

Does He Care?

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Exodus 3:7-12

Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, ⁸and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.' ¹¹But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' ¹²He said, 'I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.'

1. Hurricane Irma and Other Troubles

I am sure you've heard about the damage from Hurricane Irma. A Category 4 storm hit Florida on September 10 and ripped off roofs, flooded coastal cities, and knocked out power to more than 6.8 million people. The storm has killed at least 38 in the Caribbean and 31 in Florida, South Carolina, and Georgia. As many as 25 percent of homes in the Florida Keys have been destroyed and as many as 65 percent of homes suffered major damage.

People around the country took time last Monday to remember the 2977 innocent people who died in the terrorists' attack on September 11, 2001. Last week in England, 29 people were hospitalized when a crude device exploded on a crowded London underground train. Last Friday, North Korea fired another missile over Japan and landed in the Pacific Ocean. According to the South Korean military, the missile was far enough to reach Guam.

Are we safe from all of the problems we face in our world today? The truth is that we don't know. Every one of us has experienced or will experience tragedy, sickness, and hard times in life. During these times, we may feel that God has disappeared. Christians can be disappointed, angry, or sad from the problems that we face in life. Some of us may ask, "Where is God?"

Are our problems unique to our time in history? I would argue that this is not the case. When I compare the experience of my parents and those who came before me, I see that the generations before us experienced the same if not worse trials in their lives. During my parents' time, they experienced the military takeover of Korea by the Japanese, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

What about the people that we read about in the Bible? We see here that the forefathers in the faith also experienced trouble and trials often far beyond even what many of us have experienced. What then do we say when our non-Christian friends ask us, "Does God really care about His people?" or "How can God let these things happen to His people?" I believe the scripture for today gives us insight into the answer.

2. The Israelites in Egypt

In Exodus 3:7, God says to Moses, "***I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings.***" We see three important terms "misery," "cry," and "sufferings" that explain the lives of those who lived about three thousand five hundred years ago. Why did the Israelites suffer? Exodus 1:13-14 explains, "***The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.***"

The Egyptians did not want the Israelites to be numerous, and so the Egyptians made the lives of the Israelites bitter with forced labor. Yet the more the Israelites were oppressed, the more they multiplied. So the Egyptians mistreated the Israelites even more. Exodus 2:23 says, "***The Israelites groaned under their slavery, and cried out. Out of the slavery their cry for help rose up to God.***"

3. God's Response

How did God respond to their cry for help? We can find 6 verbs in Exodus 3:7-8: observed, heard, know, come down, deliver, and bring up. "Have Observed," "have heard," and "know" imply that God was observing, hearing, and aware of the oppression of Israel for a long time. When the moment for God's action arrived, God rescued His people from the Egyptians. I would like to point out that we need to pay special attention to the verb "deliver" from the passage, which in this context means "snatch away." The

word “snatch away” is important because it implies that God would use violence to deliver the Israelites from Egypt.

These six verbs tell us what God has been doing for His chosen people. The Israelites might have said that God’s response was slow and that they had to wait for God’s help for a very long time. According to Exodus 12:40, the Israelites lived for 430 years in Egypt. We do not know exactly how long the Israelites were mistreated in Egypt. In Genesis 15:13, God says to Abram, **“Your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for four hundred year.”** Based on this, we estimate that the Israelites were enslaved for roughly 400 years and cried out for help to the Lord during that time.

Why did God not respond to His people’s prayers immediately or sooner than when He did? I do not know the answer. But one thing that we are sure of is that God was listening the whole time and heard their cries to Him. Even before the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt, God already knew what was going to happen to them.

We may reflect on our own experience and can think of times that we’ve waited years or even decades until we’ve seen God do something in our situations or the lives of others around us. We don’t know when and how God will answer, but we are reminded that even when we think that God isn’t doing something, He always hears us and never forgets His promises.

4. The Promise of a Good Shepherd

Ezekiel 34:23 says, **“I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.”** Why does God talk about setting up a shepherd? It is because Israel’s leaders took care of themselves rather than taking care of their people. So God promises that a true and good shepherd would come who would take care of God’s people. The Good Shepherd will seek the lost, bring back the strayed, bind up the injured, strengthen the weak, and feed the sheep with justice (cf. Ezekiel 34:16). John 10:11 says, **“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”** Jesus has come as the good shepherd. He is the fulfillment of God’s promise.

As God sent Jesus as the good shepherd, God uses Moses as a mediator and a shepherd to fulfill His promise to the people of Israel. God could have used anyone but He chose Moses. God created Moses and prepared him for years to fulfill the mission that God would give Moses to lead

His people out of slavery. Moses refuses God's request several times. Moses feels the big burden of God's invitation. We may have felt that burden or have seen our friends struggle with the burden of following after Jesus. But just like Moses, we know that God's invitation comes with an honor and a privilege for all of us. God chooses us and calls us to His own. And God also calls us so that we may be His hands and feet to serve and reach out to those who need God the most.

5. God is Always With Us

I'm thankful to everyone for your prayers and congratulations for my son's wedding last week. The wedding was a wonderful experience. The wedding reminded me of the importance of our spouses, our family and the people around us and how blessed we are to have others in our lives. After I came back from the wedding, I was reminded that God sent Christine to help me. I hope God sent me to help Christine. We are sent to help each other. I am also reminded that our children and spouse are not always with us. Each one of us needs God, and God never leaves us.

6. Conclusion

God is not visible in the human sense, and because of this, we may think God does not hear and see what is going on around us. But the Bible tells us that God knows everything about us. God is our creator, deliverer, and sustainer. Psalm 94:9 says, "**He who planted the ear, does he not hear? He who formed the eye, does he not see?**" The creator God sees what happens around us and hears our prayers. He knows how we are doing at every point of every day. If we need help, God sends someone as an angel to help us.

7. Application

While meditating on today's scripture, the word "sensitive" came to my mind. We can sometimes feel like God isn't sensitive to our needs. But the Exodus story reminds us of how much God is sensitive to our needs and our situations in this life. And God uses us to help someone.

From this Tuesday morning and Thursday night, we will have an Exodus Bible study. We will explore how God takes care of His chosen people and how much God wants us to live a missional life. It will be a wonderful opportunity for us to learn how much God loves His people and how much God wants us to love others. The exodus story will teach us how to live our lives and how to overcome all kinds of challenges in our lives.

We may hear someone ask, “Who cares?” God does. People may ask “Where is God?” God is not far from us. He is near to us. Does God care for us? Absolutely! This is what the Bible tells us. Let us pray.