearts of the Frank family. We have to read this and think that this is a very similar situation, except you're trying to keep an infant quiet. You're trying to keep a baby quiet, and that's why something is going on here where they kept Moses quiet, they hid him for three months. We have not just the edict of Pharaoh; you have the people themselves.

Where are you to go? You're slaves, and you're slaves to slave-owners. How are you supposed to hide an infant who will need to be nursed, who will need to be changed, who will need to be

comforted and quieted? How are you going to do that? Can you fathom the amount of stress and the screaming that would become a part of everyday life as babies are ripped from the arms of their mothers? This is a horrific period of human history, and this force is pointed at Moses.

You had the king, you had the people, and then you had the Nile itself. Maybe you need to know this; maybe you don't. The Nile is not like the Trinity River. Are you tracking with me? If you want to take a raft down the Trinity River, you're going to need to carry that raft down the Trinity River. It's not going to float down that river, right?

The majority of the time, unless there's some sort of epic storm in the area, that river is not there. The Nile doesn't disappear or vanish in certain seasons, so let's talk about the Nile. The Nile is the second longest river in the world. It's 4,258 miles in length. The mouth of the Nile River is the Mediterranean Sea. Do you know what the mouth of the Trinity River is? That's my point. That's exactly my point. "Oh gosh, I don't know."

This is my point. This thing is very different. In fact, listen to this. The output of the Nile River, what is called its discharge, is 99,940 cubic feet per second. I'll do the conversion. That's 6.2 million pounds of water per second in motion. This is what Moses is put into. How is Moses going to survive? He's three months old. He's not going to go hands with Pharaoh. He can't fight off a nation of people. He certainly can't swim the Nile.

We see in this space the sovereign hand of God at work. We see in this space God's reign and rule over every aspect of creation. Pharaoh is blinded and hardened, so much so that this Savior of the Hebrews is going to be in his own house. We see that the people are unable to see and find Moses, and we see that the Nile River itself doesn't sweep Moses away but quietly tucks him into the reeds, while it's just so lucky that that happened to be where Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe.

Again, I want to remind you that what we see repeatedly so far in Exodus is that God has a plan, and God is working that plan. If you remember back to week two, what is that plan? The plan that sin and death and the brokenness that befell humanity when sin entered the cosmos would ultimately be redeemed through this people.

We believe as Christians that Moses is an actual person. This is a historic moment. We don't believe that this is legend or fable. We don't believe this has been green-screened. This happened. This is a

historical moment, yet God is revealing something to us in this historical moment that is true about us and true about him.

You and I find ourselves today in an impossible situation that we cannot get ourselves out of, in the same way that Moses has no shot against Pharaoh, has no shot against his people, the people of Egypt. In fact, we're going to watch him next week try to take on Egypt by himself. That's going to go bad, just a little foreshadowing of next weekend, what happens when you take matters into your own hand rather than trusting the Lord.

I probably shouldn't have told you that. You'll probably skip now, but whatever. Now, you have Moses. He's unable to tackle the Nile. What are you going to do with the Nile? Curse the ocean? How are you going to do that? Nobody wins against six million pounds of water per second. Yet, he's drawn out. He's pulled out. He's rescued.

You and I find ourselves trapped, stuck in an impossible situation. Yet, God's plan to crush the head of this serpent... This embodiment of evil and brokenness is pictured here in this rescue, pictured here in Moses being drawn out of the water. See, we read this in the context of the entirety of Scripture, and we see that what is happening in this moment is God painting a picture of the salvation that would come to all of us where we could get pulled out, drawn out of.

In our case, it's not Pharaoh that we're worried about or the people of Egypt that we're worried about or even the Nile. What really has you and I in an impossible situation is sin and death. Maybe you're like, "Oh good, I made it on the morning where sin and death are the topic." Congratulations. You did. You made it on the morning where sin and death are the topic. I want to talk to you about that. I want to define sin, because sin is hard to define since the whole Bible tells us what sin is.

It's not this kind of real clear definition. Sin is missing the mark. It's falling short of the glory of God. It's rebellion. It's trespass. There are all of these different ways that sin is unpacked in the Scriptures. My favorite definition is by a man named Cornelius Plantinga, a really, really smart human being. He is a philosopher, theologian, teacher, professor. He's brilliant.

Here's what he says. "Sin is any act, any thought, desire, emotion, word, or deed, or its particular absence..." This is already all-encompassing. Look at that again. "Any thought, any desire, any emotion, any word, or any deed, or the absence of that thing..." Do you feel the impossibility that we

find ourselves stuck in? "...that displeases God and deserves blame. Sin is a culpable and personal affront to a personal God."

There are two ways for us to think about sin. The first and most common and correct way to think about sin is that sin is personal rebellion against God. The Bible says, **"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."** No one escapes being a sinner. We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. That's true about every soul in this room, the person to your left and to your right, sinners. Do you know who's sitting in your chair right now? A sinner.

Everyone falls short of the glory of God. We are all personally sinners. We have personally rebelled. We have personally and with great culpability sinned against our Creator, chosen his stuff over him, thought that we were smarter than him, believed our way was better than his. Everyone in the room has done this. The psalmist would say it like this, Psalm 51:5. **"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."**

Parents, quick question. Did you have to teach your kid to be shady, or did they just kind of figure that out? "Here's how you can be a misleading little liar." My guess is you didn't do that, but your kid picked up on it pretty quickly. Right? That's not just environment that teaches them that. This text says they were born in iniquity. That's another way to talk about sin. We have a bent away from righteousness. That's a bent toward, right? That's what iniquity means. You're bent away from righteousness. This is true about all of us.

Confession time. I have never snatched anything out of my wife's hand and screamed, "Mine," in her face. That has just never happened. She's here. That has never happened. I have never bitten her hand until she bled because she wouldn't give me something I wanted. Yet, my children behaved just like that until we disciplined it out of them...lovingly. If it's not environment that is teaching those little souls who inhabit our house that, "If I don't get what I want, violence is the answer," what is that? That's iniquity. That's sin.

**"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."** It is personal rebellion against God. One of the ways the Bible teaches this is by giving us the Law. If you have a background here with me, I love this one because it's just the easiest one I know to show us our guilt. The Ten Commandments, which we're going to get to here in just a bit, were given to us by God to show us that we couldn't be good enough and we couldn't ransom or rescue ourselves from sin.

The Ten Commandments are not complex. They're really simple. "Don't lie. Don't steal stuff. Don't love things more than you love God. Don't hate it when good things happen to people you don't like. Don't rejoice when bad things happen to people you don't like." That's called coveting. "God hasn't given me what I'm due." It's impossibly arrogant. Let's keep going. "Obey your parents. Don't have a heart full of lust. Don't have a heart full of anger."

These aren't complex ethics. They're not, "Hey, you have to shoot this guy, and if you shoot this guy, we'll let these 10,000 live." "Oh gosh, what do I do?" That's not what the Ten Commandments are. They're, "Don't lie." Look at me. You're a liar, aren't you? That was probably harsh. I know you're not. You just lie a bunch. You're not a liar, right? This is what we do. We have to justify and hide the fact that the most simple rules imaginable, we can't do.

What is God showing you in that? That you need a Savior, and one who is better than you, and that you don't make a good Savior for yourself. Sin is also bigger than just our own private rebellion. Sin is systemic. Here's more of Plantinga. "Christians have discovered that sin is not only personal but also interpersonal and even super-personal." Super-personal? Is that even a thing? Who talks like this? Intellectuals do.

Here's what *super* means. It means it transcends the personal. He goes on in the context to define this. "Sin is more than the sum of what sinners do. Sin acquires the powerful and elusive form of a spirit, the spirit of an age or of a company or of a nation or of a political movement. Sin burrows into the bowels of institutions and traditions, making home there and taking them over."

Plantinga is going to argue (and I think rightly argue and biblically argue) that sin is, yes, personal offense against God, but it gets bigger than that and becomes systemic and really pollutes whole systems and structures and institutions, so sin becomes a type of spirit of the age, a way in which we see and think that is hopelessly broken and ultimately condemned by God.

Here's how we see that in the Scripture. We see this in the Scripture when God condemns or judges whole cities or whole nations. To give you some examples, Jesus himself pronounced a judgment on the city of Jerusalem, gave them woes, and said that there was a day coming when Jerusalem would be laid in ruins, that there wouldn't be two stones left on top of one another.

In AD 70, Rome sacked Jerusalem and burned it to the ground. If you know your Bible, the first couple of chapters of the book of Revelation are letters to the churches. In those letters to the

churches, Jesus tells the churches, "Here's what you've done well. Here's what you've done poorly. Repent, or this." He pronounces judgment or blessing over whole churches.

He doesn't say, "Hey, you seven at the church in Ephesus..." No, he says, "To the church of Ephesus, write..." He's saying, "To all of you..." We see this in Sodom and Gomorrah, the whole city. We see this in Jeremiah, when the whole nation of Israel is judged. Now, surely there's a remnant. Jeremiah himself is a remnant of those who are faithful to the Lord.

The spirit of the age, the systemic power of sin has so corrupted and broken and burrowed in and taken over how they see, think, and operate, that the only thing left is for God to judge and dismantle and destroy. Sin is systemic. Here is something else to consider about sin. Not only sin personal and systemic, but everyone is an escalating sinner. Are you tracking with that? Everyone is an escalating sinner.

Sin always takes you further than you think it'll take you. When you were younger...maybe you still do...my guess is you liked loud music, right? No one is like 13 and going, "Oh gosh, why is the music loud?" What you do is you're listening to some music, and you're going, "Oh man, I love that song." You had it at 2, just a safe low, and then you're like, "Oh, I love this song." You're up to a 4. Then you listen to that song and then the next song and then the next song.

You're like, "Oh gosh, this is my favorite." You turn it up to like a 7. Then you're like, "Gosh, this is one of my favorites." Then three or four songs later, you just pop the dial. You just go all the way. When someone finally hops in your car, they're like, "Oh my gosh, bro. Are you crazy?" You're like, "What?" It doesn't even sound loud to you anymore because you've just been slowly turning it up.

This is how sin works. We are all escalating sinners. You don't ever stay at the same level of sin. It always increases. That's why the Bible says the wages of sin is death, because sin is ever escalating. Now, when we talk about sin being death, we need to talk a little bit about what the Bible means when it talks about death because there are three ways we die because of sin.

The first way is we die spiritually. Actually, we're born spiritually dead. Here's what the Bible says out of Ephesians 2:1. "**And you were dead in the trespasses and sins...**" What that means is at the very core of who you are as one made in the image of God, something that was meant to be vibrant and alive has died because of iniquity and sin, so death rules and reigns in the deepest part of our being.

We can kind of feel that. We're trying to solve that. Really what drives our lives for the rest of our days is trying to get to the bottom of whatever that thing is. It constantly has us pursuing more, oftentimes more of what we actually already have, to try to satisfy us. The Bible talks about this spiritual death in a lot of different ways. In Ecclesiastes 3:11, it says that God has put eternity into our hearts.

If you have a background in church, if you've ever heard a pastor or a minister say there's a hole in the heart of man that only God can fill, this is that idea, eternity in our hearts, spirits that are dead that were meant to be alive. We see that not only does sin create spiritual death, but it also creates physical death. What we read about when we were talking about God's plan to reconcile and redeem all things to himself was this idea that before sin entered the cosmos, the reality was very different.

Man and woman were naked and unashamed. There was nothing to hide. They never felt guilt or shame. They were just in the open. Everything was working relationally. Everything was working in regard to glory to God, joy in the hearts of man. Yet when that was fractured, one of the judgments pronounced on man was death.

Again, that was in the first movie, Genesis 3, starting in verse 19. It says, "**By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.**" Now we see that death is not just spiritual, but it's physical. There was no physical death before sin entered the cosmos.

Then lastly, we see eternal death. People tend to wig out about eternal death, but it's interesting to know that... I want to show you what eternal death or eternal destruction is all about. It says in 2 Thessalonians 1:9, "**They [those who are stuck in sin and death] will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might...**"

Let's chat about this for a second, because God gets really bad press around this. Here's the reality of eternal destruction. The reality of eternal destruction is that Christ has come to save us from that eternal destruction, and man, who is a part of this systemic and personal rebellion against God's good, right, beautiful creation, is enjoying the common grace of God while cursing his name. One of the more heartbreaking things to watch mankind do is enjoy what Christians know to be the common graces of God.

Common grace is the grace of God given to all mankind everywhere, regardless of whether or not they believe in him, honor him, or love him. You don't need to be a Christian to enjoy good food, right? You don't need to be a Christian to enjoy sex. You don't need to be a Christian to enjoy money. You don't need to be a Christian to enjoy vacation.

You don't have to be a Christian to enjoy those things, right? Those are common graces given to all mankind. They're like medicine or an MRI machine. They're common graces given to mankind by a God who loves people. One of the more heartbreaking things to see is someone who wants nothing to do with God, wants to curse God, shakes his fist at God while enjoying the common graces of God.

Eternal damnation, eternal death is God giving people what they want. "You don't want me? You don't want my ransom? You don't want my rescue? You don't want me to pull you out of the Nile? You don't want me to rescue you from sin and death? Then I will rightly and justly judge you for that, and I'll just remove not just my presence by my glory, my common graces, and I'll give you what you want for eternity: life experienced without me. I'm out."

All common grace is gone. People who would say, "I would rather be in hell with my friends," miss the point that friends are a common grace gift of God toward all mankind. There won't be that in the absence of the presence of God. There won't be comfort. There won't be sleep. This is the right, just judgment of God on those who curse and belittle his name as he seeks their salvation. This is where we find ourselves gone, in sin and death, and you can't get out of this in the same way a dead man can't decide not to be dead.

"You know, I died. I'm just not really into this death thing. I'm coming back." You don't get to do that. In the same way, spiritually dead people need to be drawn out and revived. What we see when Moses gets stuck in the weeds and pulled out of the Nile is a picture of the work of Christ in drawing us out of sin and death.

Let me read you a couple of texts here. Romans 5:8 says, "**...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**" I just don't know if I'll ever be able to get over that text. While we're in rebellion... If you think of sin as personal and systemic, it's burrowed into the bowels of institutions, that there's a spirit of this age in which we all participate...

Not only have we personally sinned against God and said, "I'm smarter than you. I'm going to do life the way I want to do life." By the way, when you want to be your own god, it's going to always lead to anger or anxiety. Now, here's why. If you're god, you have to control and manage everything, except here's the thing: You can't. You can't control or manage everything. Do you know why? Because you're not God, so you can't do it.

What happens is you tend to try, but the only way you can control is to manipulate or to intimidate or to assume. Now you're kind of starting to escalate that volume knob on just how deplorable your acts of sin are. If you try to control your spouse, and you can't, then you start to manipulate. If manipulation doesn't work, then you'll use intimidation. You might ultimately use violence or tearing down, or you'll become a despicable, pathetic man, using your strength not in a way that honors God but in a way that is shameful and wicked. You have to control. You have to manipulate.

If that's not the way you go, then you'll always be anxious about how things will play out. You'll try to control it all the more, even while you understand that you can't. This is what happens when we try to be god. This is where we're stuck. This is where we're trapped. Anxiety, anger, sin, death. This is how it plays itself out.

Yet, the Bible just said that while we're doing that, while we're actively sinning, "I don't need you; I got this," just jacking up everything, while we're doing that, Christ dies for us. Not when Moses grew strong enough to swim the Nile or finally kill a man with his bare hands that we'll read about next week, not fine, no, no, no. While he could do nothing in that little basket, he was drawn out.

While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. We read earlier kind of our predicament. **"For the wages of sin is death..."** Here's the second half of that verse, Romans 6:23. **"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."** That's terrible economics. The wages of sin is death. What you deserve, what I deserve, what we all deserve because of that sin, both the systemic and the personal, is death, rightly and justly, spiritual, physical, eternal death.

But God gives us free life. "Spiritual life?" Uh-huh. "Physical life?" Yeah. "So are you saying we're not going to die?" No, there will be a transition. There will be a transition, but you certainly won't experience death like someone who is stuck in sin and death. Lastly, eternal life. Look right at me. I need you, I'm desperate for you to hear me say this. Eternal life does not start when we get to heaven. Eternal life starts the moment we say yes to Jesus Christ.

Ever-increasing joy belongs to the soul who says yes to Jesus as Lord from the moment he says yes on into eternity. Now, a billion years from now, you're still going to be experiencing ever-increasing joy because God is an inexhaustible well, but the joy of eternal life doesn't begin when we get to heaven but when we lay our yes down.

Finally, John 3:16-17 says, "**For God so loved the world...**" Think about how crazy that statement is. In the midst of all we're talking about, sin and death and rebellion, "**For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.**" There's eternal life again, and not eternal life after we die, eternal life starting now for those who say yes. "**For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.**"

You would think, in this kind of destruction of his creation and beauty, with all of the... We see just this little bit of brokenness in the world. God sees all of it, takes it all in at once. There is a 9/11 going on somewhere in the world even today. There is a people group being slaughtered. There is a people group running for their lives. All over the world today, this is going on. God sees all of that, every act of rape, every murder, every bit of abuse.

He sees it. He takes it all in, and he sends Christ. You would think if he's sending the Son, he's sending the Son to handle some business, right? Sword in the hand, sickle on his fist. You would think that if God is coming down, he's certainly coming down to lay waste to some stuff. Yet what the Bible says is that he comes not to condemn but to save from condemnation.

He steps into this mess that is Rome burning the world to the ground. He steps into this mess where people who are religious and have no space for those who are fallen and broken and hurting. He steps into this place where there is so much evil and brokenness, and he comes not to condemn but to save from that condemnation, and this is what we see happening. This is the hope we see being stirred in our hearts as Moses is pulled out of this water.

As he's drawn out of the Nile, we're reminded that we have been drawn out of sin and death forever. If you're a Christian, my hope today is that you would be encouraged in just being reminded of what has happened to you. You've gone from enemy to son. You have been brought into the household of faith, and you are delighted in.

Like Pharaoh's daughter looked upon Moses and had compassion, that God in the heavens has looked on you and had compassion and extended mercy, and that you might, as David cried out, have the joy of your salvation renewed in your heart as you are reminded of God's goodness and grace toward you in Christ.

Then there are those of you... One of the things I love about The Village is that so many of you who aren't Christians keep coming here. Theologically, that's called the effectual call of God. What that means is God is kind of wooing you, and you don't really know he's wooing you. You just keep coming with your friend. Even on the way out today, you're probably going to be like, "Yeah, I don't know. That kid... Were those purple pants? I don't know if I can listen to a guy in purple pants."

You're going to find this reason to not listen to me, and then they're going to be like, "I get it. I don't know why he does that. Do you want to come back next week?" You'll be like, "Yeah, call me." You'll come back. What that is called is the effectual call of God. God is wooing. God is drawing you to himself. Some of you have been hanging out here for months, some of you for a couple of years.

Here's what I want to just plead with you, just unapologetically plead with you about. This is the salvation that is available to you. This is what all of this is about. Would you consider today being the day that you just laid your yes down? I'm 22 years in, and I still have questions. I'm 22 years in, and I'm not quite sure what to do about this or how to reconcile this, but I'm 22 years into experiencing the ever-increasing life and joy that was promised to me by God in Christ.

Are you even sure of what your hurdles are anymore to saying yes to Christ and his salvation? Why not today? Why couldn't you today just go, "You know, I don't understand at all. I have questions, but I just want to say, 'Yes, Jesus. I'm stuck in sin and death. I got a sense of that in my time here. I got a sense of being sinful. I got a sense of being dead in my spirit. I just want to say yes to Jesus. I'm going to need some help knowing how to work that out and what that means for my life. I just want to say yes.'" I want to plead with you to consider that.

It's a heartbreaking thing to be pulled out of the Nile and sit on the side of it while you watch people get washed away down the stream, ultimately to their deaths. I'm pleading with you today to consider the claims of Christ and finally say yes. "Well, I don't know what to do." I promise you, you can just cry out to Jesus, "Save me."

Earlier this summer, my son came up to me. We were just having a conversation, but he just said with tears in his eyes, "Dad, I want to know and love Jesus." I was like, "That's awesome, buddy. Come on. Let's sit down and talk about it." We sat down, and I just said, "You just need to say that to the Lord."

He said, "Well, I don't know what to pray." I said, "All you need to do is say what you just said to me to God. In fact, I think the work that God has done in your salvation has already occurred in your heart, which is what is making you want to pray this prayer." Just cry out to the Lord, and he'll hear you.

It's not like God doesn't hear that prayer for help because you don't put a vow in it, or you didn't repeat some incantation that I gave you. That would make us witches. We're not witches. No, we just cry out, "I want to lay my yes down. I get a sense that I am a sinner. Forgive me. Help me. I don't want to wrestle with this anymore. I want to say yes. Then we'll wrestle from there." I want to plead with you to consider that and do that today.

Let me tell you why I'm pleading. Whenever the gospel is clearly preached (that's what we just did here), the heart will respond in one of two ways. It will open and soften or it will close off and harden. We will see in the weeks to come what happens when you actively harden your heart against God softening your heart. It magnifies the death and destruction of sin in your life. It cranks the volume up all the way to 10 and leads to our destruction.

If you feel a tenderizing going on in your heart as we've gathered in this space today, that's a serious thing to consider and reflect on and to pray about, because to cram it, stuff it, or ignore it is hardening your heart toward the one thing your heart desperately needs. Consider laying your yes down today. Lets pray.

Father, I thank you for my brothers and sisters and for those who are trying to make sense of all of this. We thank you that you've drawn us out, Father, that our great enemy is not some Pharaoh or some peoples who are bent on our destruction. It's not even the Nile River. Our great impossibility is sin and death, and you have made a way.

As Christians, we praise you for that. I pray for those who aren't believers or can't quite get there. I just pray, Holy Spirit of God, for the gift of sight, for the gift of belief, the faith to believe in your free grace. I pray that as they argue themselves out of what you're doing in their hearts, that you would

silence that in them, that you might grant the good gift of belief. Help us. We need you. It's for your beautiful name I pray, amen.

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