



## Exodus (Part 9) – Wrung Out

Matt Chandler – October 23, 2016

---

[Video]

**Female:** From darkness to night, 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. We're going to look at Exodus 5. If you don't have a Bible, there should be a hardback black one somewhere around you. I just want you to grab one so you can have it. We're going to look at all of chapter 5. I just want to point out a couple of things. I'm not sure how long this will be. It could be short. We don't know. Let's just give it a go.

When we last looked at our story in Exodus, what we saw is that Moses showed up to the people of Israel and showed them the three signs that God had given them. Now, remember signs aren't parlor tricks, but rather, they're acts of God outside of the natural order that are meant to point to something beyond themselves. It's not like God is just trying to show off. God is trying to communicate.

There was the staff into the snake. There was the leprosy. There was ultimately the Nile that was turned to blood. If you remember back to the story, Moses shows up in Egypt and gathers the elders and the leaders among the Hebrews and tells them exactly what God said to tell them. "Here I am. God has sent me to you. The, 'I am who I am,' has sent me here. The Lord has sent me here, and here are the signs."

The people understood the signs because the last thing you and I read together was that when they had heard that God had heard their cries and was there to answer those cries, they fell on their

faces and worshipped. We don't want to move too quickly past that moment because it's a significant moment. Here's what I mean by that. For over 400 years, this group of men and women have been oppressed, crushed, murdered, raped, used, abused, treated as sub-human, and they have pled and cried out that God would hear and save and deliver.

Then Moses shows up, the guy who had started that rebellion all of those 40 years ago and had just ruined the whole thing and had run away in fear. He's now back, but now he has some signs. The serpent. "Yeah, I control the serpent, the sign of Egyptian power and might." Leprosy. "This thing the Egyptians have no power over and no ability to conquer, I will conquer it like that." Finally, the Nile. "The very source of their wealth and ability to rule the world is in my hands."

He shows them the signs. If you can imagine the type of rejoicing that would have occurred now that God has heard... Now, if you're human, which I believe is 100 percent... You might have a dog in your purse or something like that. I'll get to that in January when we do the life sermon, but for now, just keep Bootsie quiet during the sermon.

Ultimately, since we're all human, here's what we know. The second we smell hope, our minds and hearts just run wild with it. "Here we go. Good news is here. Let's go get 'em." Then, Exodus 5. This is such an important chapter for us as human beings. Verse 1 of chapter 5.

**"Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'" But Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.'**

**Then they said, 'The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.' But the king of Egypt said to them, 'Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their work? Get back to your burdens.'**

**And Pharaoh said, 'Behold, the people of the land are now many, and you make them rest from their burdens!' The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their foremen..."** By the way, those are Hebrews, not Egyptians. **"You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as in the past; let them go and gather straw for themselves.**

**But the number of bricks that they made in the past you shall impose on them, you shall by no means reduce it, for they are idle. Therefore they cry, "Let us go and offer sacrifice to our God." Let heavier work be laid on the men that they may labor at it and pay no regard to lying words.'**

**So the taskmasters and the foremen of the people went out and said to the people, 'Thus says Pharaoh, "I will not give you straw. Go and get your straw yourselves wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced in the least."' So the people were scattered throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. The taskmasters were urgent, saying, 'Complete your work, your daily task each day, as when there was straw.'**

**And the foremen of the people of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, 'Why have you not done all your task of making bricks today and yesterday, as in the past?' Then the foremen of the people of Israel came and cried to Pharaoh, 'Why do you treat your servants like this? No straw is given to your servants, yet they say to us, "Make bricks!" And behold, your servants are beaten; but the fault is in your own people.'**

**But he said, 'You are idle, you are idle; that is why you say, "Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord." Go now and work. No straw will be given you, but you must still deliver the same number of bricks.' The foremen of the people of Israel saw that they were in trouble when they said, 'You shall by no means reduce your number of bricks, your daily task each day.'**

**They met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting for them, as they came out from Pharaoh; and they said to them, 'The Lord look on you and judge, because you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.' Then Moses turned to the Lord and said, 'O Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all.'"**

It just went from better to much worse. Here we go. We get the good news. Hope is infused. There is excitement about what might come. What we just read really could be described as the anatomy of disappointment. It's the anatomy of disappointment. There is excitement. There is hope. God has finally heard. God is going to work.

Things just got a lot harder. "This is not what I had in mind. This is not what I had in view when I got the good news that God was for me, that God was going to save, that God was going to rescue, that God was going to help, that God was going to come alongside. I had my own vision of what was going to come, and it wasn't getting beaten worse and overworked near to death. It was just not in my 20-year plan."

What we all know about disappointment is disappointment is always rooted in hope. You can't be disappointed if you didn't first hope that something would be different. Let's just be honest. No one here is exempt from this. Every one of us had this kind of vision for our lives. We had this vision for what life would be like. For some of us, that was in Christ. For some of us, that was before Christ and during Christ and after Christ. We just have this vision of what we think life should be and how it should work.

Then when it doesn't happen, disappointment sets in. We can say a lot about disappointment. It shatters our dreams, and that is not overstated. It shatters our dreams. It erodes our confidence. It highlights our limitations and inadequacies, something we can hardly live with in this day and age because we bought into the hype that we're not limited. If we just worked hard enough, we could do anything we wanted to do.

I'm glad your mom loves you. She lied to you. It's just not true. You can't. You just can't. It diminishes our hope. It makes us even hesitant to hope again in any real way. It can make us feel desolate and lonely. Doesn't disappointment make you feel a little lonely? Especially if you think about the world we live in, with Instagram and Facebook and just the faux happiness of everyone on earth slammed right into your face.

Doesn't it make you feel alone when you're disappointed? It creates doubt and fear. It can cause us to question our belief in God, his very existence. It certainly can make us wrestle with whether or not we think God is actually trustworthy and for us. In a very real way, what disappointment does is it just takes hold of us, and it just wrings us out.

If we thought about vitality and energy and life as a sponge filled with water, disappointment is the act of wringing that sponge out dry. We said from week one in the series... This is why I have been so excited about Exodus, because it hits us right where we are, and there is much more to come. In fact, through May 26, we're going to just watch God work among us and in us and through us

through this beautiful tale of recreation and God setting up his people to be a light to the world around them.

What we see here is a common experience we all have. We said in week one and week two that God is working a plan, and that plan is almost always going to play out differently than we think it's going to. We said that. Do you remember that? In fact, that was one of the big premises that we wanted to set before we could get to doing a chapter at a time. We wanted to very slowly say to everyone on repeat so that we could get it in our gut that God is working a plan, and that plan is a good plan, but it will almost always play out differently than we think it should.

We said all of those weeks ago, like five weeks ago now, that there are some things we need to adjust in order to take those waves in such a way that they don't drown us. Here are the three things we said we were going to need to do if we were going to be able to survive God's good, right plan playing out in ways that are confusing and disorienting and, if we're really honest, really disappointing at times.

The first thing is we're going to have to come to grips with our humanity. What we said is we're going to have to acknowledge our limitations. We're just going to have to acknowledge that we're not ultimate, that God is. For all of mankind's giftedness, no man is omnipotent, has all the power there is. No man is omnipresent, is everywhere at once in his fullness. No man is omniscient, knows everything and everywhere at once, seamlessly past, present, and future all flowing together, one event leading to other events leading to other events. Only God is in that space. We're not.

Our position is one of a gnat trying to figure out complex chemistry. We're just not going to do a good job at it. Look, if you're straight, even with your human brain, you're not going to do a good job at it. We're less. We have to acknowledge our limitations, that God is going to behave in ways that are really confusing to us. We have to acknowledge our limitations. You have to grow comfortable in the sovereign brilliant size of God as opposed to our tininess.

I've said it to you. I know. The rest of your week is spent with people trying to convince you in the other direction, but to be small and in the hands of an infinite God is so much better than being big and strong and bold and able and having all things under control. No, just be small and in his hands. It's awesome. Just embrace the fact that you can't, and he can, so we should probably let him. It's just such a better way to do life.

That's not all we need to acknowledge. We also... I said this, but I want to give better and more detailed examples this time. We're going to have to learn to read the Scriptures honestly, read the Bible honestly. Again, in a world where people can take texts and create a little meme out of it and stick it on Instagram, just proof text verses about how easy life is, and if you just trust God, then \$100 bills will rain down on you, and you will never get sick again.

These verses are pulled out of Scriptures with a complete disregard for the Bible's complete honesty of what life is like in a Genesis 3 world, a world that is fallen and broken with sin. Let me give you some examples. The one I used that week was in John 16:33. **"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace."** "I have said some hard things to you because I want you to walk in peace." **"In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart..."** Why? What was that? **"...I have overcome the world."**

Look. That's not soft-selling life. "In this world, you will have tribulation. You will have difficulty. You will cry. You will hurt. You will get sick. People you love will be lost. In this world, you will have tribulation, but take heart." Why? "Because I'm here. Because I have you. Because I have overcome the world." Some of my other... It's weird to call these passages favorites, but they really are because I think that if you'll stop for a minute, these are warm blankets on our soul, because this is the world we live in, not the imaginary world we thought up. This is the one we're in right now.

In Matthew 11:2-6, there is this surreal and, I think, beautiful moment where John the Baptist is in prison. Basically, he has called out the ruler of Rome there in Jerusalem because he has divorced his wife and is sleeping with somebody who is not his wife. John the Baptist calls him out and is then arrested. There is not a lot of free speech in the Roman Empire.

John the Baptist is arrested and thrown in prison, which seems really strange, since he's the one who makes a way for the Lord, prepares a way for the Lord. He understands himself to be the frontrunner of Jesus Christ. He has been faithful. In fact, even Jesus would say that born of man, there is not a greater man born than John the Baptist. If you have a resume, and Jesus is like, "Of all humans besides me, this guy is incredible. I have the fully God thing going for me also. Just man, John the Baptist. He's my kind of people."

John the Baptist is now in prison, death sentence more than likely coming. We pick up the story. The story is super intriguing. Here's what he says in verse 2. **"Now when John heard in prison about**

**the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'**"

Here's what has happened. John the Baptist is in prison. He hears all of the things that Jesus is doing, and he's like, "Okay, I get it, but why am I in prison? Something has gone wrong here." Have you been there? "Something is not adding up in my life because I've been faithfully preaching Christ. I've been eating locusts and honey.

I have sacrificed everything for the plan of God. Something has gone wrong here. Guys, go find Jesus and ask him, 'Are you the one, or should we be waiting for somebody else? Was I wrong when I baptized him in the Jordan? I could have sworn the Holy Spirit fell at that moment.'" Look at Jesus' response. It's stunning.

**"And Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.'"**

On the surface, that just looks like great news, but here is what Jesus just did. Jesus just quoted the prophet Isaiah concerning the coming of the Messiah. He quoted verbatim outside of one little line. Do you know what the line was? "And the prisoners will be set free." The very last line of that Isaiah prophetic word about the coming of the Messiah is, "The prisoners will be set free."

If you have a verse memorized in your mind, and somebody starts to say it, you're kind of able to finish it. If you're John the Baptist, and you're in prison, and your guy runs back and is like, "Okay, here's what he said. Do you remember the prophet Isaiah? He quoted him. Here's what he says." He starts to quote Isaiah. What do you think John the Baptist does? "Okay. Uh-huh. Oh yeah. Yeah. Lepers. Okay. Got it. Deaf. Blind. That's all he said? Wait, that's all? No, no, no. Isaiah said the prisoners will be set free."

Let me just try to explain what just happened. Jesus just said to John the Baptist, "I am the one, and you're going to die in prison." Again, I can just feel Jeremiah's angst. First, it's important to know that in Jeremiah 1, God comes to Jeremiah. Here's what he says to Jeremiah. "If you will say what I tell you to say and go where I tell you to go, I'm going to give you the power to build up nations and destroy them."

I'm going to be straight with you. I don't know too many men who would turn that gig down. I just don't. I just don't know a lot of men that if God showed them, "Just with your mouth, I'm going to make you such a good communicator with such force that you say what I tell you. You're going to build up nations, and you're going to destroy them." "Bro, I am in. I want my life to matter, to count. Build up nations. Tear them down. That's my kind of talk right there." It's like a pre-game speech.

Then what happens is almost every time Jeremiah opens his mouth and testifies what God tells him to testify, he is beaten. He is imprisoned. He is thrown bloody into a ditch. Finally, after Jeremiah faithfully says what the Lord told him to say, he is literally beaten naked and thrown bloodied into a ditch, and here's what he says to the Lord in Jeremiah 20:7-8.

**"O Lord, you have deceived me, and I was deceived; you are stronger than I, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all the day; everyone mocks me. For whenever I speak, I cry out, I shout, 'Violence and destruction!' For the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long."**

Remember that what we said last week is the power of God almost always flows through obedience rooted in faith. Obedience to what? The Word of God. Jeremiah says, "You tricked me. You deceived me." He literally just said, "You lied to me. I did what you told me to do, and the only thing that has been torn down is me. I am a laughingstock. I am mocked all the day long. The word in my mouth is derision and shame."

If you were the brother praying like that at home group... Aren't you just scooting your chair back just a little bit? "I don't know what's up with Jeremiah tonight, but we'll pray for him." What is this? Look at me. This is heartbroken disappointment. Jeremiah loved Israel. He loved the people of God, and they were far from God. As a pastor, what do you think his heart is like when God says, "Look, I'm going to build up a nation and tear it down"?

He's saying to Jeremiah, "I'm going to draw my people back to me." Jeremiah is good-hearted. He's out there proclaiming the Word of God in the hopes that his brothers and sisters would repent and come back to the living God and be rooted in what is true and right for their own good and the glory of God in the ancient world.



When the book of Jeremiah ends, Israel is led into captivity, and Jeremiah with them. We don't like Bible studies like this, right? We don't. The Bible is filled with this. King David in 1 Chronicles 28:2-3 will be my last example here. I know some of you are like, "Whew! Amen." It says, "**Then King David rose to his feet and said: 'Hear me, my brothers and my people. I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord and for the footstool of our God, and I made preparations for building.'**" You're going to learn more about that in the spring.

Look at verse 3. "**But God said to me, 'You may not build a house for my name, for you are a man of war and have shed blood.'**" Look at me. Who sent David out to war against the Philistines? God did. Do you want to talk about some serious discombobulation? "David, make war. I want you to drive out the Philistines. I want you to destroy. I want you to go on a rampage for those who despise my name. I want you to lay hold."

If you've ever worried about David as you read through the Psalms, and he's coming off as schizophrenic, think of... There is just no way this brother doesn't have PTSD. I mean, he has killed hundreds and hundreds of people at point blank range. He has seen the slaughter of friends. He has seen... His life is marked by war, and his heart's desire...

I mean, if you think of the cries of David's heart... "One thing I ask and all I seek is to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple." When you think about the psalms where he laments not being able to go in and worship the Lord... He is a man whose heart is captivated by God. He has been obedient to God. Now he wants to build for God the temple. God goes, "No. You're a man of war. You've killed too many people. I'm not going to let you." David is heartbroken.

Spoiler alert on Exodus. Moses doesn't make it into the Promised Land. I hate to give away the punch line for May, but he's not going to make it in. All of this faithfulness, and he's not... The Bible is filled with this, and we ignore it. We have to read the Bible honestly. You and I in 2016 are looking back at these men as these mighty men of faith.

Tell me they didn't accomplish all God had for them. We're here. It's crazy that you and I are in Dallas, Texas, worshipping Jesus. That's insane. What are we doing? This is on the other side of the earth. What are we doing here? Faithful men and women. That's what we're doing here. Their stories played out differently than they thought they should, but God moves the ball. We don't.

We're just faithful, ordinary people, one day at a time, faithfully doing what God is calling us to do. It's God who moves the ball. It's God who is faithful.

We need to read the Bible honestly so we're not surprised in the day of trouble. We should never be surprised in the day of trouble. Natural disaster shouldn't surprise you. Disease shouldn't surprise you. Death shouldn't surprise you. I'm not saying that not being surprised means it hurts less. It doesn't hurt less, but if we're going to survive waves of disappointment we need to acknowledge our limitations as human beings, but we also need to read the Bible honestly.

Lastly... I will preach this until you take my face mic away. Even then, I think my voice could carry this room for at least three or four services before it gave. If we're going to survive the waves of disappointment that are sure and bound to come to all of us, we must continually look to the cross of Jesus Christ as the objective evidence that God is for us and not against us, that he sacrificed his own Son to purchase us as sons and daughters by his blood.

If you start putting all of these pieces together, you can really start to draw some parallels in regard to how you... If you have children right now... I disappoint my children all the time. Sometimes it's because I'm not all I should be for them, but sometimes it's because I know more than them, and I'm going to tell them no, and they're going to be disappointed, but I know it's best for them.

Now, there are some things... Here we go. We need those things to help us survive the disappointment, but there are some things that can be present in our lives that will exacerbate or make disappointment even worse. That's what I think you see happening in this text. Let me give you three things quickly that kind of exacerbate what is absolutely coming into your life.

In fact, some of you might be in that right now. You are so disappointed right now, so lack trust in God, so just feel like, "I can't trust him again. I've already been through that. I'm not doing it. I just really doubt that he's good or is even there. If he is there, I just don't know that he's good." What can exacerbate disappointment? We see three things in this text.

1. *Halfhearted obedience*. I want to unpack that. Look at verse 1. **"Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'"** Look at me. That's not what God asked him to say. In chapter 3, he is guaranteed full liberation.

What is he doing? He's saying, "Well, that seems a little aggressive God. I know this king. I'm just saying, if I say that, it's going to go badly. I'm going to help you, Lord. I get it. I just met you. We're going to get to know each other. Let me help you out here." He asks for a few days to go rest. This is halfhearted obedience, and it makes disappointment worse.

Maybe this would help. I think it makes disappointment worse because somehow we've justified that we're being obedient when we're not and that God should have done something because we were obedient even though we weren't really obedient. Are you tracking with that? If I could... Once again, throughout this series, I want to press on what I see in front of me.

We easily spend most of our times in marriages at The Village Church, the brokenness in those marriages, the hurt in those marriages. It's very real. It's very painful. It's ever-present. I think one of the things we oftentimes see is men and women who are just so disappointed in what their relationships have turned out to be. A lot of times, they have not been obedient to the Lord in regard to trying to cultivate that.

Not always. Sometimes they have been, and there is either abuse or neglect or some other type of foolishness or wickedness or sin, but oftentimes, what we see is a man who has not given himself over to full obedience to cultivate his wife's heart, to love her and serve her and build her up and encourage her and then is really frustrated at this, this, and this, but he hasn't given himself over to full obedience, or a wife who has not given herself over to full obedience and is really disappointed in the Lord.

What did we say about the power of God? It almost always flows through... What? Obedience rooted in faith. Our horizontal relationships can oftentimes be on fire. There can be all of this disappointment about these horizontal relationships, yet we have not been fully obedient to the Lord. We have been halfhearted at best. What would it look like to just sell out?

My son is playing a little tackle football right now. He's not actually on the team. He's just practicing with them. It's fun that coaches are still saying the same stuff they were saying when I played. If you're like, "You played?" I was on the team, all right. Here's what these coaches are telling him. "Full speed, or you're going to get hurt. You'd better go full speed. If you kind of trot in there, you're going to get yourself hurt, so you need to go full speed."

That mantra was laid on us in my football years like it was the only thing the coach could say, like he had been electrocuted or something and was on repeat. Someone needed to smack him so he could move on to whatever was next. No, no, no. It was, "Full speed. Full speed." Every play. Every time. Over and over and over.

This is what it looks like to be fully obedient. "Full speed. I'm going to obey you in whatever you ask. I'm going in. I'm going to trust you with the results." We're not being obedient to get results. God help us in the 'burbs. We're driven by results. "If I don't get results, why should I spent my time?" Because God is getting results you can't see or fathom. God is getting results. You want results to feel better about you, not to be in any kind of glad submission to God.

2. *Fear*. From a human perspective, what we see is a clash of titans. Now, we know all of these millennia later, looking back at the Scriptures, that it's not really a clash of titans at all. In fact, it's an NFL linebacker playing with a kitten. Even that is probably soft-selling it. Look at what is happening really if you dial in to what is happening. In verse 1, it says, "**The Lord says...**" Then in verse 10, it says, "**Thus says Pharaoh...**"

In verse 9, Pharaoh calls God a liar. You have, "**Thus says the Lord...**" Then you have, "**Thus says Pharaoh...**" "You tell him Pharaoh said..." Moses is saying, "God said..." You have this space where there is this huge argument about what is true and what is right and who the people should serve, and Pharaoh is calling God a liar.

The interesting thing that is happening here is God says to the people of Israel, "Come out and rest." Pharaoh says, "No, stay in and work." Pharaoh thinks they need work. God says they need rest. It's all about who the people will serve. It's interesting to note here and as we think about our own relationship with the Lord that the Hebrew words for *slave* and *worship* are the same word.

God is not going, "You know what? Come on out into the wilderness and just lie down." No, no, no. "You come out, and you worship me. You serve me." This works even in our English language. Are we not in a real way in a worship *service*? We're here to serve the Lord, to praise the Lord, to make much of the Lord, and to be recipients of the kindness and grace of God among us.

The words are similar, but look at where the people side. Look at verses 15 and 16. "**Then the foremen of the people of Israel came and cried to Pharaoh, 'Why do you treat...'**" What?

**"...your servants like this? No straw is given to..." Who? "...your servants, yet they say to us, 'Make bricks!' And behold, your servants are beaten; but the fault is in your own people."**

There is this clash of titans, per the human perspective, Pharaoh ("Thus says Pharaoh...") and the Lord ("Thus says the Lord..."), with the prize being the service or the worship of Israel. The people, frightened, used to their oppression, frail and weak, worshipped just a few verses ago and are now calling themselves servants, worshippers of Pharaoh. "Your servants. Why would you do this to your servants? We serve you. Why would you do this to us? We're making bricks for you."

Who you ultimately work for is who you ultimately worship. The activity and the intensity of your minutes, seconds, efforts, and days, if you pay close attention to that, who you're working for is actually who you really worship. This is why I think Jesus can say, "If you want to know where your heart is, look at your wallet." Who you work for is who you worship.

I think what we have here is a fear that is wrongly placed and leading to greater slavery. See, good fear creates confidence, and bad fear creates a type of enslavement. Good fear is our confidence, knowing the full scope of Scripture, being confident that our God is the, "I am who I am." We are confident that our God is able and will ultimately, when all is said and done, accomplish all he is going to do. We're confident and fear him because he is big and holy and profound, and nothing can stay his hand.

The fear of man begins to kind of lose its sway over us, and we find ourselves not working for the approval of men, not working for the gaining of trinkets and toys, not working for our own self-value and worth, but we find ourselves, when fear is rightly placed, working to please the Lord, serving the Lord in gladness. We see here that their fear is misplaced.

3. *Forgetfulness.* I put here that only the love, patient, and grace of God is more consistent in the Scriptures than the forgetfulness of God's people. Look at verse 22. **"Then Moses turned to the Lord and said, 'O Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all.'"**

Well, I feel like... I don't have the sharpest mind, but I think God has told him that this is exactly what is going to happen like four times, starting back in chapter 3. "You're going to go. You're going to tell Pharaoh. I'm going to harden his heart. He's not going to listen. I'm going to show signs and

wonders. I'm going to pull you out completely. You're going to go and tell him this is my name. He's not going to listen. His heart is going to be hardened. Things are going to get harder. With signs and wonders, I will lead you out.

Moses, you're going to go. You're going to meet with Pharaoh. First, you're going to meet with the elders of Israel. They're going to sing and rejoice. Then you're going to go to Pharaoh. He's not going to listen. His heart is going to be hardened. He's going to put heavy burdens on the people. With signs and wonders, I will lead you out. You will plunder them."

Then what happens? At the first little sign of opposition, the first little sign of difficulty, Moses has forgotten everything about the snake and the hand and the blood and the burning bush and the voice of God and that obedience rooted in faith is the conduit through which the power of God flows. In a second, all of the mercies of God in his past have vanished, and all he is aware of is the current crisis and loss. He forgot. He forgot.

We are not different than him. I've been a pastor of this church for 14 years. We are not different from him. It doesn't take much for us to forget the billions of ways God has been faithful to us leading up to this moment of crisis. Then the wave comes in, and we feel betrayed and deceived and lied to, and we forget all of those answered prayers and those moments where God really sustained us when we really didn't think we would make it through.

We forget all about the tender mercies God has given us, the common grace he has given to all of us. The way you see it most often is nobody really praises God that they're healthy, but they certainly complain when they're sick. If you woke up and had good energy and are able to work out and run and do the things you kind of love... It's a rare thing, in the middle of your workout, to just be like, "Praise your name, Jesus."

I'm not saying that you don't call out to Jesus in the middle of your workout. I'm saying that in the middle of one, you're just not really grateful that you have movement and mobility and the physical ability to do those things. There are some people who don't, but you're not one of them. There is very little gratitude and gratefulness in our hearts for that. Why? Because we deserve that.

Now, once you ask, "Why do you deserve that?" things start to fall apart. It's a forgetfulness that makes disappointment so much worse. If you're not forgetting, when disappointment lands, you have this treasure trove of God's faithfulness behind you, so you can swim pretty well on that wave

when you just remember, "We've been here before. God has been good." When you think about this, "God saved me."

I oftentimes, in moments of just trying to remember God's goodness in my life, wonder about why I cared when Jeff started sharing the gospel with me. When my friend in high school started to share the gospel, why was I interested? Why didn't I just go, "You're a weirdo, Jeff. Leave me alone." Wouldn't it have been cool for me to just say something witty and sharp? I don't know if you've picked up on that. I have that natural gift.

Jeff is like, "I need to tell you about Jesus. When do you want to do that?" Wouldn't the most natural thing for me to do in that moment be for me to have some snide remark that dismissed him as a fool? Why didn't I? Why did I think church was such a goofy thing and keep going back? Why did I find this insatiable desire and need to understand? "I'm far from God. What is that?" It's God wooing me. It's God calling me unto himself.

God saved me. I wasn't looking for him. He came and found me. That's amazing. How could I ever question the other waves my wife and I and I as a man have had to ride when he saved me, stuck his hands down into the muck and the mire and pulled me out and set my feet on a rock? For the last 20 years, he has refined and cleaned and healed and put me back together in ways I couldn't imagine. How could I dare question him because of this wave or that wave?

Brother, sister, I have ridden some waves. Don't forget. Remember. I want to end our time just with this. Here is the thing about disappointment. Here is where I think you can take disappointment and leverage it for your own spiritual good. You're going to have it. We already agreed on that. This isn't a sermon on how not to have disappointment. "Just have really low expectations." No. Don't ever do that. I want you to have the highest expectations imaginable.

Because we're not God, we hold all of those expectations with open hands and never clench down onto them because we don't know because he's eternal, and we're not, so we know he can. When I was sick... One of the things I wanted to draw your attention to is the fiery furnace, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Do you know why? Their response to Nebuchadnezzar was, "God can save us. He will save us. And even if he doesn't..."

Gosh, I love that. "He can. He will. But even if he doesn't, I'm going to praise him." That's the default position of the Christian's heart. "I know he can." It's not, "I don't know. The Lord probably won't."

We never want to be there. We never want to be, "He probably won't." We always want to fight against even our doubts that in the moment, while we're praying, God will completely heal this person.

We just want to believe, "No, you will heal. I'm going to cling to that. I'm going to trust that you're able, and I want to even rebuke myself here for a moment for even doubting for a second that you would be willing." If you're like, "Well, doesn't Jesus teach us to pray, 'Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'"? Yeah, but the will of God is going to be done, but he has also commanded you to ask for healing. Right?

We're not setting low bars. We have this crazy high bar. We hold it all with an open hand. Here's where you can redeem your disappointment. Disappointments will reveal what is really going on in your heart, what you really want, what you're really after, what it is you truly desire. The Bible is right when it says the heart is deceptive above all things.

How do we know? Well, when you pick up that, it's really disappointing. Okay, so why? Why is it disappointing? "Well, I really wanted this." And your wants? Listen. Your wants... I'm guessing your disappointments aren't built around not getting bad things. They're probably good things that you wanted that you didn't get that you're disappointed about.

They reveal your heart. More than likely, the idols of the evangelical heart are good things, not wicked things. They are good things made ultimate that ultimately enslave. They reveal your heart. Here's what I want us to do. Would you do me a favor? Just bow your heads and close your eyes. Let's just spend a moment or two together.

I know, Plano, this might be weird for you, but just go ahead and bow your heads and close your eyes. Nobody is really looking around but me, and it doesn't matter. You're going to leave this place. I just want to give you an opportunity here. I want to give you permission. I want to show you that you're in such good company in the Bible if you're in that space where you're disappointed, weary, struggling with doubt, feel overwhelmed, don't know how much longer you can hang in there.

I want just to ask this question. If you're in this place and your confession would be, "If I have to be honest before God, who already knows me, already knows what is going on in my heart, I'm disappointed. I'm trying to hang in there, but I had this picture of what life would be like. I had a picture of what marriage would look like. I had a picture of what work would be like. I had a picture



of what things would look like, and I have been walking in disappointment for a while now, and I'm a bit weary and overwhelmed by it all."

Would you do me a favor? If that's you, would you just raise your hand? You don't need to be embarrassed by that. "I'm just disappointed." All right. Praise God. Why don't you put your hands down? Now, let me encourage you in this way. There were a lot of hands that just went up in the room. Let me end just by laying this before you. One of the reasons we want to be serious at The Village Church about a couple of things...

One is we want to be serious about it being okay to not be okay. We don't ever want you to pretend that you're not disappointed if you are, because that's going to eat you up and destroy you. We want you to understand that it's okay to not be okay. It's also why we're really serious about you actually belonging and not just attending, to be in a group with other people where you can be honest about, "Hey, I'm in this season in my life where I'm really disappointed. Here's what I'm disappointed at."

See, studying the Scriptures, knowing the Bible in community is how God shapes and molds and moves us. That's why even in the announcements this weekend, you heard so much about GroupConnect, and Connect Singles, and these things you have opportunities to be a part of because we're trying to put you with other people who can walk alongside of you in this disappointment. Let me pray for you who raised your hands and those who should have and didn't and bless you. From there, we just want to respond to the Lord in our time together.

Father, thank you for these men and women. I thank you for the boldness of so many who lifted their hands and said, "Right now, I'm just disappointed. I just had this picture of life. It has not gone like I planned. I'm blaming God for that mostly." Thank you that the good news of the gospel isn't that things go our way but that you go our way. Thank you that you are enough regardless of the disappointments in this room. Build our faith to believe that and embrace that and love that. You are King over all, and we praise you. It's for your beautiful name I pray, amen.