**Session 4: Week 3a**

***God of Deliverance***

**Exodus 2:11-25**

**5-6 September 2022**

**An Unexpected Thing –** Even though Moses had been raised in the palace of Pharaoh, he had an awareness of exactly where he had come from, i.e. he knew he was a Hebrew, and he was loyal to his people. We also saw the touching faithfulness of God in placing him back safely in the arms of his own mother as an infant through the intervention of five women. But why did God choose to begin the book of Exodus with a story about midwives? Certainly they “delivered” Israel in a very literal sense, but what else is there for us to learn?

**Rejected by His Own –** Moses had a sense that he was to deliver his people, but when he struck down the Egyptian, he showed that despite having the *right motive*, he chose the *wrong action* and the *wrong time* to accomplish the goal. The man he had defended from the Egyptian had evidently talked, so the matter became public. The reaction of the two Hebrew men the next day when Moses tried to intervene in their quarrel is a foreshadowing of the later response to the “true and better Moses”, Jesus Christ. He too “came to His own, but His own received Him not.”

**The Well –** When the text says that Moses sat down by a well in Midian, it doesn’t mean that he was just sitting there. It means that he settled near the well after he had fled from Pharaoh, and the next scene mentioned in Exodus tells of his encounter with women by that well. Wells in scripture are often the scene of betrothals (e.g. Rebekah and Rachel) or places where God makes a particular promise to His people. So it is no surprise that the “true and better Moses” will meet with a woman by a well in the New Testament…or that the question that comes up between them is her marital state. Jesus offers her living water, and in that moment she becomes betrothed to her Bridegroom.

**A Sojourner –** Moses named his firstborn son Gershom, which means “sojourner”, to reflect the fact that Moses has been a sojourner in a foreign land. In fact, he will remain a sojourner all his life, dying within sight of the Promised Land, but not dwelling in it. We too are “Gershom”, sojourners in this world while waiting for our eternal home.

**God as a Midwife –** The last three verses of Exodus chapter 2 strongly stress the fact that the Israelites were groaning and crying out to God for relief from their suffering under Egyptian oppression. The wording is strongly reminiscent of Romans 8:22, which describes all creation as groaning with the “pains of childbirth”. So too, “labor pains” are beginning for the Hebrew people, and they are crying out to their heavenly “Midwife” for deliverance. There are other places in scripture that convey this idea:

* Psalm 22:9-10 – “Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother’s breasts. On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother’s womb you have been my God.”
* Psalm 71:6 – “Upon you I have leaned from before my birth; you are he who took me from my mother’s womb. My praise is continually of you.”
* Isaiah 66:9 – “Shall I bring to the point of birth and not cause to bring forth?” says the Lord; “shall I, who cause to bring forth, shut the womb?” says your God.

So why does Exodus begin with a story about midwives? Because *God is presented to us* in this story of deliverance *as the deliverer himself.* This metaphor will continue as we continue on in Exodus. So the people groan, and we have these wonderful statements about God at the end of chapter two: He *hears,* He *remembers,* He *sees,* and He *knows*.