



## Scotts Hill Baptist Church

GOD'S EXIT PLAN • SUCCESSFUL FAILURES • EXODUS 2:11-25 • 1/19/2025

### MAIN POINT

Moses tried to achieve what he thought God wanted through his own means and failed miserably in his sin. God, however, is a God of restoration who continued to use Moses for His purposes after his restoration.

### INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Name some figures in Scripture who God used in spite of their sin and brokenness.**

**Describe a time in your life when you were frustrated with how slowly God seemed to be moving in regard to a particular need you had. How did you deal with the frustration?**

Scripture speaks of Moses' failure in attempting to lead his people. Moses had a good thing in mind as his goal—liberating the oppressed people of God and stopping their suffering. The problem was that, instead of waiting for God to move on behalf of His people in His own time, Moses rushed ahead and sought to take care of the matter in his own way. Doing so involved Moses' succumbing to the sin of murder and the consequential fear.

### UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EXODUS 2:11-14.

Following the narrative of Moses' birth and adoption, the action of Exodus skipped ahead approximately 36 years. From the description of the events, it is clear that Moses identified strongly with the people being oppressed by the Egyptians. Moses was certainly not wrong in his desire to see an end to the oppression of his people—God's people. In fact, God Himself had that same desire, as the coming verses of Exodus will reveal. However, Moses took a good and noble desire and attempted to fulfill it in an evil way. He refused to wait on God to deliver His people, and attempted to lead them himself under his own power and insight.

**How do you naturally respond to injustice? Does your natural, immediate response prompt you toward a sin like Moses' did? If so, how do you hold those emotions in check?**

**How have you seen God move in your life to bring resolution to unjust situations or conflicts? Did you ever try to handle it on your own? What happened?**

Despite his scheming, Moses' actions did not go unnoticed. Where Moses had intended to finally and officially align himself with his Hebrew countrymen, his actions and their discovery had left him even more estranged from the Hebrews and as a fugitive of justice from the Egyptians. Instead of being a man choosing between two people groups, he was now a man without a country.

**What does it indicate that Moses checked to make sure there were not witnesses before the murder? Would his actions have been different if witnesses had been knowingly present?**

**Why do you think sin in secret seems more acceptable? How does the resulting fear of exposure change a person's behavior?**

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EXODUS 2:15-22.

Having fled to Midian, only to enter into another episode of ending oppression (Reuel's seven daughters attacked by shepherds), Moses found a home with Reuel, the priest of Midian. In very much a summary form, verses 20-22 move quickly from Moses rescuing Reuel's daughters, to being invited to dinner, to settling in Reuel's homestead, to marrying Reuel's daughter, Zipporah. Following his betrothal to Zipporah, she bore him a son. Moses named the child "Gershom," a meaning that carried a somber recognition of his perpetual "outsider" status. The naming of his son, then, is a sign of his own brokenness.

However, while all of these events took place, God remembered the covenant. He was never absent, negligent, or too busy. God saw the Israelites, and His taking notice strongly foreshadowed that help was on its way.

**How significant of a role do your hometown, family, and friends play in your understanding of your identity?**

**Describe a time when you felt like you were starting over. Maybe it was professionally or relationally. How did it impact your view of God or His care for you?**

**How did the Israelites respond to their oppression at the hands of the Egyptians? What action words describe God's response?**

**What prompted God to take action on behalf of the Israelites?**

**God's remembering His covenant does not imply that He had forgotten it. Rather, it means that He chose to put His promises into effect. What is the relationship between the cries and prayers of the people, and God's promises?**

We may wonder if God hears our prayers. Suffering can make us desperate enough to pray, yet discouraged enough to conclude nothing can be done, even by God. When we find ourselves in difficult situations, we can take confidence because we know God knows about our suffering. He hears our prayers and acts to bring us courage, patience, peace, comfort, and help.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Have you ever tried to do the right thing, the wrong way? Why is it important to consider the character of God when we act out of passion?**

**When you think about the difficult decisions and conversations you have coming up in the next week or two, how does it strike you to read that, in the midst of their desperation, God took notice of the Israelites? When have you been tempted to think that God wasn't taking notice of you recently? How does it feel to know He absolutely does?**

**What seasons of failure or difficulty have made you search for a better understanding of who God is? Who do you know that needs to benefit from what you've already learned during your searching?**

## PRAYER

Pray that God will use the experiences in our group as a launching pad for personal ministry throughout our community. Pray that the Holy Spirit would protect our group from the lie that our past failures make us useless to God. Especially pray that God will gently remind us throughout the week that He notices us and moves on our behalf.

## COMMENTARY

### | EXODUS 2:11-25

2:12 Moses' caution indicates that his action was deliberate. Struck translates the same root word as "beating" (v. 11) and "attacking" (v. 13). In other words, the Egyptian was striking a Hebrew man, a Hebrew man struck another Hebrew, and Moses struck the Egyptian but with a different outcome. Hid translates a word used sometimes in contexts involving burying something (Gen 35:4; Jos 2:6; 7:21); it is different from the word used in verses 2 and 3 about Moses' mother hiding him.

2:13-14 Moses expressed surprise that the two Hebrews were fighting. This incident is evidence that the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt exemplifies God's loyalty and grace; it did not take place because they were all fine, deserving people.

2:15 The land of Midian included territory in modern Saudi Arabia, on the east of the Gulf of Aqaba. The Sinai Peninsula to the west would not have been far enough from Pharaoh to be safe, since Egypt had mining interests in the Sinai and it was under Egyptian military control. When he sat down by a well as a newcomer, Moses positioned himself to meet people, as had Abraham's servant when he met Rebekah, and as Jacob had done when he met Rachel (Gen 24:11-14; 29:1-6).

2:16 The priest of Midian, the father of seven daughters, was called Reuel (v. 18; Num 10:29), Hobab (Jdg 4:11), and most often Jethro (Ex 3:1; 4:18; 18:1-12). Other men with more than one name include Jacob (Gen 32:28; 46:2; 48:2; 49:2), Gideon (Jdg 7:1; 8:35), and Solomon (2Sam 12:24-25). Midianites were descendants of Abraham through his wife Keturah (Gen 25:1-2). Because of this connection, perhaps Jethro led others in worship of the God of Abraham and Isaac, as did Melchizedek (Gen 14:18-20). The Midianites as a

whole seem to have been nomadic desert dwellers who were later enemies of Israel (Gen 37:28,36; Num 22:4,7; 25:1-18; 31:1-20; Jos 13:21; Jdg 6-8; 9:17; Ps 83:9; Isa 9:4; 10:26; 60:6).

2:17-19 Again Moses came to the defense of someone, but this time it had nothing to do with the Israelites or their plight. He rescued a bunch of shepherd girls from what seems to have been a common annoyance, and they thought he was an Egyptian. Moses' identity continued to be an issue.

2:22 The name Gershom reflected the son's status as an alien in both Egypt and Midian.

2:23-24 The word for groaning describes a man with broken arms in Ezek 30:24. Four different words for the Israelite outcry and four words for God's response combine to make a weighty statement of desperation and response. The formality is enhanced in Hebrew by the unusual repetition of the word God as the subject of each verb in verse 24, which also underscores God's superiority and sovereignty: God heard... God remembered... God saw... God took notice. God's remembering is more than mental awareness; it implies action in keeping with His covenant promises (Gen 8:1; 19:29; 30:22; Lv 26:42-45; Ps 105:8; 106:44-46; Jer 14:21; Am 1:9). The command to "remember" the Sabbath Day is parallel to the command to "keep" the Sabbath (Ex 20:8; Dt 5:12).

"Took notice" ( heard) translates a verb often translated "know" or "knew" (1:8; 5:2; 6:3,7; 7:5; 16:12; 18:11), which like "remember" typically involves more than awareness of information. Here it carries the thought of having regard for something or someone and of exercising personal concern (Ps 31:7; 37:18; 144:3; Hos 13:4). Because God knew their situation and took action, the Israelites and others would come to know Him in a new way. This verse assumes that readers are familiar with the promises that God had made and confirmed by covenants with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen 12:1-3,7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-21; 18:17-19; 21:12-13; 22:15-18; 28:3-4,10-22; 32:9-12; 35:9-15; 46:1-4; 48:3-4,15-16; 50:24-25).