

If you were around for our recent Karis DNA, you’d know that we’re passionate here about developing leaders. We want to send interns out to plant and lead churches. We want to develop others to lead here in the church and out in the workplace. What do godly leaders look like? And, how are true leaders made? We see some things here in this passage. But we’ll see those teachings will also take us far beyond them.

Let me give you a roadmap for this morning. **First**, we’re going to carefully observe what happens here in this passage. **Last**, we’re going to look at what this passage points toward. **In between**, I’m going to tie the two together. How should we read Old Testament stories like this one? We’ll seek to answer that question this morning together. Let’s pray.

What Happens Here

Even if you’ve never read Exodus, you probably know that Moses will serve as the leader of God’s people in the book. He’ll lead His people to freedom. He will be their deliverer. We’ve seen in Exodus that Israel is now in bondage in Egypt. They move from being numerous and powerful to being slaves and targets for genocide. Pharaoh’s plan, though, is thwarted by someone in his own household. His daughter finds a baby floating in the Nile. She rescues him, and she names him Moses. She ends up raising him in her home.

Here’s how we might write the rest of the story. Moses grows up as prince of Egypt. When he reaches the age of 20 and looks like and fights like a young Bruce Willis, he leads his people in a revolt. They slaughter all the Egyptians. Israel is back in power again. Hooray. But this isn’t what happens at all. The Lord is going to do some things in Moses first. Let’s look at that here in **verses 11-22**.

Verse 11 says Moses is now “*grown up.*” We know from Stephen’s sermon in **Acts 7**, that he’s 40 years old. I just turned 40 and often feel old. That gives me hope that God can still use me. Yet, Moses ends up dying as a 120-year-old, so I’m not sure that helps me much. But that’s beside the point. What does Moses do here?

He goes out to His people, the passage says. He draws near to them. He leaves his palace and visits them. Picture one of Brad and Angelina’s adopted kids, raised in riches, returning to Africa, looking around, seeing the devastation. **He looks on their burdens.** He doesn’t close his eyes. He doesn’t turn away. He sees, but feels. He has compassion on them.

He identifies with his people. Notice the repetition here in **verse 11**. Twice, the Israelites are called “*his people.*” Being raised in the house of the Pharaoh’s daughter doesn’t make him forget his roots. He’s part of the family of Israel.

He seeks to deliver His people. Righteous anger is possible and even good. I think of the article I read this week about the culture of rape in DR Congo. That should make us mad. But our anger more often than not turns sinful, and that’s what happens to Moses here. He sees an Egyptian beating one of his own, and he cuts him down.

I remember Amy telling our son at about 8 months old not to touch something. We left the room and watched. He looked both ways and reached over and touched it anyhow. This is what Moses does in **v. 12**. It’s what we all do by nature. He looks around, sees no one, and kills the man. But, of course, God sees. And so does man here, he learns. Eventually our sins will come out. Moses buries the Egyptian in the sand. But that’s definitely not the end of it. At all.

Often times I find myself in a hard situation, and I freak out. Maybe I see someone treated unfairly, and I don't like it. Maybe it's me being mistreated, and I go off. But I immediately react. I don't rely on the Lord. I just try to fix it fast in my own strength. Usually things don't turn out so well, either.

This is what we see here. Moses's sin is clear. What he does is wrong. But this points forward to what God is going to do through Moses later. He is going to judge the people of Egypt. He will sentence them to death. He will grant the people of Israel relief. But the Lord is going to do it in a way that magnifies His grace. He is going to do it in a way that shows the world His glory. Here Moses tries to take the matter into his own hands. And that's not good.

He goes back out the next day, **verse 13** says, and he sees two of his people, the Hebrews, beating each other. When my kids hit on each other, I often will remind my oldest of a true story that happened a couple of years back. I'll say, "Remember how KU's basketball team got in a fight with their football team? We're not going to do that are we?" He always looks at me puzzled. He has no categories for that behavior. But beating on his little brother and sister makes perfect sense. And it does to most of us, sad to say. In the midst of the opposition and oppression of sin, the world, and Satan, we'll actually fight with each other!

This is what Moses sees happening, and he questions it. He says, in **verse 14**, "***Why do you strike your companion?***" Now, as you see here, those two guys don't look at Moses, and say, "Oh, yeah! I never thought of that! That makes no sense at all!" My kids don't really do that either. These Israelite slaves say something that my little ones, and all of us will say. What's that? It's, "You're not the boss of me! You can't tell me what to do! Who put you in charge?" They lash out at him. As sinners, that's generally our response, too.

We work with interns here that we pray will one day plant and lead churches. They're brought to some degree into the leadership circle, and they see some crazy things - people being dumb and mean. They see folks lashing out at those who are desperately trying to help them. We say, "This is what you're signing up for. Get used to it." Well, Moses doesn't know it, but this is what he's signing up for, or, rather, what God has selected him for. This is a preview of the book of Exodus, because as he's trying to lead his people out of slavery into the Promised Land, they're going to be tearing into him the whole way.

But that isn't all they say. Look at **verse 14** again. They yell at him, "***Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?***" We're not sure if they're afraid or if they're being smart-alecks. But we know here that it makes Moses fear for his life. It catches him off guard. He says to himself, "***Surely the thing is known.***" He knows he's now going to be a wanted man. And he's right.

The paranoid Pharaoh tries to strike again. **Verse 15** says he tries to kill this man who was raised by His daughter. Maybe he realizes then that his brilliant strategy of infanticide had missed this one baby boy and had failed. But, as Bobby so clearly pointed out a couple of weeks ago, behind Pharaoh is Satan himself trying to stamp out the people of God and the Deliverer of the people of God. Pharaoh is raging. But, Satan is roaring, too.

Moses flees. Here we see the making of a great leader. He draws near to his people. He feels their pain and suffering. He identifies closely with them. He seeks to deliver them.

But God wants to do much more in him than that. He intends to humble him. Now there are a lot of things that a leader needs, but there's probably nothing more important than humility.

A bunch of power and responsibility in the wrong hands is dangerous and satanic. This is what Pharaoh represents in Exodus. The Lord, however, uses the humble. Moses is later called the meekest man on the planet in **Numbers 12:3**. God is going to bring him to that point. And it's not going to come easily. It's going to take 40 years in the wilderness of Midian.

Have you thought about that? Moses becomes the guy who's played by Charlton Heston. He becomes the focus of a Disney movie. He's known as one of the most famous leaders ever. How does God prepare him? He makes him herd sheep in the desert for 40 years. So many people want to be leaders today. But they don't want to take time to prepare. And they don't want to humble themselves, either. That's how God makes leaders.

So, in **verse 15** He goes into the desert of Sinai. This is a significant place for Moses and God's family. **It's a part of their past**. The father of this nation, Midian, was one of Abraham's sons. Midianite slave traders had brought Joseph and, thus, his children to Egypt in the first place. Now Moses is fleeing there. **But this also colors his future**. There he gains a wife and a helpful father-in-law. But later, those Midianites end up as enemies of the people of God.

He sits down next to a well. This is significant, also. This is where his forefathers, Isaac and Jacob, had met their wives, in **Gen. 24 and 29**. He does, too. **Verses 16-17** say that the seven daughters of the nation's priest come to get water for their flock of sheep. Some other shepherds show up and bully them. But Moses defends them. Here in **verse 17** we see the first use in the Bible of the word "**saved**." Moses isn't just a leader. He's a savior. He rescues these women. And he will rescue God's people, also. He will become a shepherd, too, and unlike those here that attack these daughters, and in contrast to the slave-drivers of Egypt, he'll be a gentle, loving one.

In **verses 18-20**, the girls go home and tell their dad. He asks, “Why the heck didn’t you bring him here? He at least deserves a meal.” They get him, the man we’ll find later is named Jethro, and he feeds him. **Verse 21** tells us he gives Moses his daughter in marriage. She’s named Zipporah. They have a son, says **verse 22**. And they name him “**Gershom**.” His name means “**sojourner**,” which is significant. Why? Here Moses is in a land foreign to him. He is passing through a place that is not His home. And, more than that, he’s getting all kinds of love and hospitality, whereas, back along the Nile, his people were giving him the shaft. They despised him.

Now, can you see what’s happening here? He’s being humbled. He’s going from being a prince of the Egyptian empire to being a shepherd in the wilderness. His position dramatically changes. This is God’s way of readying him for his vocation. The Lord’s going to make him a deliverer. And this is how it has to happen.

When you think about it, Moses is perfect for the job. The girls here, in **verse 19**, call him an “**Egyptian**,” likely referring to his dress. But he’s been raised in the Pharaoh’s courts. He is suited to do what God wants him to do. The Lord has readied him for his calling. He’ll do the same thing for us. But he’s got to be humble first. So do we. All of us, and especially leaders, need this. Then there’s no doubt where the glory’s going to go when things roll.

What makes a good leader? Generally, it’s someone who knows what the people have been through. He or she has walked in the people’s shoes a bit. Moses here is experiencing a bit of their pain. He’s in a land that’s foreign to him. He’s being rejected and mistreated just like them. He’s being readied to be their Redeemer. But He’s experiencing the hurts of those who will be redeemed. Plus, he’s once again in the desert of Sinai, learning God’s lessons for him. They’re going there soon to learn the same things!

Think about those Israelites right now. Ever felt like God was silent? Like nothing was happening? You feel all sorts of pain, and you feel as if God's gone and could care less. There they are in Egypt, languishing for what's going to be another 40 years, all the while the Lord is busy putting together their deliverer. People of God, don't buy Satan's lies. He cares. He hasn't forgotten you either.

And think about Moses, also. Yeah, he's got a wife and a child - that's gotta be pretty good. But he still must be thinking, "What has happened?" He must be shrugging his shoulders and yelling at the sky, wondering why he's gone from big-shot prince to being a humble shepherd, a vocation scorned by the people of Egypt. But the Lord was just getting started in his life. Much of the goodness in our life comes through time and struggle. I was reading Matt's blog the other day. He was speaking of painting, but said. It's...

so much more like getting lost in the woods than it is jumping in a car and driving to the store for milk. It's not meant to be that simple. If it were that way there would be no discovery, no evocation beyond what we already know... and what good would that be?

Maybe you're not pushing sheep around. Maybe you're working at Subway. It may not be where you'd like to be. But He's sovereign and he's at work. So trust Him.

On Reading the Old Testament

He's turning Moses into a humble leader. But, is this story just about leadership? We've looked at what the passage says. Let's turn to where it points. How do we read Old Testament stories like this? What's their point?

Some people read them to draw out principles for leadership or marriage or childrearing or work or whatever it might be. That's what a lot of preaching is. "Five principles for not choking your boss" or whatever it might be. Old Testament passages are often used.

Sure, there are some great principles in this book. It's got great wisdom. But reading the Bible like that misses its whole point. It's meant to point to the only truly wise man.

Others read it as a book of rules. Keep them, and God will accept you and maybe even like you. But the problem is that we don't do well keeping the rules. In fact, God wants us to see that. He wants to use the Bible to humble us, to make us see our great need for a Savior. God wants us to see the only one who really kept the rules. That leads to the third bad way to read the Bible.

Some people read it as a book of heroes. See David? Live like him. Slay that Goliath in your life. But the problem is that David also killed a honest soldier and slept with his wife and then killed him off to hide it all. And Moses here buries an Egyptian in the sand. So looking at the Old Testament characters as heroes isn't the best path either. Rather, they all point forward to one main hero - He's Jesus!

Let me take this all another way. **Here's another bad way to read the Bible. You read this story of Moses, and all it is is history.** You may believe it happened. That's nice, of course. But it doesn't go beyond that. It's just history. It's similar to reading about the Constitutional Convention, but it's in the Bible. God's clearly involved in some way. But you're not sure much more beyond that.

Here's another bad idea. You read it as an allegory. Know what that is? I'll explain. An allegory is where each character or feature of a story represents something. The features of the story point to something deeper. The story is made up, though. It's not historical. Making the first mistake, we treat it just as history. Reading it this way, we ignore the history, looking for a "Bible code" of some sort. Neither path gets us to the heart.

Here's a third way: it's not just history. It's certainly not allegory. It's what we call typology. When we read stories like this one about Moses, we take the history seriously. But we don't stop there. We see it pointing forward to something greater. The characters and details become types or symbols that reach beyond themselves. To what? To whom? To salvation. To Christ, the greater hero. This is the way we have to read the entire Old Testament. As a grand story. With a great hero. And that includes these great pages here in Exodus.

Look with me, if you would, to **Luke 24, p. 885**. This is a passage that we read all the time here at Karis. Two guys are walking along the road lamenting the death of Christ, when this guy comes up alongside them and starts chatting with them. He then turns to teaching them, or rather rebuking them. Check out **verses 25-27**.

Luke 24:25 And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

What's Christ saying? It all points to him. We're fools not to see that. Christ says "**Moses**," this section we're talking about right here, that prophet and deliverer, pointed to Him. Later on, **verse 31** says, their eyes were opened and they recognized him. They look at each other and say, "***Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?***" God wants that to happen to us. He wants us to be opened up to the glory of Christ in the Old Testament and for our hearts to burn in response.

The New Testament shows us how to do this. Look with me at **Hebrews 3:1-6, p. 1002**.

Heb. 3:1 Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, 2 who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. 3 For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. 4 (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) 5 Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, 6 but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

The books of Moses, and especially the character of Moses, point to Jesus. Just as Moses faithfully cared for God's people, so did Jesus. Moses pointed to Him. But Christ is greater. He built the house! He fulfills Moses, but supersedes him, too. Christ is glorious!

This is what we must see as we walk through Exodus. I told you our first week that the theme of the book was this: **“set free through Jesus from bondage to life for worship by God's grace and for His glory.”** This deliverer who rescues the people of God from bondage, Moses, reaches forward to a new, better Deliverer, Jesus, who rescues us from sin and Satan and through water. And Moses, we'll see, saves them through this event called the Passover. There lambs are slain and their blood is painted on doors to save the Israelites from great judgment. Those Passover lambs point forward to Christ who was slain for our sins that we could be spared, as well.

God then shows His redeemed people how to live. Moses as Prophet gives Israel the law of God - the 10 commandments and a long explanation of how they get worked out in life. That prophet points forward to a greater prophet, Jesus. Think about Christ in Matthew 5-7, in the Sermon on the Mount, sitting there teaching the people. God wants us to see Him as a new, greater Moses. And Jesus also never sins; He perfectly obeys God's law. Therefore, just as Christ's death can be given us for salvation, so can his life be given to us, as well, when we believe.

The Lord brings His people to Him for worship. Moses receives from God directions to make the tabernacle. The Lord comes down at the end in fire and dwells among His people. Have you read the gospel of John lately? There, at the beginning, the gospel writer says that Jesus came and “***dwelt among us.***” Literally, he “tabernacled” among us. He set up a tent among us frail, sinful human beings. He is “God with us,” Emmanuel. And we’re to worship Him as God, too.

Also, think with me of one key detail of the tabernacle. Sacrifices had to be made to get to God. This reminds us of our sin. That blood points forward to that shed by Christ himself, so that we could draw near to God. So notice, the whole book of history, true history, reaches forward to the glory of Jesus. And this isn’t biblical Where’s Waldo. It’s easier than it sounds. As the *Jesus Storybook Bible* puts it, “Every story whispers his name.” We just have to look and listen.

Where This Passage Points

Well, then what about this section here in **Exodus 2:11-22**? Moses points to Jesus the Redeemer. Christ draws near to His people, He sees their sufferings, He identifies with them, as a human, and He goes about delivering them, saving them, not by killing someone, but by allowing Himself to be put to death. He’s a good Shepherd who gently, lovingly cares for His fragile, clueless sheep.

But, there’s even more. Moses is a prince turned shepherd. Jesus is God, exalted with His Father. He humbles Himself and comes to earth to be with us and to rescue us. He is the Redeemer who humbly saves by His blood.

But He also identifies with His redeemed people. He sojourns on earth, a cold, cruel place that’s not His home. He’s rejected by His people and welcomed by foreigners.

The Spirit drives Him into the desert, where He's tested and tempted by God through Satan for 40 days. He knows what Moses goes through. He knows what Israel goes through.

And that nation, of course, points to us. We're citizens of heaven who dwell here on earth. We receive the sufferings that He received. We're shaken and formed by the difficulties of our sojourn here. Christ is our Redeemer. But He knows the hardships of we who are the Redeemed. Let that encourage you, Karis!

So friends, when it comes to marriage, you don't ultimately need principles. There are truths in Scripture that are helpful to us. But, more than anything, you need to see your sin and great need. You need to know you're a sinner and so is your spouse, and you both need a Redeemer desperately. **You don't need rules for what you can and can't do in relationships.** God's word gives us commands that are for our good, yes. But, again, you need to recognize you can't keep the rules. You need to reach out for one who did and who died for all your screw-ups. **You don't need some Bible hero to imitate; that won't help.** You need to see that those characters weren't that great. They look a lot like you, in fact. You and they are fallen, needy human beings. You need the Hero, the God-man Christ Jesus.

Hear me: Moses was a great leader who became a deliverer. And God made him one by putting Him on His knees. But this passage isn't primarily about leadership. If anything, it shows we need humbled. It shows we need much help. We need a greater One to lead us. We need a Redeemer.