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The Exodus: Reframing Our Perspective

Exodus 6

Introduction: Reframing Our Perspective (5:22-23)

Good morning, Chapel Hill! My name is Gunnar and I lead the worship ministry here at the church. And I have to say, it is so good to be with many of you in person this morning. It was pretty bizarre to lead worship to an empty room for three months straight! And so, I can tell you that I have been so grateful to have you back with us in person. It's definitely a blessing.

For those of you who can't be with us in person, we're so glad you can join us online as we continue our message series through the book of Exodus. What we are going to find in today's passage in chapter 6 is that God continues a heart-to-heart conversation that he was having with Moses.

Now, this conversation begins back at the end of chapter 5, when Moses starts expressing some of his concerns and frustrations. You see, God had promised that he would make things better for the Israelites—that he would get them out of Egypt. But, even though things were supposed to get a lot better, they actually seemed to be getting much worse. And so, this is what Moses said to God at the end of chapter 5: "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.*"

Moses was pretty honest with God! And, if we put ourselves in his shoes, I don't think we can really blame the guy! But, here's the thing: I think that Moses had made one critical mistake. Moses' was far more focused on his *problems* than on God's *promises and plan*. He was so caught up in all that he was experiencing, that he couldn't see what God was up to. And so, Moses needed God's help to reframe his perspective...

There have been many times in my life when I've needed help to see things from a different perspective. I recall one time, in particular, when I really needed a more hopeful outlook on my circumstances. Aimee and I were weeks away from getting married. And while we were very happy in our relationship, I was personally struggling in my job situation. It was becoming increasingly clear that this job was just not the right fit for me. And all the issues that I was facing had started to become draining for both of us.

There was one day when I really came to terms with all my emotions about work. And the discouragement hit me like a ton of bricks. And I remember calling Aimee crying—which I

hadn't done before, and I don't think I've ever done since! But in that phone call, I shared all my concerns with her.

It was at that point, in the middle of my emotional breakdown, that we realized we had our first pre-marital counseling session in just a few minutes! And I'm so glad we remembered that! Because it was during that session that I was able to share with the pastor all that was going on at work and how it was affecting our lives—it was that conversation that set me on a trajectory to begin seminary and to pursue this job at Chapel Hill.

You see, before that conversation, I had been so caught up in my circumstances, that I couldn't see how things could ever be any different than they were right then. I needed that pastor's help to reframe my perspective. And once I did that, I felt a sense of hope—a sense of excitement that things really could get better.

I think we all need this from time to time! We need to reframe our perspective. This was true of Moses. And it's also true of every one of us. In fact, this is the big idea of our passage today: [Big Idea:] God calls us to reframe our *perspective* by focusing on God's *promises* and *plans*. [Say aloud together? Repeat] We're going to dive into all of that together. But, before we do, would you join me in a word of prayer? [Pray]

Reframe #1: Focus on God's *Promises* More than Our *Problems* (1-5)

Alright. Let me give you the first way that God calls us to reframe our perspective: [Reframe #1] focus on God's *promises* more than our *problems*. This is what God said to Moses, starting in verse 2: "I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty [El Shaddai], but by my name the LORD [Yahweh] I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant."

What we're told here is that God had formed a special relationship with the Israelite's ancestors. And this special relationship that God formed with them is what the Bible calls a *covenant*. That may be a new word for many of us, so let's start with a basic definition of covenant. A covenant is a relational commitment between two parties. [Repeat] Now, in the Bible, these commitments took on a variety of shapes. But most covenants were usually based upon certain vows, or promises, that one party made to another.

And that's exactly what God is referring to here in his conversation with Moses. He is saying that his actions in the present are based on covenant promises that he had made to Israel in the past... Back in Genesis, God had made certain promises to Abraham—promises to give him a special relationship to himself; to give him many descendants; and to give him a huge plot of land. That's what God had promised in his covenant with Abraham

But here's what we especially need to know about these promises: We need to know that God was completely committed to giving Abraham and his family everything he had promised them— no matter what.

And this is what Moses and the Israelites needed to focus on. They needed to reframe their *problems* in light of God's covenant *promises*. In the midst of trials, in the midst of suffering, God reminded Moses that he would make good on his promises to Israel—that he would keep his word to the very end...

Friends, we need the same reframe. We need to focus on God's *promises* more than our *problems*. Just as God promised Abraham a future, a home, and an everlasting relationship with himself, he promises the same things to us in Jesus Christ! Jesus has offered us a covenant relationship with God—a covenant that he purchased with his own blood at the cross. Because of Jesus, we have God's promise to never leave us nor forsake us—to love us through thick and thin, no matter what...

I remember when I personally needed this reframe in my life. It was just a couple months after that important conversation with our premarital counselor. Aimee and I had just gotten married, here's a picture of us at that very happy time **[wedding photo]**. And it was right around that time that we made a really big decision for our future. *We decided that I would resign from my job*. And, as you can imagine, it's pretty scary to start off a marriage without either spouse making a steady income! But Aimee was in the middle of her master's program; I had just started mine. And, on top of that, I was experiencing some of the worst clinical anxiety of my life... It was a really dark time.

And it was during that dark time that my faith hit rock bottom. I was questioning God. I was struggling with what I believed... But even though I was struggling in my faith, even though it seemed like my life was falling apart, for whatever reason I still sensed this connection, this draw to God. I can remember staying up at night, standing out on my porch, and having these down-to-earth conversations with the Lord. It was as if God just wouldn't let me go. I still had this mysterious sense that he was with me, that he loved me. In the midst of all my problems, God was still reminding me of his promise, that he would always be with me. And in those moments, that was just the encouragement that I needed to keep going— to hold on to hope.

We all need God's help to reframe our perspective in light of God's promises. That's our *first* reframe...

Reframe #2: Focus on God's *Plans* More than Our *Pain* (6-8)

And our *second* reframe comes in the next section of the passage. God calls us to [Reframe #2] focus on God's *plans* more than our *pain*. Here's what God said to Moses starting in verse 6:

“I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.”

Now I think it was probably tough for the Israelites to imagine all of this. I mean, God’s telling them, “you’re gonna be free!” and all they can think about is the fact that they’re slaves. God’s telling them, “You’re gonna have a special relationship with me!” and yet they’re not even allowed to go make one sacrifice to the Lord. And God’s telling them, “I’m gonna give you tons of beautiful land to live in!” even though they don’t even own the property their houses were sitting on. I can only imagine that this whole thing sounded pretty farfetched!

For the Israelites to get out of this predicament, it was going to take nothing short of a miracle. God would have to show up in a powerful way to change things around. And, you know what? That’s exactly what was about to go down! Because God was on the move.

God was about to show who the real boss of the universe is. He was going to show the Egyptians, and the Israelites, and the other surrounding nations that there is never a moment in history, never a place on earth, where God doesn’t have the final say. Just as Abraham Kuyper said, “There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ does not cry, Mine!”

This world, our existence, our future—it is all in God’s most capable hands. This is just as true of us as it was of the Israelites. Our future is as good as done! God has an incredible plan for this universe and for all of us who call him Lord. God has something in store for when Christ returns that the human mind can only dream of.

And let me just give you a little glimpse into this plan of God... When Christ returns, there will be no crime— because sin will be done away with. There will be no racism— because every tribe, tongue, and nation will worship Jesus together in harmonious unity. There will be no political division— because there will be one perfect king on the throne. There will be no coronavirus, no cancer, no flu, no depression, no dementia—we because the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in his wings.

There is a day coming, and it’s right on the horizon, when the God of this universe—Yahweh, the Great I Am—will put an end to all the wrong and make everything right again! Because Jesus is coming again! And we say, Amen, Come Lord Jesus! This is what we all long for... The day when Jesus comes and sets everything right again.

God has a future planned that we can only dream of. And now the question for us, right here right now, is the same one the Israelite’s had to consider: *will we believe all that?* In the midst

of the chaos around us, will we trust God to come through? It may be challenging to see a way forward—to see how God could bring good out of all the evil in this world. But, let me tell you, it's beyond possible—*it's as good as done*.

God will, in his perfect timing, according to his holy character, and for the glory of his name, bring all things together for good... And this is what we need to focus upon as God reframes our perspective. We need to focus in on God's plans.

Conclusion: How to Reframe Our Perspective

Unfortunately, when the Israelites were given the opportunity to trust God's promises and plans, they made the wrong choice. They didn't listen to God when he gave them the opportunity to reframe their perspective. It says in verse 9 that, "Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery." They couldn't look beyond what was going on *within* them and what was going on *around* them to see the God who was reigning *over* them...

So, how do we avoid making the same mistake? How do we focus on God's promises and plans more than our problems and pain? Well, I'd say that we need to do what Moses did. We need to have regular, heart-to-heart conversations with God. We need to have consistent reframing conversations in the context of prayer.

And so, as we close, I want to offer two, simple recommendations on how you can have those kinds of reframing conversations with God. ***The first is this: be honest with God in your prayers.*** Be honest with God. Moses didn't sugarcoat his fears or frustrations—and neither should we! You can tell God what you're really feeling, what you're really thinking. It's actually through that process that God helps you work through your situation. Take time to share with God what's really going on, and the ways you need him to help you. Don't hold back. Be transparent and honest with God when you pray.

Second, involve Scripture in your prayers. Use Scripture to guide your prayer time. It's only through the Bible that we can come to terms with God's promises and plans, over and over again. It's only as we reflect prayerfully on the Word of God that the Holy Spirit brings new ways of seeing things— new ways of approaching things— that we wouldn't have considered otherwise. So, my challenge for every one of us, as we seek to reframe our perspective, is to pray with a *transparency heart* and with *Scripture in hand*.

And in order to do that, I'm going to recommend a couple tools. Because I think one of the best ways to pray more honestly and pray more Scripturally is by having some kind of guide in the process. So, let me recommend a digital and a print option for praying meaningfully every day.

For all of you who prefer digital, I'd recommend the [Lectio 365 app](#). If you're worshipping online, you can find a link to that in the description of this video. For those of you right here, you can search for it in your app store on your phone. But the Lectio 365 app is a great tool that helps you pray through the Bible. It gives you small portions of Scripture and a variety of prompts to focus your prayer time.

For you "old school" folks like me, who like using a print book, I'd recommend [Seeking God's Face](#) by Philip Reinders. It's a fantastic resource. In fact, it's been my go-to prayer book for the last few months. Again, for those of you online, there's a link in the description to pick up a copy. And for those of you here, you can find it on Amazon, and have it delivered right to your door.

But, regardless of which resource you use—whether digital or print— here's my challenge for all of us: Make honest, Bible-based prayer a regular practice in your life. Because it's in those heart-to-heart conversations that God reframes your perspective to focus on his promises and plans in your life.