

Exodus: Chosen and Redeemed (11 weeks)

These studies are written for small groups but can be adapted for individual use and are intended to accompany our sermon series.

A further book that might of use in preparation for leading a small group is 'Exodus for You' by Tim Chester', it is a combination of commentary and study.

Week 1 - Chosen and Redeemed – Exodus 2

IN – Who is at the table?

Spend 10 minutes catching up with each other if you haven't done so already, and pray for those who are absent today - why not drop them an encouraging a text message.

UP - Where is Jesus at the table?

Spend 10 minutes in prayer and worship using these commands to lead you:

"You shall have no other gods before me." *Exodus 20:3*

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." *Mark 12:30*

Scripture – Exodus 2

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

Through a strange turn of events Moses' mother cares for her own son, and even gets paid for it! Moses grows up and at some point becomes aware that he is a Hebrew, kills an Egyptian and then flees to Midian and gets married. The chapter ends with a few verses about the Israelites calling out to God and him hearing them.

1) As a baby Moses gets returned to his mother. Do you see this as God's hand at work or just a coincidence? (verses 1-9)

What about in your own life... do you attribute things that work out neatly and nicely as God's hand at work or just coincidence and chance? Are things all planned out by God and how much does humanity play in determining outcomes?

2) Before killing someone, Moses looks around to see if anyone might witness the act (verse 12), but he is found out (verse 14).

God has forgiveness for you and loves you, even though he sees all we do, hears all we say, and knows all we think. How does that make you feel?

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3) The Israelites cry out to God and God hears them (verses 23-25).

What do you need to cry out to God for at the moment? Where do you want God to break in and to change things?

OUT - Who is missing from the table?

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Week 2– God’s Rescue – Exodus 3

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Scripture – Exodus 3

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

This is a well-known passage about God meeting with Moses in a burning bush. A hugely significant chapter in Moses' life, as he is called to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. But also, of course, significant for all the Israelites, as their salvation is promised.

1) Re-read verses 5-6. When you are just about to pray, read the Bible, or go to church, how do you approach that connection with God?

2) Moses asks “Who am I?” to do what you are calling me to, and God replies that he is sending him and is with him (verses 11-12).

Are there experiences in your life (in the past or ongoing) where you feel that God has called you into something difficult or challenging? How does knowing that God has called you into that thing, and is also with you in it, impact things for you?

3) Why do you think that God continually refers to himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (verses 6,15&16)?

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4) How does the past work and deeds and promises of God (whether in Scripture or in your own life) impact the way you live out your life of faith now?

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Week 3 – Passover – Exodus 12: 1-29

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Scripture – Exodus 12:1-29

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

The Passover and its significance cannot be understated in the Old Testament story of God's people. In this passage there is a mixture of command for the Israelites to do immediately, and how to remember this significant event.

- 1) What annual traditions do you hold as an individual, a family, a local people group or a nation? How have they been passed on to you or how have you passed them on to others? How are these traditions significant and what do they mean to you?
- 2) Instead of a firstborn dying in an Israelite home, the lamb was to die instead. How does this sacrifice relate to and point forwards to Jesus' work on the cross? What links can be drawn? Discuss what this means to you personally.
- 3) How do you think we, as Christians, should respond to commands made to God's people in the Old Testament?

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Week 4 - Facing Fear – Exodus 14:5-31

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Scripture – Exodus 14:5-31

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

- 1) Verses 5-9 demonstrate how anger is often linked with fear and vice-versa, which will often lead to rash regrettable decisions (see verses 23-28). How do you see this relating to Pharaoh and his officials 'changed' minds with a disastrous outcome? How might this relate to us?
- 2) Look at verses 10-14, what do you make of the Israelite's response? How might we develop a good response when faced with fear?
- 3) Look at verses 15-22, Moses has been empowered to fight the battle, but he needs reminding. What battle is the Lord equipping you for?
- 4) Moses and the people needed to take a step of faith to walk through the parted Red Sea, but the people walked together. Whom are you walking with in times of fear and challenge?

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Week 5 – Daily Bread - Exodus 16:1-35

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Scripture – Exodus 16:1-35

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

- 1)** Two months and 15 days after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, they grumbled against Moses and Aaron. Read verse 3, it was the Lord who had brought them out of Egypt, He was the one who performed the miracles. How does their grumbling challenge us in our relationships?
- 2)** Look at verses 4-19, the Lord has heard their grumbling and made provision with instructions which they are told to obey. Spend time discussing what obedience looks like and in particular, what we learn about obedience and provision.
- 3)** Verse 12 says "then you will *know* that I am the Lord your God". The manna in the dessert is miraculous. Jesus performed signs and wonders to demonstrate the power and presence of the Kingdom of God. How you *know* that Jesus is the Lord your God?
- 4)** Verse 33 is the one exception to keeping the manna because it is assigned for generations to come as it was placed in the Ark of the Covenant. Spend time reflecting on what it means for us to treasure the Lords provisions and goodness for generations to come.

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Week 6 – Winning the Battle – Exodus 17:8-16

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Scripture – Exodus 17:8-16

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

This story demonstrates the link between intercessory prayer and ministry in the valley.

- 1) This is a story about spiritual battle in the heavenly realms and on earth. What speaks to you from the story?
- 2) How is the Lord challenging you to grow on the mountain and what might be your next step?
- 3) How is the Lord challenging you to grow in the valley and what might be your next step?
- 4) Put this into practice and spend time in prayer as the spirit leads.

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Week 7 - The Mountain of the Lord – Exodus 19

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Scripture – Exodus 19

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

- 1) Read verses 4-6 and then share your thoughts and emotions on the descriptive words used for God's obedient people.
- 2) This chapter speaks a lot about consecration. Spend time unpacking what it meant then, and what it means now, as followers of Jesus.
- 3) What then is the application for us as individuals and the body of Christ - particularly in relation to mountain and valley ministry as discussed last week?

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Week 8 - Covenant Promises – Exodus 20:1-21

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Scripture – Exodus 20:1-21

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

1) Focusing on what have been called 'The 10 Commandments' (verses 2-17), do you think they still apply to Christians today? If they do, why are they different to laws in the Old Testament that we would say don't apply - such as those to do with food (eg. Lev 13)?

2) Verse 2 reminds us that these commandments are given after God has saved Israel out of Egypt, as part of maintaining covenant relationship of love with him.

How does this alter how they are read, and shape how they can be fulfilled? How does our salvation affect how we respond to what God asks of us in our relationship with him?

3) The 10 Commandments could be split into two parts: the first 3 being directed towards God (verses 2-7) and the last 6 being directed towards others (verses 12-17).

Can the transition commandment between the two, the fifth commandment (verses 8-11), be read in both categories, and if so, what does that say about the idea of 'Sabbath' today?

4) In different cultures and context different ones of these 10 Commandments have been the hardest to keep as followers of Christ.

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Which of these commandments do you think is hardest to keep today for individual Christians, and what is it about our culture that makes it the hardest? *[As an extension question: which is the easiest to keep, and what about our culture makes it the easiest?]*

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Week 9 - Waiting & Wanting – Exodus 32

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Scripture – Exodus 32

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

1) Look at verse 1, why does waiting often act as a refining agent, bringing our sinful desires to the surface? Have you known examples of this in your life, and how has God used such occasions to make you more Christ-like?

2) Look at verse 2, the irony is that the very same precious objects that are being given to create idols are the same that are those 'plundered' from the Egyptians (Ex 12:26) to be offered in the construction of the tabernacle of God's presence (Ex 35:4-10), which Moses is being given instructions about when this occurs (see the previous chapter(s)).

How does this speak about worldly wealth that we get in life, and how we use it? How do we avoid using it in wrong ways, spending it on cultural and personal idols, rather than directing it towards worship of God?

3) Look at verse 8, given how awesome the plagues and Exodus events were, all of which had happened in the past year at this point, why do you think the Israelites forgot what God had done so quickly? In which circumstances are we guilty of too easily forgetting what God has done in our lives, and how do we stop this happening?

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- 4) What do we learn about the powerful impact of prayer from Moses's prayer in verses 11-14?
- 5) Look at verse 24, is this what really happened?! (See verses 2-4). How can we be tempted to 'massage the truth' in our moments of personal failure or wrongdoing, and how do we avoid doing so?

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Week 10 - Seeking God – Exodus 33:7-32

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Scripture – Exodus 33:7-32

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

- 1) Look at verses 7-11, what do you think motivated Moses to set apart this place to meet with God? What motivates you to set apart time and places to do the same?
- 2) Continuing with verses 7-11, why do you think that some of the people didn't make use of this tent (see verse 7b), but instead stayed in their tents and missed out on the privilege? How does this mirror what stops you coming close to God at times?
- 3) Looking at Moses' prayer in verses 12-23, what do we learn about prayer from Moses's conversation here? What are the places of (i) Honesty, (ii) Listening, and (iii) Faith-filled asking in it, and how does this challenge our prayer lives?
- 4) In verses 18-23, Moses seems to already have been given the main thing he was asked for - God's permanent presence with them – which had been withdrawn because of their sin (see Ex 33v5). So why does Moses ask this one last thing? What does this say about the ultimate goal of our prayer lives and relationship with God?

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Week 11 - Seeing God – Exodus 34:1-9

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Scripture – Exodus 34:1-9

Spend 30 minutes reading the scripture and discussing these questions:

1) Look at verses 1-4, how is this a second change of Israel? (See Ex 32, 33:5). How does God giving Israel a second chance relate to:

(i) His name/nature revealed in verses 6-7?

(ii) When God has given us a second change (can you think of examples personally of this)?

2) In God's self-revelation (verses 6-7), what do you think would have challenged Moses about how he describes himself? What challenges you? The two are unlikely to be the same, and what does this say about how our cultural conception of God changes, and what we therefore need to be aware of in our relationship with God?

3) In verses 8-9, how does Moses turn revelation into fuel for intercession? How do you do the same in your prayer life, and what physical resources do you use to do so?

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4) It's sometimes fun to think about what you would and said/done if you were God! (Careful...!). Without looking ahead, how would you have responded if you were God to what Moses asks for in verse 9? Now read on, verse 10 onwards, and see how God responds – what does the difference between what you would have said and what God actually says say to you about:

- (i) God, and
- (ii) your mental image of him?

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