**Exodus 2:11-15** **11Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. 12So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, “Why are you striking your companion?” 14Then he said, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” So Moses feared and said, “Surely this thing is known!” 15When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.**

We’re in the book of Exodus tonight. Last week, we left Joseph and his brothers, while they were still welcome in Egypt. We know from Genesis 46:27 that 70 people came to Egypt when Jacob relocated and Genesis 47 shows that Pharaoh welcomed them. But the Pharaoh that loved Joseph and his family died, new Pharaohs arose, and the children of Israel multiplied. Time passed. The Pharaoh of Exodus 1 didn’t know Joseph, didn’t appreciate the history of the people, so they targeted them. Theologians generally agree that Moses led about 2.4 million Jews out of Egypt when he was approximately 80, so it’s safe to believe that there were 1.5 million or more Jews when this Pharaoh says - “Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. The decision is made to enslave the people, task them, burden them, and generally make them “serve with rigor”.

When we look at the great people of God’s Kingdom, hardship seems to be the hallmark of an effective ministry. No where do I read that God made someone comfortable, gave him all he wanted, helped her realize all her dreams, and they did great things for the Kingdom of God. No! In fact, it seems that the wealthier and more comfortable a person grows, the harder it is for that person to effectively serve God… not impossible, but harder. David, Solomon, Pharisees… Jesus says in Matthew 19:24 And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

God is using the hardship brought on by enslavement to prepare His people to move. It was true in the time of Moses, it was true in the time of Jesus, and it is true even today. No revival will happen in this country until the children of God get so sick of the stench of our sin that we rise up and reclaim the conversation of this country. Ease and comfort breed silence and acceptance. God uses hardships to move us, out of our comfort zone, into wilderness wanderings, and finally to our promised rest. But we must be ready and willing to move.

Exodus 2 introduces Moses. Born of the tribe of Levi. He’s marked to die, survives, and is educated in the courts of Egypt. 40 years later, we find him walking among the slaves who are his people. Theologians debate whether he had some kind of idea that he was meant to deliver his people. I don’t read it in the Bible, so I don’t know. I try not to guess what God didn’t tell.

Let’s join Moses in verse 11 Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. This verse makes it readily apparent that Moses knew he was a Hebrew. He looked upon his brethren’s burdens, saw a Hebrew, one of his brethren. He saw this man as his brother. Had his mother told him? Had Pharaoh’s daughter told him?

When we walk among our brothers and sisters, do we see their suffering? Do we see their burdens? When the world is beating our brother down, where do we look? What do we see? My brother who’s a drug addict is burdened… where do I look? My sister fighting to raise an illegitimate child… what do I see? Moses could have picked up a stick and started helping to beat the Hebrew down. We all make a choice how to view our brethren. Let’s see them as Jesus sees us – through eyes of love, compassion, mercy, and forgiveness.

Verse 12 - So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.Moses takes vengeance out of the Lord’s hands and, unlike Joseph from last week, takes the place of God. We too are often tempted to “help God out”. But, we act from a place of sin against the sin that we see. Only a perfect God can perfectly judge and punish sin. Like Moses, our rash actions will come to light… the shifting sand of time have undone many who thought they were acting in the name of God. It says – he looked this way and that… a sure sign he knew he was doing wrong and then he hid what he’d done.

Verse 13 And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, “Why are you striking your companion?” Fresh off his taking vengeance into his own hands, he walks up on two Hebrews fighting. He decides to once again act as the judge. Mind you, he doesn’t know the situation, but judged what he saw – “he said to the one who did the wrong” then asked. How often I’ve done this in my life. I see something and decide who is in the wrong before I ever ask the first question. It’s sin. Jesus tells us in John 12:48 that the word will judge the people who reject His teachings. We’re called to witness – with love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. We don’t save – God does.

Verse 14 - Then he said, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” So Moses feared and said, “Surely this thing is known!” Sin has a way of finding us out. On more than one occasion, God has presented a new situation to show me how unjust and unrighteous my judgements are…. We’re hopelessly biased. Moses killed the Egyptian – will he met out that same measure to his brethren? Do we apply the same measure to our child that we do to the stranger’s child down the street? Romans 2:1-2 Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.

Moses feared. When we speak the Truth of God, the world will hate us, but we need not fear. Moses realized he’d gotten ahead of himself. Have you ever realized that with God? I have. I’ve done something that I just knew would meet with God’s love and approval and then realized, usually the next day, that I’d gotten ahead of God… I had not waited for Him to fight my battle… I had leaned unto my own understanding and, invariably, I end up praying for Him to fix my mess. And that’s where we find Moses.

Verse 15 - When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well. God had new plans for Moses. His day of fleeing was the beginning of freedom for his people. His day of running away meant that God was drawing near. Moses fled to Midian… don’t let it be lost on us that he fled to the land where he would be prepared to liberate Israel – the land of the very same people who took Joseph to Egypt in the first place! Genesis 37:28 Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt. Oh the God we serve! He’s bringing it full circle. Those who took freedom are now preparing the man who will bring freedom. How often God uses those who seek our hurt to instead bless us and do us good!

Moses is a study in waiting for God and depending on Him and His perfect timing. God knows the details of every story, the motives of every heart, the truth in every tale. We study Moses and learn to trust God. He uses our very enslavement in sin to bring about our freedom in Jesus, our very weakness in this world to make us mighty in His Kingdom.