

What's In a Name

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[0 : 0 0] We are in the book of Hebrews, and so you can get on over to Hebrews chapter 11. We will also be in Exodus today, so if you want to put a sticky note or a finger or a 3x5 card or something in Exodus chapter 2, you can do that as well.

And Jenny, whenever you're ready, please come and serve us. This is Hebrews chapter 11 and verse number 27. Hebrews chapter 11 and verse number 27.

By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. Let's pray. Father, we are grateful for the privilege of gathering here together, as Tim has already reminded us.

We're grateful for the opportunity to lift our voices, to have our hearts moved, even to have our emotions and our consciences moved again by these reminders of your great love for us.

Both as we sing a song like, oh, give thanks to the Lord, and we celebrate how you have loved us. And also as we sing, when I survey the wondrous cross, and our hearts pause, and we slow down, and we think, and we're reflective about these beautiful words written so many years ago that continue to be meaningful to us today.

[1 : 3 0] As we think about the great plan of salvation, the work of redemption. Thank you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for saving sinners like us.

And thank you for giving us gospel hope to persevere and to press on in faith. Thank you for giving us a message of hope that we can take to hurting broken people around us, recognizing that we also, at one point, were hurting and broken and so desperate for hope.

Give us courage. Give us humility as we go with this gospel into the world, into the places where you have us, and as we come in contact with people. Give us words to say, scripture verses to quote.

Remind us, again and again, by the power of the Holy Spirit, not to be timid, but to be bold, confident that you will work, even in our weakness.

Father, we look to you for this time in your word and ask that you would bless it. We want to hear from you. We want to hear what you have to say to us from your word.

[2 : 4 3] So please open your word to us. Help me not to be a distraction. Help me to be faithful. Guard me from saying anything that will be foolish or unhelpful or would take away from the message that you have for us today.

We want to see our Savior, the Lord Jesus, clearly. And we want to be reminded of the good hope that is ours and how you call us to deeper faith in you.

It is in Jesus' name that we pray, that we give thanks, and that we ask these things. Amen. In William Shakespeare's play, Romeo and Juliet, Juliet asks an interesting question.

She says this. She says, what is in a name? What is in a name?

That which we call a rose, by any other name, would smell as sweet. She's right.

[3 : 54] It doesn't really matter what you call this rose. In fact, you can call this stinky diaper if you want, right? It does not change what this rose smells like or what this rose looks like or how this rose makes someone feel.

When they receive it. There is a kernel of truth in Juliet's statement.

Neither the name you were lovingly given, nor any name that you might be slanderously called, defines who you are.

That said, in the Bible, names are often indicators of a person's character, a person's mission, a person's calling on their life.

The princess of Egypt named the baby that she found in the Nile River. Floating in the Nile River, she names this baby Moses.

[5 : 12] He is the OG water baby, right? What does Moses mean? I got him from the water. How more obvious of a name could you come up with? He's that baby that came out of the water.

Think of the privileges Moses enjoys as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He is nurtured by his Hebrew mother, perhaps including religious instruction.

He has servants. He has food. He has a life of royalty. He is part of the most powerful family in all of Egypt. He gets a top-notch Egyptian education, according to Stephen in Acts chapter 7.

And also, according to Stephen, he is powerful. That is, Moses is powerful in speech and action. But, despite every advantage that Moses was given as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than all of the treasures of Egypt.

And he chose to suffer with God's people, rather than enjoying the temporary benefits of the hypocritically pretending that he was not one of them.

[6 : 44] And then he refuses to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Let's pick up Moses' story in Acts chapter 2 and beginning...

Sorry, Acts. In Exodus chapter 2, if we're going to Acts 2, we are having a different sermon today. Exodus chapter 2 and verse number 11. Exodus 2, verse number 11.

Years later.

Moses' story in Acts chapter 2 and beginning... ...and looking all around and seeing no one. He, Moses, the one who is strong. Strong in speech.

Powerful in speech and action. Moses' struck the Egyptian dead. And hit him in the sand. Now, the next day, he went out and he saw two Hebrews fighting.

[8 : 06] Two of his own people. Two brothers. And he asked the one in the wrong, Why are you attacking your neighbor? Oh boy, verse 14.

Who made you? Who made you a commander and a judge over us? The man replied. Are you planning to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?

Then, Moses became afraid and thought, What I did is certainly known. When Pharaoh heard about this, he tried to kill Moses.

But Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in the land of Midian. Now, let me read a couple of verses from Acts chapter 7, because I think it is so helpful to let Scripture interpret and comment on Scripture whenever that is possible.

And we do find that it's quite possible and helpful here. Acts chapter 7 and verse 23. This is the same sermon, the same speech that we looked at last week.

[9 : 17] Stephen is speaking, and he says this, Acts 7, 23. When he was 40 years old, speaking of Moses, he decided to visit his own people, the Israelites.

And when he saw one of them being mistreated, he came to his rescue and avenged the oppressed man by striking down the Egyptian. He assumed his people would understand that God would give them deliverance through him.

Massive narrator comment here. But they did not understand. The next day, he showed up while they were fighting.

And he tried to reconcile them peacefully, saying, Men, you are brothers. Why are you mistreating each other? But the one who was mistreating his neighbor pushed Moses aside, saying, Who appointed you a ruler and a judge over us?

Do you want to kill me the same way that you killed the Egyptian yesterday? When he heard this, Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian.

[10 : 28] Privilege often leads to presumption. And that seems to be the case with Moses.

Did you see that there in verse number 25? He assumed that his people would understand. That they would understand what?

That he was the deliverer. You see that there in 25? That God was going to deliver them through him. In addition to every other privilege that Moses has, being the SOPD, he also seems to have this privilege, some sense of God's calling on his life.

Some awareness, some revelation, that he was the deliverer. We don't have that, but there must have been something there, because Stephen tells us, he assumed that his brothers would know that he was the deliverer.

Privilege, I suspect, led to presumption. Rather than waiting on God for the right time to deliver his people, Moses takes matters into his own hands.

[11 : 54] And rather than leveraging God's means of deliverance, Moses leverages his own human means of deliverance. And what is that? Well, Stephen tells us.

He is powerful in word and action. Nothing to strike down this Egyptian. Nothing to kill him with his own hands.

Bury him in the sand. And listen, if Moses wanted to get away with this, as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, there is no reason to believe he couldn't have made up a story and lied his way out of this.

He's powerful in speech and action, but he doesn't use God's means of deliverance. He leverages power, his own power, to exploit weakness.

Do you ever do that? Do you ever use your strength, your authority, your power, the force of your voice, the force of your personality to make others feel small and insignificant, irrelevant, afraid?

[13 : 05] The fruit of the Spirit is gentleness. And gentleness means cultivating the kind of strength that refuses to exploit weakness.

the consequences of Moses' rush to action. He is discredited among his own people.

They know what he did. They know that he's a murderer. He becomes the enemy of Pharaoh and he is now a fugitive.

I love how Stephen uses the word exile. He's in the land of Midian. He is away. He is out of Egypt. A fugitive from the land of Egypt in the land of Midian.

Back to Exodus chapter 2, verse 23. Exodus 2, verse 23. After a long time, Stephen will tell us in Acts chapter 7, this little after a long time is 40 more years.

[14 : 22] 40 years in exile from Egypt. 40 years in the wilderness of Midian. 40 years away from the power and the privilege and all of the things that were his in Egypt.

40 years shepherding sheep. After a long time, the king of Egypt died and the Israelites groaned because of their difficult labor.

You can read their slavery and they cried out and their cry for help because of the difficult labor ascended to God. Verse 24.

Put a circle around this. God heard their groaning and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

God saw the Israelites. Verse, and then at the very end, and God knew. knew. This is what we want and need from one another.

[15 : 27] This is just a brief aside here. This is what we want and need from one another. The way that God responds to his people who are horribly abused and mistreated.

This is the way we need to respond to one another. The same way that God, do you see that? To hear their groaning, to remember them, to see them, and to know them.

Wow. Wow. We can enter into that with one another. Chapter 3, verse 1. Meanwhile, meanwhile, I love this. This is like just a scene change.

I think of like the Star Wars scene change where it just wipes across the screen. Meanwhile, Moses was shepherding the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian.

He led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. Then, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire within a bush.

[16 : 29] And as Moses looked, he saw that the bush was on fire but was not consumed. This is weird, right? So Moses thought, I must go over and look at this remarkable sight.

Why isn't the bush burning up? When the Lord saw that Moses, that he had gone over to look, God called out to him from the bush, Moses, Moses.

Here I am, he answered. Do not come closer, he, God said. Remove the sandals from your feet for the place where you are standing is holy ground.

And then he, God, continued, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.

Then the Lord said, I have observed the misery of my people in Egypt and have heard them crying out because of their oppressors. I know about their sufferings and I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them from the land to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the territory of the Canaanites, the Hethites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

[17 : 55] So, because the Israelites cry for help has come to me and I have also seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them, verse number 10, therefore, go.

I am sending you to Pharaoh so that you may lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.

Now, what happened the last time? Moses had this sense of calling. It didn't go well, did it? He was impatient.

He took matters into his own hands. He murdered someone. His privilege led to presumption and it went straight to his head.

But 40 years have passed. Away from the privileges of Egypt, 40 years learning the ways of the shepherd and rather than pride, notice Moses' humility, verse number 11.

[19 : 10] But Moses asked God, who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?

I don't think this is cowardice. I don't think this is a lack of bravery. I think this is an awareness that if I do this my way, on my timeline, in my strength, this will fail again like it failed last time.

I wonder if Moses is in some way picking up on Jesus' words in John chapter 15 when Jesus says, apart from me, you can do nothing.

It's kind of a hard verse to read if we're honest, right? It bumps up against all of our pride. Wouldn't it be great if that verse said, apart from me, you can only do a little bit? I love that.

That's good. Then I know, okay, a little bit. But it's so clear. Jesus just says, apart from me, you can do nothing. I wonder if Moses is picking up on that a little bit.

[20 : 22] Notice how God responds to Moses' admission of weakness. And notice that God in his gentleness does not exploit Moses' weakness.

Verse number 12. He answered. I will certainly be with you. And this will be a sign to you that I am the one who sent you.

When you bring the people out of Egypt, you will worship God at this mountain. Notice two things very briefly. There is this promise of his presence.

I will be with you. And notice secondly, there is a sign that assures Moses of success. You will bring them out, and you will worship at this very mountain where I am meeting with you right now.

But remember, the last time Moses did things his way, when he got impatient, he was discredited. He knows the people are not likely to believe him, not the least of which that 40 years have gone by and they figure Moses is already dead.

[21 : 36] And so Moses asks for more. Verse 13, Moses asked God, if I go to the Israelites and say to them, the God of your ancestors has sent me to you, and they ask me, what is his name?

What should I tell them? Now, we might expect, if we were dealing with another lowercase G God, we might expect a response like, who do you think you are?

How dare you question me? Remember in the Wizard of Oz? How dare you question me? But notice that God does not hesitate to reveal himself to those who desire to know him.

Not even if that person is a failed leader, not even if that person is a murderer, not even if that person is a fugitive from his own country, not even if that person has been wandering around the backside of the desert chasing sheep for 40 years.

God does not hesitate to reveal himself to those who desire to know him. Verse 14, God replied to Moses, Jesus.

[23 : 02] I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites. I am has sent me to you.

God reveals himself as the God who is. The God who just is. The God who is self-existent and self-sufficient and he so kindly gives Moses a visual of this.

There is this flame that is in this bush and the flame ought to consume the bush. That's what would happen if you lit a fire in your fire pit and you threw some sticks in there.

The sticks would be consumed by the flame. But notice this flame is self-existent and self-sufficient. it doesn't need the bush to burn.

God reveals himself as the God who is. Verse 15 God also said to Moses say this to the Israelites the Lord the God of your ancestors the God of Abraham the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob has sent me to you.

[24 : 22] This is my name forever. this is how I am to be remembered in every generation. He is the God who keeps promises.

He is the true and better promise keeper. I am the God of Abraham. I am the God of Isaac.

I am the God of Jacob. And in the same way that I was God for your ancestors Abraham Isaac and Jacob I will be God for you Moses. The God of Moses.

Verse 16 go and assemble the elders of Israel and say to them the Lord the God of your ancestors the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob has appeared to me and said I have paid close attention to you and to what has been done to you in Egypt and I have promised you that I will bring you up from the misery of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites Hittites Amorites Perizzites Hittites and Jebusites a land flowing with milk and honey God has not forgotten his promises to Abraham nor to Jacob nor to Isaac God has not forgotten his promises and he is the God who is aware of their suffering what was the promise to Abraham I will be with you I'm going to give your people this land what was the promise to Jacob go down to Egypt and

I will be with you there and then I will bring you up again from Egypt God says I have not forgotten my promises I know what you're going through I am well aware of your present suffering verse 18 they the elders of Israel they will listen to what you say and then you along with the elders of Israel must go to the king of Egypt and say to him the Lord the God of the Hebrews has met with us now please let us go on a three day trip into the wilderness so that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God however I know that the king of Egypt will not allow you to go even under force from a strong hand but when

[27:10] I stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all my miracles that I will perform in it after that he will let you go God reveals himself as the God who is able to rescue his people the God with full knowledge of the future this is a powerful God a God who can say I know that the elders of Israel will listen simultaneously I know that the king of Egypt will not listen but I am going to roll out my strong arm against the king of Egypt and then he will listen and he will let you go God reveals himself as the God who is able to rescue his people this revelation that God makes of himself is take your breath away stunning how would we know these things about

God if he didn't tell us he knows and controls future events according to his will he is fully mindful of all that hurts his people right now in the present he never breaks his word he never goes back on a promise he keeps them all and he is the self existent self sufficient God who is what's in a name God has many names in this in the Old Testament but this particular name Yahweh has special significance in fact if we were to flip forward just a couple of chapters Moses would tell us because God tells him I haven't used this name with others what's in a name this self revelation that

God makes right here at the burning bush with Moses this is new this is fresh I am the God who is self sufficient self existent aware of how my people are hurting and powerful enough to do something about it tell them I am has sent you in John chapter eight Jesus is debating some religious leaders and they have a bit of a debate about Abraham and Jesus says this John chapter eight and verse fifty eight before Abraham was I am now these religious leaders were not annoyed by

Jesus bad grammar they were incensed at him why because they knew what Jesus was doing they knew that Jesus was calling their attention to this scene and this name and Jesus is saying that name the self sufficient self existent all powerful promise keeping God who is able to deal with his people's misery that's me before Abraham was I am they hate Jesus for doing this and so as we read in Acts chapter 2 according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God these religious leaders delivered Jesus to the

Romans in order to be murdered by crucifixion but God raised him from the dead and God has given him a name that is above every name so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow!

[31 : 40] And every tongue will confess that it is Jesus who is Lord and all of this to the glory of God the Father and this is why we can read in Acts chapter 4 there is salvation in no other name there is salvation in no other name there salvation in no one else that includes yourself you will not find salvation in yourself you are not going to find salvation in your parent or your great aunt or your uncle or your great grandfather who was a Christian there is salvation in no one else you will not find salvation in a priest or a pope or a pastor or a preacher you are not going to find salvation please hear this in a political leader there is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved friend are you saved children are you saved do you know the

Lord Jesus as your savior have you ever as Paul writes in in Romans chapter 10 have you ever called upon the name of the Lord Jesus in order to be saved I confess that some stories in this line of Hebrews 11 are difficult to relate to some of them are hard to relate to but I suspect that we can all relate relate with Moses I suspect that we can all relate to being impatient and wanting something to happen I suspect that we can all relate to being willing to take matters into our own hands in order to get something that we know needs to happen to happen I told a friend this week about a desire that

I have for someone else to repent and for someone else to tell the truth and for someone else to confess These are all good things!

It's okay to desire these things! And yet for now this seems to not be God's will or at least it is not God's timeline And this is really hard because I wish it was God's timeline And I'm willing to do things to make this timeline start I can relate to Moses I get it When your grip slips what emotion whips When you lose your grip on the circumstances and you are not in control and you cannot define the timeline and you can't make something happen

When your grip slips what emotion whips When you can't get your children to do what you want!

[35 : 51] And you feel rightly frustrated Isn't it easy to resort to loud threats and to be like Moses the strength of my voice my ability to do something about this to break up this situation isn't it easy to want to be like Moses or to choose some kind of heavy handed discipline when you have lost your grip what emotion whips what emotion takes over and now is dragging you around when you lose control in a relationship and you end up in this situation where you are only willing to give when you are getting something in return is that some kind of a transactional quotey things relationship that's not healthy but we do this why do we do this because we want control when elders and church leaders resort to ultimatums we choose a path of dividing and conquering rather than unifying and shepherding what is happening in our hearts brothers and sisters perhaps you are the type of mentor the type of manager the type of leader at work where there is no result that is ever good enough for you because it's not done your way or maybe you don't respond with a show of force perhaps you respond with a different type of emotion a different emotion perhaps whips you around and it is a motion of pouting melancholy moping around so that everyone around you knows that you are upset what happens when you can't control what you eat or what you're going to wear or what you're going to do or where you are going to go when your grip on these practical realities in life begins to slip what emotions whip perhaps as husbands we stop loving sacrificially and we only make decisions and demands and perhaps as wives we stop having tolerance for any sort of imperfection that's not the way that

I would do it and that is not good enough and resentment becomes the emotion that whips us around followers of Jesus we can develop an us versus them mentality who is in who is on the inside of quote orthodoxy and then we can look across at all the other Christians Christians Christians in the world and we say they're not like me they don't hold all the same things that I do what have we done what are we doing when we only want to talk about the!

failures! and never the fact that she is the beauty the bride of Christ his love his delight and that he is for her there's hope for you and me but not in ourselves the hope for you and me is in the gospel of the Lord Jesus and the hope is in this promise from 1st John chapter 1 if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness oh there's unrighteousness in my heart that needs to be cleansed!

out today notice this when Moses' grip slipped what emotions whipped presumption pride resentment anger and all of these things led to what chapter 2 and verse 14 all of these things led to see it here Moses became afraid you see that this was the end result from Exodus's point of view the end result is fear you haven't accomplished what you wanted you've made it worse by taking things into your own hands and trying to do them by your own timeline but there is something shockingly remarkably remarkably amazingly and graciously beautiful that the author of Hebrews tells us about this scene chapter 11 and verse 27 do you see it by faith by faith he left

Egypt by faith he was not afraid of the anger! of the king now there's lots of debate and discussion about how to reconcile these two things because the book of Exodus clearly says that he was afraid and yet the book of Hebrews tells us that it wasn't fear but faith that motivated him to leave I don't think this deserves all the pages that we spend writing about this particular irreconcilable difference in scripture do you know what I think is true both of them I think Moses legitimately was afraid the kindness of God under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit when the author of Hebrews records this story for us he doesn't tell us about Moses fear he tells us graciously and mercifully about

[42 : 21] Moses faith by faith he left Egypt behind not being afraid of the king's anger notice this for Moses persevered as one who sees him who is invisible see in the gospel of Jesus we have a better way to deal with situations that slip out of our control we have a better way to deal with circumstances that we don't like we have a better way of dealing with dangers a better way of dealing with people who are difficult and hard to get along with and rub us the wrong way we have a better way of dealing with one another!

faith in this invisible God that Moses met that day at the burning bush and faith in the God who came down the God made flesh the word the Lord Jesus Christ this is the kind of faith that develops into the spiritual fruit of patience the kind of faith that surprises with mercy when your natural response was going to be anger this is the kind of faith that refuses to make to manipulate or to make ultimatums this is the kind of faith that rejects the lie that all hope is gone and too much time has passed and there's nothing left to be done here this is the kind of faith that perseveres in adversity the kind of faith that sustains through weeks and months and years 40 years if necessary waiting on

God to work this is faith in the God who reveals himself the God who is the God who is self existent and self sufficient the God who keeps every one of his promises the God who is fully aware of your circumstances and the God who has the power not only to tell us what's going to happen in the future and the future is bright brothers and sisters!

for you child of God let's pray and ask God to give us this type of faith father we are so grateful so so grateful that in your word in Hebrews chapter 13 you tell us I will never leave you nor forsake you we need that promise we need that promise every day because we are going to encounter situations that allow us to begin to believe that you have left us and you have abandoned us and here we are all alone wandering in this wilderness no one even cares oh father please stir up fresh faith in you in the

God who is thank you for revealing yourself to Moses in this way thank you Lord Jesus for shocking and frustrating and making so angry those religious leaders by taking this title for yourself claiming this name as your own so that we would know this is our God our Savior is our God thank you Holy Spirit for helping us to see the beauty of Jesus would you stir up fresh faith in us to persevere by looking to the God who is invisible we ask this in Jesus name amen