

Exodus (Part 31) – Drawn In

Matt Chandler – May 21, 2017

[Video]

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 that 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 as 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.

The Israelites found themselves in a harsh wilderness. Though they had just witnessed God's power and might in rescuing them, the people doubted their Deliverer would provide and, instead, complained of hunger and thirst. A few days later, they found manna on the ground, sweet and good to eat, and the Lord told Moses to strike a rock with his staff, giving them water to drink. The Lord had provided yet again.

As the Israelites approached Mount Sinai, Moses delivered a word from God. If they obeyed and kept God's covenant, God would make them his treasured possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, and the people promised to do so. Three days later, the mountain shook as a sound like a trumpet grew louder and louder. Then the Lord came down in fire and smoke. When the people heard God's voice, they grew afraid and asked Moses to speak with God on their behalf.

God gave Moses many laws and instructions, including the Ten Commandments, and the Hebrews promised to worship the Lord alone and to keep his laws. Moses spent 40 days and nights on the mountain with God and returned to find the people bowing down to an idol. They had forgotten their promise. Moses burned the idols and atoned for the people's sin, and though God punished the Israelites, he did not destroy them completely.

After the Israelites repented of their unfaithfulness, they went to work making everything the Lord had instructed. They sewed fine garments for Aaron and his sons and consecrated them with oil for their service as priests. They built the ark of the covenant to hold the tablets of the Law and also built the tabernacle where God would dwell with his people...Yahweh, the one who drew them out of slavery.

Though the Israelites would endure more strife and hardship, they continued on in hope toward the Promised Land. The story of Israel is the story of us today. We are God's people. He draws us out to draw us in, and, like the Israelites, we still await the Promised Land in the midst of our sin and suffering, yet God is with us.

[End of video]

If you have your Bibles, go ahead and grab those. We're going to be in Exodus, chapter 40. We've shown some version of that video for 31 weeks. There's a phrase we very purposefully put in not just this video but in almost all of the artwork around the study of the book of Exodus, and that's the little phrase *he draws us out to draw us in*.

When we wanted to communicate to you in a really simple way the story of the book of Exodus, what we're talking about... What we've been talking about is God drawing us out of slavery, drawing us out of sin and death to draw us in. Now what I want to do is make it crystal clear what we've been drawn into.

So that's my point in our last gathering on the book of Exodus: to clarify as best I can what it means to be drawn *in*. I think we know what it means to be drawn *out*. Out of sin and death, out of slavery and into...what? Let's now read, starting in verse 16 through the end of the book of Exodus.

"This Moses did; according to all that the LORD commanded him, so he did. In the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was erected. Moses erected the tabernacle. He laid its bases, and set up its frames, and put in its poles, and raised up its pillars. And he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent over it, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

He took the testimony and put it into the ark, and put the poles on the ark and set the mercy seat above on the ark. And he brought the ark into the tabernacle and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony, as the LORD had commanded Moses. He put the table in the tent of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil, and arranged the bread on it before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

He put the lampstand in the tent of meeting, opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle..." This is stunning detail "...and set up the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. He put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil, and burned fragrant incense on it, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

He put in place the screen for the door of the tabernacle. And he set the altar of burnt offering at the entrance of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the grain offering, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

He set the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing, with which Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet. When they went into the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed, as the LORD commanded Moses. And he erected the court around the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court."

From this moment on, we're going to focus on *this* text. I wanted you to get the feel that this thing is being put together now. They built it. They made it. God has commanded it, and now it's starting to come together, but we're going to camp out now starting in the second half of verse 33 to the end of the book.

"So Moses finished the work. Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys."

There are three ways to think about the future. The three ways, primarily, that people think about the future is, first, they think about heaven without earth. If you have a church background, the narrative goes like this. Like, finally God is done with it, so Jesus kind of comes back in an X-wing fighter. He drops two torpedoes down on the earth, and it explodes, but not before we're all snatched up into the sky so we don't have to deal with any of that. We get sucked up in the rapture, and the earth is destroyed forever.

I don't want to make too many theological jabs other than to say that's not biblically accurate. At least I'm certainly not of the camp that thinks it is. Maybe that would be a better way to say it. It makes for great terrible movies, but not necessarily in line with God's vision for the redemption of all things. If the earth gets destroyed, does not the Devil win? What you have is this idea that one day the earth will go to the junkyard, and we'll kind of be like Tom and Jerry, in the heavens as a spirit, playing on a harp for eternity. Again, this is out of step with the biblical story.

What happens when you think this way is you're able to discard things that really matter, like beauty and creativity. These things don't matter to you if the earth just goes away. Creation care doesn't matter. Nothing matters except what we want, what we want to do, and how we want to do it. So that's one of the ways to think about the future. There's heaven without an earth.

Another way to think about the future is earth without heaven. You and I live in a day and age where *this* is the dominant air people are breathing. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. You'd better get yours now, because that's all there really is, and if there *is* an afterlife, I'm going to heaven, because I'm a good person." By and large, people live as though duty doesn't matter, no judgment is coming, and they should just do what befits their gut in the now.

I saw a graph this week that Mark Sayers put out. I love Mark Sayers. You can read any of his books. Just a stunning, brilliant sociological mind, filled with the Holy Spirit. Just a real gift of God to the church. He put out this chart that tracked the rise of the understanding of individual rights with the decline of the idea of duty. The more and more we think life is all about us, the more and more the idea of duty and sacrifice vanishes. It was fascinating to watch secularization and the idea of individual rights increase while the idea of duty collapses.

This is the pull of our day. "Do what you want right now. Forget the cost, because this is all you have. So don't stay married. You only have one run at this. Don't say 'no' to those impulses, because it's your life, and you'd better get all you can while you can." This is a view of the future. "There is no heaven. This is all we have, so I'll be danged if I'm not going to drink and eat and give in to my impulses."

Then the third vision, and the vision we really see in the book of Exodus and, I would argue, the Bible is heaven *on* earth. This is the future that Exodus is pointing us to. This is certainly the future the tabernacle communicates. If you were here when JT English taught on the tabernacle, he tied it

back to Eden. Now don't forget, as we end Exodus, that Exodus is book two of five books. We're in the middle of a story. I don't have time for the *Star Wars* illustration again.

God created everything good and right and beautiful, and sin fractured it, and then when God saved his people out of slavery, out of sin and death, he began to "re-Edenize" the world. Everything in the tabernacle is meant to communicate that God is re-Edenizing the world. He's bringing us back to the beauty of life as he designed it to be in him. That's what the tabernacle communicates.

When we believe and embrace a future where God is making all things new and re-Edenizing the earth, that actually moves us toward real practical obedience that makes a massive difference when it comes to both the definition of human flourishing and the actual flourishing of humankind. See, if we are going to be in heaven on earth, that means creativity and beauty matter. They matter to God.

It is God who created cotton-candy skies. It is God who created the mountains. This natural beauty is his idea. He didn't need to do that. It could be a bland world, but his glory is shown across all creation...his creativity, his brilliance, his beauty. So Christians should love creativity and art. We should love beautiful things. We should cultivate it. We should participate in it. We should give ourselves over to the creation of beautiful things because we believe in heaven on earth.

It means that while we love what is beautiful, we lament what is broken. We lament the fact that this is not the world God created it to be, that things have been broken, that injustice is alive and well. Our hearts break over that, which moves us toward the poor, which moves us toward fighting against injustice, and then lastly, we believe God is re-Edenizing the world, which compels us to share the gospel to all.

These are practical, moving things that occur. If you actually believe this, that we're going to be heaven on earth, that God is going to make all things new... That fire you're reading about in 1 Peter that consumes is a refining fire. It's burning away impurities, not destroying forever. Again, if the earth is destroyed utterly, then Satan has won and has stolen from God his crown jewel. Look at me. Satan doesn't win. He just doesn't win. That's just not going to be his trophy.

A victory belongs to God's Enemy and *our* Enemy if the earth is destroyed, because Satan could say, "I took that from God. I stole it out of his hands." He doesn't have that kind of power. He just doesn't have that kind of power or authority. So we believe God will make all things new *here*, and we will

reign and rule on a new heaven and new earth for eternity alongside our King. That's what the tabernacle points to. That's what we believe: in the re-Edenization of the world.

Now when we see the cloud of God's glory fall on the tabernacle, we're seeing four things about the nature and character of God. Look back at those last five words of verse 33 into verse 34. **"So Moses finished the work. Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."**

Now I rarely do this. I rarely *want* to do this, because I don't ever want to take from you confidence in the Word of God. What happened here in the ESV and in the NIV because they're not word-for-word translations, which means they're trying to get across sentence-to-sentence translation to you... Sometimes they'll add a word, like they did here, and the word they added here was *then*. There's a promptness in this text in the Hebrew that you're not seeing in the ESV.

The text we just read from our Bible says, **"So Moses finished the work. Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."** In reality, it reads, "So Moses finished the work, the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." What you see in the Hebrew is a promptness, like God was ready to just pounce on it. God is eager to fulfill his covenant promises.

God is eager. Not in an anxious way. Maybe when you think about your *own* eagerness you kind of equate that to anxiety. God can't be anxious. He's God. But he *is* eager. If we could just use our sanctified imaginations, that the God of the universe, wanting to dwell among his people, is watching them obey and build the tabernacle... "Okay, there's the basin. Are they putting it where I told them? Okay, they put it where I told them. Okay, here comes the screen." *Boom!*

He's eager to dwell among his people. He's happy to do it. He just can't wait to get in there with his people. Now think about how you consider God. Think about how we tend to think about God. Most of us think God is actively avoiding, and at least we hope he's not watching, but the God of the Bible is eager. He wants to get in there. You see this not just here but throughout the Scriptures. I love in the first chapter of Galatians when the apostle Paul, who is Saul of Tarsus, who hated God and tried to kill Christians, wrote that it pleased the Father to reveal the Son.

In my mind, because I know the story in Acts, what happens is Saul of Tarsus gets up that morning. He's headed to imprison, kill, and destroy, driven by demonic power and his own fleshliness. He

saddles up his horse, and the Lord is like, "Yeah, saddle up that horse. Hop up on it. Yeah, yeah, come on. You have your papers to imprison and kill my people? Okay, grab those papers. Is your sword sharp? Make sure that sword is sharp. Now hop on. Head on to Damascus." *Boom!* And he saved him. I mean, just saved him. Like, pounced on him.

He knew that morning when Saul of Tarsus woke up that Saul of Tarsus wouldn't go to sleep that night, but Paul, who would be an apostle, would go to sleep that night. This is the eagerness of God to save, the eagerness of God to step into the brokenness of mankind and heal and fix, and you're seeing it as the glory of God slams into the tabernacle the second it's completed. God is eager. He longs. We shouldn't be surprised by this.

At nearly every point in our story, it is God who initiates, God who comes toward us, God who rescues us, God who saves us, God who delivers us, God who forgives us, God who extends mercy to us, God who provides for us. This is the same God who gave them water, gave them food, gave them divine protection, and drove out their enemies. This is our eager God. He is ours; we are his. You see it right here as he promptly falls on the tabernacle.

There's something else that happens here. Look at verse 35. This is the second time the cloud is mentioned. **"And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."** It's confusing. You have this eager God. *Boom!* He falls on the tabernacle. Moses geeks out of his mind and tries to run in. He's not allowed in. We didn't get to highlight this through Exodus. We only did 31 weeks. We probably could have done 68 weeks, but 31 is good.

Moses is never allowed in the presence of God without the invitation of God. In fact, in chapter 24 of Exodus, Moses waits for six days on the side of Mount Sinai waiting for the Lord to go, "Okay, come on." What's going on in that? We've talked about this. It's something that has so fallen out of favor in 2017, but it is so necessary. It's that God is holy. He's not just eager; he's holy, which means he is a consuming fire, so that what is not holy cannot exist without being utterly destroyed and consumed in his presence.

This is yet again a reminder, even as the eagerness of God is made visible, that there is a barrier between God and man; namely, the sin of man. I just am going to keep saying this to you. I don't care how our size fluctuates. God hates sin. He *hates* it. There *is* a judgment day coming. That

judgment day will be terrifying. The Bible says the mountains will flee before the coming of the Lord. That's scary.

If the mountains are like, "Let's get out of here!" that's terrifying. If you've ever been on a mountain, mountains are kind of scary themselves, and the mountains leave. *They* flee, which means you hide...where? There's nowhere to hide. There's not a court to object to. There's just the judgment of God, as he has initiated time and time again to forgive you, to save you, to ransom you, to rescue you, to call you his own.

Here's this block of the holiness of God. Now this is where it becomes important to not read Exodus by itself but to read it *in* the story, *in* the Pentateuch, *in* Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. I know when we think of Leviticus... "Oh, Leviticus." You know, that's where you kind of bog down in February in your Bible reading plan and then just give up and go to the gospel of John and Psalms, but what you're seeing is Leviticus is the continuation of this story.

So here we are. We can't get into the tabernacle. The presence of God is there, but Moses can't get in. God knows if *Moses* can't get in, you and I aren't getting in. I've read his story. If *he's* not in, I am certainly not in. Yet we don't wait long. Leviticus 1:1-2: **"The LORD called Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, 'Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When any one of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of livestock from the herd or from the flock.'"**

What's that a reference to? It's a reference back to the sacrificial system, the blood of the Lamb, the shed blood that ushers us into the presence and power of God. You waited a verse for the invitation. The tabernacle was specifically a place where sinners could live in fellowship with the Holy One. Isn't that good news? The tabernacle is that place where sinners get to dwell next to the Holy One without being consumed. Why? Not because of the blood of bulls and goats but because of the blood of Christ.

The next thing we see is God's guidance. Verse 36: **"Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out till the day that it was taken up."** Here's something important to know about the Lord's presence and about the Lord's glory. The Lord's presence is not there as a butler. It's there as the sovereign King.

So Israel is not free to go, "You know what? This campsite is really, really comfortable. We're just going to hang out here." When the cloud lifted and went, they followed. They couldn't go, "Ah, you know, this one is not as nice as the last one. Let's just move on." No, no, no. They waited for that cloud or that fire to lift and lead. God was guiding them in his glory. They are his to command. It was not up to them to find a comfortable campsite and stay or to hate the discomfort of one and decide to leave.

See, they have an inheritance to take possession of, and God is going to get them there. He will not leave them or abandon them to their own devices. He will lead them to their inheritance on the path he set out for them. If you missed it earlier, God took them the long way around when he delivered them so that they didn't see the Philistines and lose heart. There are times that God's way toward our inheritance will take us the long way around for our good. We should just embrace it and walk in the kind of community that can encourage us as we walk through it.

Then we see not just God's guidance, not just God's holiness, not just his eagerness to help us and save us, but we see God's faithfulness. Look in verse 38. **"For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys."** Here's why I so want to encourage biblical literacy. This cloud and this fire guide the people of God for centuries.

In fact, it's not until Ezekiel, chapter 10, that anything even happens to this cloud and fire. This is how God is leading his people, guiding his people, protecting his people, showing his people his eagerness to be there to save, to protect, to provide. In fact, I think you see in all of this God's eagerness, his holiness, his guidance, and his faithfulness is to re-Edenize the earth, and these things are going to be a part of his people's lives forever.

So here's the nagging question, and certainly the question *I* have. I've tried to do this throughout the book of Exodus. There's just something about that, and you're like, "That sounds easier." Here's what *I* think. If all I had to do was just watch a cloud and then go, "All right. Gotta go, guys."

"Why?"

"Don't know. See you guys later." You're like, "If all I had to do was follow the cloud..."

"God is going to save this guy you used to work out with. Follow the cloud." "Okay." I just feel like that would be pretty cool, pretty easy. When it comes to full surrender to God, if there was just a cloud or a little flickering light I had to follow, I feel like I could do that, and yet, as I've tried to highlight through the book, what we have is so much better. What we have is so much more beautiful. I just think at times we're out of step with it. So let's just dive in.

In the gospel of John, Jesus begins to transition and say, "I'm going to go. I'm going to be arrested. I'm going to die." This really disorients his disciples, who had embraced a version of the kingdom of God that Daniel had taught, that this Messiah was coming. He was going to be made of stone. He was going to destroy iron. He was going to destroy steel. He was going to wipe it off the face of the earth.

Then Jesus shows up and goes, "Well, actually, the wheat and the tares are going to grow up together. There *is* a day of judgment coming, but for this age, here's what's going to happen. The wheat and the tares are going to grow up together, and then I'm going to sift them. This is going to happen over time, and it's not going to be in this instant. The instant is coming a bit later, but for now, here's what the kingdom of God is going to look like."

That's why I said when we're talking about the Bible it's important for us to understand the Old Testament so we can understand the New. Those parables about the kingdom are tied to Jewish expectation of what the Messiah was going to be. It was a mystery made known to the people of God. That's what the apostle Paul says in the book of Romans. This was a mystery. The kingdom wasn't going to look like they thought it was going to look like. In the coming of Christ, he wasn't going to conquer Rome; he was going to conquer the universe.

He begins to try to calm the disciples down, because here's what he's saying. "I have to leave. I'm going to go. I have to go. I'm going to leave. I'm going to die. They're about to get me." So they're freaking out. We start to read things like this. John 14:16-18: "**And I will ask the Father...**" By the way, what precedes this is, "I have to go, and I have to go because in me going you're going to do greater things than you even saw *me* do." That's what immediately precedes this text. I wish I had time to unpack that. Maybe we'll add that to the list of things I'm preaching on in the future.

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper..." Do you notice that *Helper* is capitalized there? If you're an English teacher, you're like, "Well, that can't be right unless that's someone's name." "**...will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know**

him, for he dwells with you and will be in you." Jesus' promise in sending the Spirit: **"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."**

Then John 16 right after that: **"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."** I love Acts 1:8, where Jesus gathers his disciples. "I know you've seen me. I'm resurrected. You're ready to go for it, but here's the deal. You don't have the power you're going to need yet."

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." The fuel of global missions is the Spirit of God alive in the children of God. The re-Edenization of the world takes place because the power of the Holy Spirit inside of us is pushing back darkness to re-Edenize the world when Christ returns and makes all things new.

Then one more. First Corinthians 3:16: **"Do you not know that you are God's temple [tabernacle] and that God's Spirit dwells in you?"** The Spirit that hovered above the waters at creation, the Spirit that operated in Christ, the second person of the Trinity. I think I highlighted a couple of weeks ago there's this fascinating story in Luke's gospel where Jesus is in the tabernacle teaching, and he sees that the Spirit is present to heal, so he starts to heal. So you're watching Jesus operate in the power of the Spirit. This is incredible stuff.

The Bible is saying, "Okay, do you know where your cloud is? Do you know where your little fire is? It's *in* you. It's inside of you." Now let's contrast here. You have this giant tabernacle they have to take down and carry. You have this sacrificial system, where they have to get into that presence and power. They have to shed blood so they can enter, and even then, it's the Levitical priests who are entering on their behalf.

Now you fast-forward, and we have the Spirit of the living God inside of us, and the blood of Christ has been a sacrifice once and for all, so the presence and power of God, the glory of God that guides, the glory of God that's eager, the glory of God that is faithful, dwells in you and me for the glory of God and the good of the nations forever. So let's go down to the ground then. How now shall we live? Okay, two points.

First, *faithful presence*. I want to unpack that. All this talk about embracing ordinary, expecting the supernatural... Let me just get that on the ground. If you're a husband, you have some domains in which you're operating. You more than likely have a job. You might have fallen on some difficult days. You should let us know about that so we can pray and help you, come alongside of you, but you have a job, and you're trying to provide for your family. You're trying to love your wife well. You're trying to serve and raise children who fear the Lord.

These are the domains in which your life is operating. You're working. You have a family. So what *faithful presence* means is I'm paying attention to my life, and here's what I'm paying attention to. Am I being faithful to my wife? I'm not talking about whether I am eyeballing or sleeping around with other women. Am I being faithful to speak life into, to build up, and to unleash the Spirit of God in my wife's heart? Am I being faithful to that? Where I'm not, I need to repent and, if it's habitual, renounce and turn my back on evil and begin to submit my heart to the Spirit of God inside of me.

When I think about my kids... Am I fulfilling God's role on my life to love them, serve them, build them up in the Lord, discipline them? We're trying to raise our kids in a world that is not seeing the world like we see the world. That creates some tension in them, some confusion in them. Like, even my plea earlier in the announcements... Please, don't turn your kids over to screens all summer. I know it's easy in the moment, but the cost is going to be beyond your imagination. I believe that's a prophetic word, not just kind of a blanket idea.

The havoc and destruction that's going to reap... We are part of a social experiment that's going horrifically wrong right in front of us, and we don't seem to be able to maneuver our way out of it. So am I fulfilling the role God has given me as a dad? Where I am not, I need to confess, repent, and if it's habitual, renounce. Faithful presence. At work, am I habitually lazy? Am I known as the guy who doesn't deliver when he says he should? We confess. We repent. If it's habitual, we renounce.

We say, "You don't have this authority over me anymore," and we walk in the truth of God's Word. So it's faithful presence. That's not an idea. You need to do that. The Spirit of God lives inside of you. Do not put yourself in harm's way by hearing the Word of God and refusing to listen to it. Don't be like the guy who looks in the mirror and is like, "Oh dang! Yeah, that needs help," and then walks away and forgets. We do it.

Faithful presence. Brothers, sisters, if you're not being faithful at home, confess, repent. If it's habitual, renounce. If you're not being faithful at work, if you're not being faithful as a mom or dad...

All of these things are difficult and taxing, and God has given you mercy today to be obedient by the power of the Spirit that dwells inside of you. You've not been given more than you can handle. God will not break you without building you up.

But it's not just faithful presence, since the Spirit of God lives inside of us. It's also *courage*. What do I mean by *courage*? I'm going to try to piece something together for you that I think makes a lot of people nervous. I just need to step into this space for my own conscience before the Lord. Throughout the days of your life, the Spirit of God inside of you is prompting you to obedience. It's happening all the time, but here's the way it usually works.

You have a fleeting thought. "Man, I should write them a letter of encouragement. Man, I should call them right now. Man, I'm worried about them for some reason. You know what I should do? I should invite all of my neighbors over and just have a party where I get to know my neighbors." You just have these fleeting thoughts. Here's my gentle press. Maybe that's the Spirit moving, giving you this impulse toward obedience.

Everything I just described is obedience to the Word of God. If you're like, "Man, I need to share the gospel with that person," maybe the Spirit of God is going, "Hey, I'm going to save. Do you want to play?" "Man, I need to encourage them." Could it just be that one of your brothers and sisters is at a really low part of their life and God is going to use you to encourage them and remind them that he cares and is present? If you'd slow down what you're thinking and what you're considering...

There are these promptings from the Spirit of God moving us to obedience to his Word, and if you're not dialed into that, you'll dismiss those things as nothing. Tell me God hasn't done that even for you. I don't have time to tell stories, but there has been moment after moment after moment where I don't know what to do or how I'm going to do it, and God just sends a brother or sister alongside to encourage me, to speak life into me.

The first time it ever happened to me... I became a Christian at a First Baptist Church that was hard core, like, eight weeks on why the gift of tongues doesn't exist. I mean, just kind of anti-gifts. I don't even understand, even if you *are* anti-gifts, why you would preach that series. Yet the only group of friends I could find who were really serious about it was this group of crazy Assembly of God kids and two or three Church of Christ kids. I mean, you talk about confused out of my mind for the first couple of years of following the Lord.

The first time I tried to share the gospel with a group of guys I played ball with (I was on the team with them, just to be more accurate), I got ripped down. Basically, I was called some names about not preferring women. I mean, publicly, in front of about 40 people I just got torn down. I felt betrayed by the Lord. I mean, I walked out, opened up my locker, tossed my Bible in, and slammed it. A guy named Rodney Englebosch... I haven't talked to him in 20 years.

He grabbed me by my hand and gave me one of *those*, which back in those days could mean we were both going to get suspended. He just said, "Hey, man, the Lord has put you on my heart today. He sees you. He's pleased with you. Keep going, brother." Now Rodney could have had that thought and done nothing with it, but what he understood it to be was a prompting from the Spirit of God to step into the obedience of encouraging one another all the more as long as it's called "today," so that our hearts would not be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

That's that impulse we have to train ourselves to listen to. It's the Spirit of God. We have to have the courage to step in. Now you don't need to all of a sudden become a prophet. "God has sent me here to declare..." Shut up. No, he hasn't. You're not Moses. You're just a brother or sister who the Lord is going to use to encourage and build up his church, and the more you listen to that impulse, the louder it will get.

The more you dismiss all of this as whacked-out charismania you only rob yourself of the beauty of being profoundly and powerfully used by God in spaces that it's hard to imagine. So how do we apply what we're covering since the Spirit of God lives inside of us? How do we get on the ground with Exodus? Faithful presence. Are you being faithful? If you're not, we've already covered it. God moves toward. He is eager. He'll forgive. He'll rebuild. He'll restore. Surrender, confess, repent, recount, renounce, and walk in courage.

That impulse to encourage, that impulse to speak life, that impulse to do something missional... That's the Spirit of God inviting you into the spaces where God saves and redeems and rescues, and that will eradicate the boredom and dryness you feel right now. Do you feel bored? Then you're out of step, because all day long the Spirit is like, "Hey, you know what we should do? Here's what we should do today. Your coworker? You should just say you're praying for them. But ask me to do something in their life so you're not a liar. All right, you did it. Now go tell them."

That's life in step with the Spirit. It's beautiful and powerful and not boring. I've said this for 14 years. You can keep watching epic films about superheroes and wars or you can actually get

involved in the greatest, most cosmic war that has already been won and the only real story that exists. Let me pray for us.

Father, help us be a faithful presence at home, at work, in our neighborhood. Spirit of God, give us courage. Prompt us to obedience. Help us proclaim and abstain, to repent and renounce. Let us be known as your people in generosity, in seriousness about the Word of God, in freedom to walk in courageous surrender to your Spirit living inside of us. Help us love your Word and do your Word. We need you. Spirit of God, help us. It's for your beautiful name I pray, amen.

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