

## Exodus (Part 6) – God Sees and Knows

Matt Chandler – September 25, 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. This story began several thousand years ago, and it began with a promise from God to Abraham, that he would make his offspring more numerous than the stars in the sky, a great nation who would one day dwell in the Promised Land.

More than 400 years passed, and Abraham's descendants had not seen this promise fulfilled. Instead, the Israelites lived as foreigners in the land of Egypt. Fearing that the Hebrews would grow into a mighty nation and overtake them, the Pharaoh of Egypt forced them to work as slaves, but Israel continued to grow.

In response, the Egyptians increased their oppression of God's people, and Pharaoh gave a terrible decree. Every son born to the Hebrews would be thrown into the river, but a Levite couple defied this order, trusting God's will for their son's life, and God did have a plan for this child. Pharaoh's daughter found the baby and took pity on him. She named him Moses because he was drawn out of the water.

As Moses grew older and saw the suffering of his people, anger burned within him. When he witnessed an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, Moses killed the man and fled Egypt to hide in the desert. Years passed, and Moses made a new life for himself in Midian. Then one day, the voice of the Lord called out to him from a burning bush. God told Moses that he saw the persecution of his people in Egypt and he heard their cries. He promised to deliver the Israelites from slavery, and he commanded Moses to go before Pharaoh on their behalf.

Moses was terrified, so God sent Moses' brother Aaron to go with him. The brothers went before Pharaoh, performing signs and wonders, but Pharaoh would not listen, so God brought down plagues upon Egypt, yet Pharaoh's heart remained hard as stone. To prepare for the tenth and final plague, the Hebrews marked their doors with the blood of spotless lambs. That night, the angel of death passed through the kingdom, killing the firstborn child of every Egyptian household that did not bear the mark, including Pharaoh's.

Heartbroken, Pharaoh told the Israelites to go. They were finally set free, and the Spirit of God led the people out and toward the Promised Land, but Pharaoh's grief soon turned to rage. He changed his mind and then commanded the Egyptian army to pursue them. When the Israelites came to the Red Sea, Moses lifted his staff to the sky, and the waters parted.

The Hebrews passed through the towering waves, and the Egyptians were swallowed by the sea. God had indeed drawn his people out of bondage, out of darkness, and into the light of his presence. The story of Israel is the story of us today. We are God's people. He draws us out of our sin, our Egypt, and draws us into his presence, into relationship with him.

[End of video]

Well, good morning. How are you? Doing well? Excellent. If you have your Bible, go ahead and grab those. If you don't have your Bible, grab one of those hardback black ones somewhere around you. Kids, I want you to go ahead and grab a Bible also. If you grab one of those hardback black ones, I'll tell you even the page number to go to.

Here we are in week six of our study of the book of Exodus. Like we've been talking about, we'll be in Exodus through, I believe, May, although we could peek a little bit into June. We'll see what the Lord has for us. Once you have your Bibles, if you have the hardback black one, we're going to be on page 46. Here's how it works. The big number is the chapter, and the little number is the verse.

Kids, if you have your Bible, you're looking for a big 2 and a small 23, and we're going to look at three verses together today. Now, a couple of things. First through fifth graders, I love Family Worship Weekend. I love that you are in here with us. I think if we had the time, I could just show you in the Bible where the Bible is letting us know as moms and dads and as other adults that you bring something to us that we need.

You have a joy and an energy and a vibrancy that we have a tendency to lose as we get older and crustier, so for you to be in here today is a big deal for us, because God wants us to look at you and consider the energy and life and joy that you have as something that he wants for us. He says that to get into the kingdom, we must come as little children.

That's a really cool kind of little nugget from the Lord on your importance in the gathering of the household of faith. I'm glad you're here today. Here's my promise. I'm going to go about 20-ish minutes, and you can do that. I know you can do that. I believe that you can do that. Moms and dads, I know that first through fifth graders are in here, all right?

That means I'm prepared for there to be questions answered that I wasn't really asking, and there will be a little bit more squirming than necessary. Maybe you have to flash a little evil eye over at your child for something. I get that. If you have a church background, your mama was giving it to you in the choir back in the day.

I know you might have to look over like, "No!" I get all of that, but I just want everyone to breathe out. Moms, dads, singles, here's the other thing I want to throw out to you. These three verses... The whole book of Exodus turns on these three verses, right? These aren't three verses like, "Oh, this would be an easy spot to have Family Worship Weekend."

Literally, they are the fulcrum on which the book of Exodus shifts. At this point, five weeks in, all we've really seen is Moses and Pharaoh and Egypt and Pharaoh's daughter and Moses' mother. Do you know who has been absent from the narrative other than we can see it retroactively? God. God has not presented himself. He has not introduced himself. He has not spoken.

We have seen nothing of God except in the background, sovereignly moving the pieces around. Yet today, he speaks. Especially next week, when we cover chapter 3, which I'm already a little giddy about, but I will hold off until then. Exodus 2. We're going to start in verse 23. If you have your Bibles, go ahead and look at that.

**"During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew."**

Now, three simple verses. What I want to do is I want to pull some things out of it and just put it in front of us for us to consider. The first, and one that I think it's important for us to always know regardless of how old we are, is that the Bible never shies away from or tries to back away from this reality: people can hurt and be in pain.

We see in this text that the people of God are groaning. They are hurting. They are crying out for help. People hurt. People can be sad. People can be angry. People can have their hearts broken. This is a reality that exists throughout the entire Bible. It should never surprise us when this happens. Why? Well, people hurt because the world is broken.

A lot of times, when people are hurt, when they're angry or sad, their hearts are broken, it's because the world is broken. They are sick. That's usually not anyone's fault. When someone gets sick, they get sick because the world is broken. We can hurt over that. Or they're hurt because they've sinned against God, and there are consequences for that. Or, a third reason we hurt (we can be mad or sad or heartbroken) is that other people sin, and their sin affects us.

The Bible doesn't shy away from the fact here that to live on planet Earth introduces the possibility for hurt and real hurt to take place in our lives. We shouldn't be surprised at that. If you're older, you shouldn't be surprised at that. If you're a first grader, I'm just praying a little seed goes into your heart, and it begins to grow in an understanding that God is at work in the mess, not that God says there won't be a mess. Are you tracking? Okay.

From there, I think one of the more stunning realities in the Bible is presented to us, and it's so stunning that I think we miss it half the time. We certainly have lost the awe of it in our time. Here's the second thing. Not only do we see that people hurt, but we see that God hears the cries of hurting people. God hears the cries of his people.

This is stunning to think about. God, the creator God of everything, hears us. We live in a really noisy day. It's really loud. There are a lot of people and a lot of people who are hurting and a lot of people who cry out to God. Yet, what we see here is that God hears his people, his children, both individually as well as corporately, as a group.

Let me show you how we're limited, and God is not. On the count of three, I want you to say, not yell, but just say at a good volume, a projection of your normal speaking voice, your full name. If you're embarrassed of your middle name, just get over it. Nobody is really going to hear it. Here we

go. On the count of three, we're all going to say our full name. One, two, three. Matthew Lee Chandler.

Okay. Now, no one in here right now can go, "Got it," and kind of come up on stage and go, "I'm going to start over here and work my way to the right and pick out every individual and go, 'Here's your full name.'" In fact, if I had to guess, you probably didn't pick up on anyone's full name around you except maybe Danny Loud-Voice behind you, just because it was overpowering. By and large, we don't possess the ability to hear like God hears.

That didn't bother God at all. God didn't need to go, "Let's do that one more time. I got half of you, which is better than any of you slackers can do, but I didn't get all of you, so let's do that one more time." God doesn't hear like that. He hears us all at once, always, and it doesn't stress him out. I don't know about you. If I'm in an environment with like 40 different people talking, I'm just going to need... "Hush it!" Right? That's not how the Lord works.

If you grew up praying where you kind of prayed and the squeezed the hand to your right, and then they prayed and then squeezed the hand to their right until it made the full circle, it's a very Baptist-y way of praying, but it's not ultimately necessary. The Lord can distinguish the cries all at once from everywhere in the world, and he hears them. This is a stunning reality.

It also has nothing to do with volume. On the count of three, I want you to whisper your mom's full name. Just whisper your mom's first name. As low as you can whisper, we're going to whisper our mom's name on the count of three. Ready? One, two, three. That sounded like a scary movie, didn't it? I'm not going to lie, that wiggled me out a little bit just to hear the crowd whisper. It sounded like a hiss, right?

In order for us to hear, we need volume. For us to hear, we need a singular person to say something. We can't hear 40 different people saying something. Heck, most of us can't hear three different people. Yet God can hear us all. Then volume doesn't matter to God. He doesn't need you to be at a specific volume in order for him to go, "Okay, now I got it."

God hears us when we pray, when we cry out. When we're hurting, and we say, "God," he hears us. This is a stunning truth when you think of the size and scope of Earth and the amount of people who, at any given moment, are crying out to him all over the world. That God is aware of us, that

God hears us... In fact, the Bible says not only does God just hear you but he's aware of you. This text ends, "God sees. God knows."

Did you know that the Bible says God knows every hair on your head? Another thing we can't do. King David would say it like this, King David, who killed Goliath, an unbelievable warrior, right? He also played the harp, also killed a bear once. Who can say that? Spare me your 200 yards away old, sickly bear that you shot like a coward. Be a man. Just get naked and bite him to death. Then I'll respect that move.

In the end here, you have... I don't know why I do that sometimes. I just go off my notes. I shouldn't. I should just stay right here. David writes this when he begins to just think about and consider how big God is in comparison with how small he is. He says, "**When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?**"

Here's his question. "When I think about how many stars there are, when I think about how big the sky is, when I think about how massive the earth is, who am I that you are mindful of me, that you know who I am, that you hear my voice, that you know what is going on in my world?" This is a stunning truth that gets lost on so many of us. He hears us. He knows.

Then we need to do something with this idea of him remembering. What the text says, if you want to go back and look at it... It says that they cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. Look at verse 24. "**And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant [promise] with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.**" Now, we need to do something with remembering because God doesn't forget stuff.

What does the Bible mean when it says that he remembers, that God remembered the promise when he heard the cries of his children? It doesn't mean that he forgot. Rather, the fullness of his plan has come together. If we wanted to simplify it further, it simply means that God cannot be distracted. Quick question. First through fifth graders, look right at me. Have you ever been watching television or playing on an iPad or playing on an iPhone or playing Xbox and realized that when you do that, you cannot hear your parents?

If your parents ever come in and are like, "Hey, I told you to put up your shoes," and you're like, "Huh?" because you didn't hear a word they said. Kids, how many of you have said, "When I'm

looking at a screen, my ears don't work"? Okay, go ahead and put your hands down. Watch this. Moms, dads, how many times have you been looking at the iPad, you've been looking at the iPhone, you've been staring at the television, and all of a sudden your ears don't work?

It looks something like this. "Mom. Mom. Mom. Mom. Mom. Mom. Hey, Dad. Dad. Dad. Dad. Hey, Dad. Dad. Dad." How many of you have found that that has happened to you? Okay. We live in a day of distraction, constant noise, constant things to look at, things to consider. When that happens, we get distracted and forget what is important. We forget what is valuable. My kids have left things in certain places where they're just gone now.

Not cheap things, just things where we're like, "Hey, this would be nice. You would enjoy that. I'll just donate that to some lost-and-found at some random restaurant." It's distracting, yet the God of the Bible does not get distracted. He's not aloof. He is honed in. Maybe this would be a good way to think about it. You have God's undivided attention. Gosh, that sounds weird, doesn't it? In the immensity of the world, he not only hears me, but he doesn't get distracted. He knows what is going on, and I have his attention.

From there... The kids have been learning this one way, and we've been learning it another way. First through fifth graders, here's the way you've been learning one of the truths we're seeing in this text. God always keeps his promises perfectly, in just the right way, at just the right time. In here, here's how we've been saying that. We've been saying that God is working a plan and that plan is good, although that plan will rarely work itself out like we think it's going to.

What we see in this text is a God who not only sees and hears and knows but also a God who, without distraction, is working a plan that is for the good of his people. We're going to begin to see that pick up in the weeks to come. God has now burst onto the scene because of the hurt in his people's lives, and he's beginning to act on their behalf. His plan is perfect, and it works itself out at just the right time, in just the right way. This is how God works.

He's showing up after a period of time that really would rattle most of us. Moses has now been in the wilderness for 40 years, which means 40 more years of our brothers and sisters in Egypt, in slavery, crying out to God. Yet, now is the time. The plan is in place, and it's beginning to be executed. Now, what does this tell us? I think this is something to consider. What does this tell us about who God is? Not just, "What does God do?" but, "What does this tell us about who God is?"

I think there are three things this text helps us understand about who God is. The first is that *God is compassionate*. I know that's a bigger word, so let me define it. He sees, cares, and acts when his children are in need. Okay, first through fifth graders and maybe grown-ups, how many of you have a night light in your room? Go ahead. It's okay. It's fine. You're safe. It's a safe place. It's okay to not be okay.

Here we are. We have night lights in our room. We're a little nervous about our room. It's dark in there, and when it's dark, I can't see what's there, but if the night light is on, I can see. I like the night light because it helps me see what I cannot see. Well, here's a good way to think about compassion. God, knowing you have a night light in your room, isn't going, "What's up, man? You don't trust me? I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. How dare you have a night light? Do you not think I'm good? Do you not think I'll protect you? Do you think I'm afraid of the dark? Why do you have to have a night light? I am here."

No, no, no. The Bible let's us know that God knows it's scary to be us. He knows that he sees what he cannot see. He's not upset but rather compassionate. He knows we're scared. He knows we're afraid. He knows we're lonely, and he never responds with anger toward that, but rather compassion, that you are not alone in that fear. He is there with you. You learn about God's compassion in this text.

You also learn that *God is attentive*, but attentive in the best possible way. When we say attentive, here's what we mean. He hears and responds to the prayers of his children. I'm in the middle of... I have an elder initiative document due to our elders coming up, so I'm leading a team of guys who are working on a pretty massive project.

I'm sure this has happened to you. I got home, and I wasn't quite done with work when I got home, so I had to open up my computer, and I'm on our little island, and I'm just trying to knock out some things. I needed about 45 minutes, but I'm home, and that's really confusing if Dad's home but he's not home.

I'm home, and I'm working on it, and in comes my son, and he has cleats on. He's carrying his ball. He's like, "Dad, Dad, Dad. We need to..." I go, "Hold on. Look right at me. I need 30 to 45 minutes. I'm going to need that time." I was really tempted, because he was like, "Well, can't you just do that later?" I was really tempted to kind of go, "Do you like our house? Do you like having a roof over



your head? What about dinner? Do you enjoy food and the eating of food? Do you like that? Okay, well then Dad needs to finish his up."

I didn't do that because he's like, "Those two are related?" He's just not ready in his understanding of economics to put that together yet. I just meant, "I need 45 minutes," and he graciously gave me 45. I finished up on my computer and went out, and we threw the ball around in the front yard for a while and then had a little swim party in the backyard before it was time to shower up and get to bed because school is tomorrow.

Now, when we're talking about the attention or the attentiveness of God, we're saying that never happens. When we cry out, "Father, God in heaven," then he immediately just turns and goes, "What do you need? What can I do? How can I help? What's up?" See, earthly fathers in their best forms are just a shadow of the perfect Father in heaven.

If you have a great daddy, he engages you and encourages you and cuddles with you and prays with you and reads stories to you and throws the ball with you and coaches you and does all he can possibly do, then he's still just a shadow of the God you have in heaven who is a Father who never says, "Give me 45 minutes. Let's do that tomorrow. I don't have time right now." No, he's always, "What do you need? What's up?"

In fact, the Bible says crazy things. It says God wants to be bothered. Just keep asking. Ask him again and again and again and again. If I tell my kids, "Ask me one more time," I am threatening them. I am not literally saying, "Do that again." I'm saying, "If you ask me that again, I will never get that for you. Not only that, but there will probably be other repercussions." But the God of the Bible says, "No, no, no. I love when you ask me. I love when you come to me. I love when you approach me. Keep coming. Keep asking. Keep asking and asking and asking and asking." He is attentive.

Finally, we see that *God is faithful*. He always does what he says he will do. Let's do some more confession together. Husbands, how many of you have... It was innocent. You've just broken some promises to your wife. You said you were going to do this, some things happened, and you weren't able to deliver. Husbands, you've done that?

You're a liar, and you break your promises, so many of you, but I get that. I already knew that because of the Bible, but we've broken promises to our wives. Wives, how many of us have broken promises to our husbands? It wasn't malicious. We didn't mean to be unkind. We said dinner would

be ready, and then the next thing you know, the kid vomited all over the floor. "How am I supposed to do dinner and clean up vomit at the same time? Order pizza. We're going to make it through this. We're fine." Right?

Parents, how many of you have broken promises to your kids? Kids, how many of you have broken promises to your parents? Okay, so here's all I'm trying to prove. This is a universal experience that we as human beings will fail and let people down. Look at me. Yet God is not like us. He always keeps his promises. He is always on time. He is always attentive. His words are always true. We see here that God is faithful.

Here's how I thought we would end our time together. Because these things are true, because we have a God who hears hurting people, we have a God who not just hears but knows, there is no such thing as secrets as far as God is concerned. He knows everything. I don't know if you have that family member who is really terrible at hide-and-go-seek. I know you have your legit spot that even Mom and Dad can't find you, but almost every family has that one person who doesn't quite understand how the game works, are the easiest to find.

They're hiding behind curtains, but from the knees down, they're showing. They're just terrible at hiding. Well, as far as God goes, that's all of us because God knows everything that is going on in our hearts and in our heads and everything that is going on everywhere at once. He is stunning. He is God. Since he hears from us and loves to hear from us and works for our good, then I thought that if we can talk with him, we probably should do that.

I think if we don't stop and take a couple of moments and actually talk with God after talking about how God wants us to talk with him, then it would be a lot like doing a 25-minute talk on chocolate cake, on what all goes in chocolate cake, about how good this chocolate cake is, about all of the ingredients in this chocolate cake, but not actually getting to eat any chocolate cake.

I don't know about you, but I would be like, "Hey, quit flapping the lips and give me some chocolate cake. I'll test it out. I don't need to know how many eggs are in it, bro. Just give me some cake." What I thought we would do is just spend a moment or two thanking God and asking God because God hears. Here's how we're going to do that. First through fifth graders, I'm going to task you with this, because I'm hoping that your parents or some of our singles who are around here are going to think more quickly than you, although I could be wrong.

Here's what I want you to do. First through fifth graders, look right at me. Almost there. I want you to think of two things that you're thankful for. Two things. "I'm thankful for this, and I'm thankful for this." Maybe it's friends. Maybe it's family. Maybe it's somebody who was sick, and now they're not. Just two things you're thankful for. The Bible says that everything good and perfect comes down from the Father of Light. Everything good and perfect in our lives comes from God.

As soon as you have those two things, one or two things that you're thankful for, I want you to just stand up for me so we know you have your two. If you're first through fifth, and you can think of two things you're thankful for, I want you to go ahead and stand up. As soon as we have a good group of you standing, well actually start to thank God for those things specifically.

All right. Praise God. Now, here's what we're going to do. We're going to group up, and we're just going to spend two minutes, maybe, thanking God for these things. If it's your family, your friends... Listen, kids. There is no kind of magic to praying. You don't have to have your fingers interlocked a specific way or use a specific language. We just want to say, "God, thank you for..." You fill in the blank.

Here's what I want you to do. Why don't you gather up as a family? If you're a single here, you belong to the household of faith. Just join a family. You can say, "Hey, I'm joining you guys. You heard him. Pastor Matt told me. I'm part of your family right now, part of the household of faith. He said it. I'm in with you guys." Let's get together. For the next couple of minutes, I just want us to pray out loud. "God, thank you for..." You fill in the blank. Two things we're thankful for. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for the good gifts you've given us. We know that's not long to pray, but we thank you that you just heard us. We thank you for how you're generous to us and good to us, and you give us good gifts. For our families and for our friends and for the dozens of other things we just said thank you for, thank you. We thank you most of all that you know us, that you hear us, and that you work for our good. We bless your name. Thank you. Amen.

Now, the second way I want us to pray... I want to nuance it a bit. The second thing we see in the Bible that God loves when it comes to praying and crying out is God loves to be asked for something. Right? This is the opposite of your parents in a store. Parents in a store do not love to be asked for things.

In fact, most of you have probably had the conversation with your parents where your mom and dad are saying, "Don't ask me for anything in this store. Here is what we're here for. We're going in to get glue sticks and a pot roast. Don't ask me for anything. If you ask me for something, the answer is going to be no, and I'm going to take all your belongings and catch fire to them. Don't ask me for anything." I hope they don't really do that. It was just a point for emphasis.

But the Lord loves to be asked for things. Here's how I want to frame it. I think if you wanted to ask for an Xbox or a pony or a slide that came out of your bedroom window and shot you down into the dining room table, all of those things, the Lord would want to hear. I would like that, but I want to encourage you in this direction. I think the prayers of request ("I would like *this*") that the Lord most loves to hear are those prayers about our hearts, about our minds, and about our families.

Maybe you've picked up as even a first through fifth grader or a single or a married couple that you have an angry heart, and you're not really sure what that's about, or you have a sad heart, and you're just not quite sure what that's about. I wanted to give us the opportunity to just ask God, since he hears, since he knows, since he helps, since he responds, since he's for us, to take a moment or two and just go, "God, will you help with this? Will you give me this? Will you help in this area of my heart, in my mind, in my family?"

Let me give you just a couple of seconds here. That's not as easy as what you're thankful for, but it is a good practice of kind of going, "If I could ask God for anything, what would I ask him for? Specifically, if it had to do with my own heart, my own mind, my own family, where I am with him, how would I do that?" Now, to kind of wrap up our service today, why don't we get around our families. Singles, again, hop in with a family. Let's spend time just asking the Lord to move in those ways in our hearts and minds.

Once again, Father, we just thank you. We do ask these things of you. Where our hearts are sad, help us. Where they're angry, help us. We just ask, Father, that you, in your hearing of our prayers, would be faithful to help us and love us and serve us. I thank you that you are with us in the good and in the bad, that you never abandon us or leave us, but you are always here. We thank you that you're here. We just ask for your help in our hearts, in our minds, and in our families. We need you, Father. Help us. It's for your beautiful name I pray, amen.

I said in the first week we were together in this series that I wondered would happen if we actually lived like we said we believed. What kind of difference would this make in our everyday life if we

actually believed that God was attentive, if we actually believed he heard from us, that he was for us, that he knew what was going on in our lives?

I just have to wonder how life would be different if we actually believed those things, not as concepts but if we actually embraced those things as being true. God sees me. God hears me. God knows me. I wonder what would happen at a deep level, those guttural places, that we would just be confident that, "I'm okay. I'm going to be okay," when it feels like we're not.

Father, give us confidence in these things. We don't want to just know them intellectually; we want to, in the deepest parts of who we are, understand this. We want to have it shape us and mold us, have it drive out loneliness and rage, have it bring peace to our hearts. We want to know that you're good and you haven't forgotten us. Help us. It's for your beautiful name I pray, amen.