

Exodus 2:11–25

Worth the WAIT

TSC, Exodus 1–20: Week 2

MPT: God's people will only fully be delivered from slavery—physical and spiritual—by God himself.

MPS: Waiting is hard because it reveals our lack of control. Waiting isn't just about what you're waiting for, but who you're becoming while you wait ... less about waiting for something; more about waiting with Someone.

UFN: The struggle to believe God is working when I'm in a season of waiting on something that's out of my control.

[VIDEO: Daniel Ritchie]

I'm not crying, you're crying ...

Not sure what to say after that ...let's just do an altar call and then head on home ...

EXODUS 2

Open your Bible to Exodus 2.

Week two of this series ...

²³During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. ²⁴And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

²⁵God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.

INTRODUCTION: Waiting + Control

One of the worst feelings in life.....is having to wait.¹

I don't know about you, but I absolutely hate waiting.

¹ Owe this intro idea to Craig Groeschel

- You catch me **waiting at a standstill** in the insane traffic of 401 and Capital trying to get my kids to school in the morning, you'll likely be seeing one of your pastors sin.
- You catch me at the **grocery store** and you'll see me doing **calculus equations** in my head as I determine the fastest checkout line based on the **quantity of customers in line**, the **volume of groceries** in their cart, while cross referencing that with the **age and speed of the checkout person**.

In our fast-paced, same-day delivery world, I've heard there's still three places we ALL have to wait:

1. Doctor's office
2. Airport
3. For your significant other to be ready before you go out
 - a. Guys, when she says **"Ready in 5,"** that's the female equivalent of you saying, **"Only 2 mins left in this game."**

One of the worst feelings in life is having to wait ... especially when it comes to waiting on God.

Author **Richard Hendrix** says this: **"Second only to suffering, waiting may be the greatest teacher in godliness, maturity, and faith most of us ever encounter."**

Some of you have been waiting on God to move in your life ... you've been waiting on him to:

- **heal** you physically ... **heal you from anxiety and depression**
- **provide a job** that can sustain you and your family, or help you **get out of debt**
- waiting on a **spouse** ... or to **help you in your marriage** ... or to help you **get pregnant**
- help you know what **school** to go to or what **career path** to take

Underneath our disdain for waiting is our longing for control.

Control is a deceitful thing because it believes:

- *If I can impose my will enough on this thing, this person, this situation, then I can determine the outcome.*
- *As long as I'm in charge—as long as I'm the ultimate authority—I'm safe and secure.*

Control gives us the illusion that we're calling the shots. But waiting? ... I don't think anything reveals our lack of control more than **being forced to WAIT**.

- It's in waiting that **we get a sense of our limits**.

- It's in waiting we are confronted with the reality that there are so many situations where **we are powerless** to influence an outcome or timeline.

What if we started to see waiting as an opportunity to **grow our dependence on God**, rather than be **disappointed** and **discouraged** by what he's seemingly *not* doing in our lives?

What if waiting isn't just about *what you're waiting for*, but *who you're becoming while you wait*?

Perhaps nobody understood this more than Moses. What we're going to see over the next several weeks of this series is how Moses received a **PhD in Patience and Waiting**.

CONTEXT

Last week, Pastor J.D. showed us how, in Exodus 1, Moses opened the book by giving us a **clear illustration of our salvation**. He showed, through the story of his own **birth and circumstances**, how God was and has always been fully in control of everything, as he **works to fulfill the promise he made to a man named Abraham** in Genesis—to bless him, make his name great, and his descendants as numerous as the stars of the sky.

So the first chapter of Exodus, even though there's some hiccups here and there, overall it's coming together quite nicely:

- Baby Moses is born to a Hebrew mom.
- Even though he should've been killed at birth by decree of Pharaoh, **by faith** his mom puts him in a little baby ark and floats him down the river, where none other than Pharaoh's daughter rescues him.
- She decides to not only keep him, but to have one of her servants (unbeknownst to her, it was *Moses' mom*) raise him.
- She names this baby "Moses," which in Egyptian means "son," but in Hebrew means "drawn out". . . all foreshadowing how one day, God would use Moses to *draw his people Israel out of Egypt*.

The whole plan seems to be going swimmingly (pun intended), until it's not. Surprisingly enough, it's when Moses **tries to take control** that the **illusion of control** begins to unravel and leads him into a long period of waiting on God. Look at **Exodus 2:11** . . .

WALKTHROUGH

¹¹One day, when Moses had grown up (Acts 7 tells us he was 40 years old here), he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people.

Notice **twice in v. 11**, he refers to the Hebrews as “his people”: **He went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people.**

This is interesting, because for 40 years, Moses has grown up in the house of Pharaoh as an Egyptian. But, keep in mind, he’s also being raised *by* his biological mom.

- As he’s growing up, he likely has his **biological mother** whispering, “Hey, this **palace** and this **lifestyle** and this whole **‘Prince of Egypt’** stuff, *it’s all fine and good ... but don’t forget: You’re a Hebrew. You belong to God, not Pharaoh.*”

And it says **he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people.**

There are two ways of “looking on” in the Hebrew language ... think about it like this: When you watch a sports game (or *The Bachelor* or whatever you’re really into on TV), there are two ways you can “look on”:

- 1. Sit back. Hang out. Observe, but not really invested.**
- 2. The proper way to watch a game:**
 - a. leaned forward
 - b. straight back
 - c. chin down
 - d. feet shoulder-width apart, to stand at any time
 - e. strong triangle with arm for support
 - f. hands together, one in a ball for stress ... the other open, ready to clap
 - g. This position travels well too—folding chair, lawn chair, on top of a cooler, bleacher, back of a truck, etc.
 - i. Leaning in ... feel the hits, riding the bumps, cheer, weep, celebrate, moan, you *feel*

This second way is how Moses looked on: He’s **leaned in, he’s invested, he feels his fellow Hebrew’s pain so viscerally** that ¹²**he looked this way and that** (kinda like a kid does when he knows he’s about to do something that will have serious repercussions if it’s found out), **and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.** **This is an old-school Hebrew hit-and-run.**

¹³**When he went out the next day, behold, two Hebrews were struggling together. And he said to the man in the wrong, “Why do you strike your companion?”** ¹⁴**He answered, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?”**

Now, there were only three people that knew he killed that Egyptian. One is Moses, and one is buried in the sand ... which means it had to be the one guy *he rescued* who went and told everyone.

If I'm Moses, I'm a bit confused—*Wait, I'm here to SAVE you, not kill you!* **Acts 7** gives us more insight into what Moses was thinking ... **Acts 7:25–28:** ²⁵*He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand.* ²⁶*And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?'* ²⁷*But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?'* ²⁸*Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?'*

Moses thought this act of “justice” would be a rallying cry for his Hebrew brothers ... that they'd **rise up** and **free the shackles of Pharaoh**, and they'd see Moses as their deliverer.

Moses seemingly had all the tools ... But he was doing it in his own strength, setting himself in the role that **only God could empower and equip him to perform**.

- The truth is, he started before he was ready. He was trusting in his own strength, not God's. He tried to give them salvation **by his hand** ... he **tried to reconcile them**.

His fellow Hebrew asks a valid question, I think ... he says, “**Who made you a prince and a judge over us?**”

- The fact is, Moses **hadn't** been made a prince or a judge.
- Now, later on, as we'll see over the next few weeks, God *does* put Moses in those roles and speaks through him and uses him mightily.
- But at this point, Moses is trying to do God's work in his own strength.
- **God's work must be done in God's way, in God's time, by God's strength, for God's glory.**
- Moses needed to learn that salvation doesn't come from *his* hand, but from *HIS* hand—that Moses is merely an instrument in the Redeemer's hand.

Verse 14 continued: Then Moses was afraid, and thought, “Surely the thing is known.” ¹⁵When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well.

Thus begins part two of Moses' life.

- Part 1: 40 years as prince in Egypt
- Part 2: 40 years as shepherd in Midian
- Part 3: 40 years as leader of Israel

¹⁶Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters, and they came and drew water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. ¹⁷The shepherds came and drove them away (think high school when upperclassmen would shove freshmen out of the way to get to the water fountain first), but Moses stood up and saved them, and watered their flock. ¹⁸When they came home to their father Reuel (you probably know him as **Jethro**), he said, "How is it that you have come home so soon today?" ¹⁹They said, "An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and even drew water for us and watered the flock." Forty years of Egyptian hair, clothing, and style made them assume Moses was an Egyptian.

²⁰He said to his daughters, "Then where is he? Why have you left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread." Jethro's like, "A single man protected and provided for you, and you left him out there! Go get that dude! He's a keeper!" ²¹And Moses was content to dwell with the man, and he gave Moses his daughter Zipporah. Single guys: This is how you get a wife → Go out to Midian and protect the ladies and water their flocks. ²²She gave birth to a son, and he called his name Gershom (which literally means "a stranger"), for he said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land."

Moses goes from being a **potential savior** to now a **lowly shepherd** in Midian.

- Shepherds, by the way, were seen as "abominations" to the Egyptians. That's what **Genesis 46:34** says.
- This ain't just *rough day*; this is *rock bottom*.

From a human perspective, Exodus 2 has turned into a story about a massive failure:

- Moses is an exiled shepherd, caught in the middle of nowhere, separated from his people in a foreign land. He's given up on his dreams of deliverance. He even names his kid "stranger," because that's how he feels being away from his people Israel.
- Meanwhile, God's people remain slaves in Egypt.
- *It all looks so dark. And in that darkness, God seems so distant and silent ...* conspicuous in the writing of Exodus 2 is the seeming absence of God. It's as if he's not even there.
 - Israel is in slavery, **waiting**: *Has God forgotten about us? Does he even care?*
 - Moses is in Midian, **waiting**: *Did I waste my chance? Has God given up on me?*

*Isn't this how **waiting** feels? Is there even a God who sees what's going on? Is there even a God who hears my sobs? God, I'M WAITING. Won't you do something?! Do you even care?*

²³During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help.

Groaning. Crying. Waiting.

The advice to combat waiting is usually “patience,” right? Did you know the Latin word for patience literally means “suffering” or “endurance”?

Because that’s what waiting can often feel like—a kind of suffering.

- *Second only to suffering, waiting may be the greatest **trainer** in godliness, maturity, and faith most of us ever encounter.*

You know, we often describe the Christian life as “walking with Jesus.” But if you look at Scripture, I think we could make the argument that “waiting with Jesus” is also a fundamental part of what it means to follow God.

- **Andrew Murray, *Waiting on God*: “Dear Christian, don’t you see that waiting is not one among a number of Christian virtues . . . but waiting expresses that disposition which lies at the very root of the Christian life? Waiting gives a higher value and a new power to our prayer and worship, to our faith and surrender, because it links us, in unalterable dependence, to God Himself.”²**

It’s what God was doing in Moses’ waiting, and it’s what God wants to do in your waiting:

- to lead you into a deeper relationship with him
- a greater understanding of him
- a greater dependence on him
- a greater experience of his power, that can only be accessed when we empty ourselves of our own

Waiting can feel like suffering—like a long, unanswered cry for help. But it’s in these moments of waiting—when God feels silent, distant, or absent—that he’s actually working the most deeply in us.

So how do we live in this tension? How do we walk faithfully while we wait? I wanna give you four practical ways to help align our hearts with God’s purpose in our times of waiting.

Four Ways to Make It Worth the WAIT:

Welcome the Tension

If you look back at it, Exodus 2:21 says Moses was “content” to dwell in Midian. That word reflects a shift in Moses’ life and heart—he’s made a deliberate decision to settle in Midian and accept this new season of life.

That doesn’t mean he was necessarily thrilled about his situation . . . but it *does* reflect a resignation to God’s sovereign plan for his life. We should read this “contentment” as a form of “trust during his waiting.” Moses was in a waiting period—a season of obscurity and preparation for the

² Andrew Murray, *Waiting on God*, p. 67.

greater mission God had for him. His willingness to “dwell” in Midian and take on a simple life as a shepherd shows how he submitted to this process of waiting, even if it meant giving up his former ambitions.

One of the Hebrew words for “wait” is the word *Qavah*.

- Qavah combines two words: QAV = cord; AH = stretch
- Qavah carries the idea of stretching something tight until it’s ready to snap.

There’s a workout technique called “*time under tension*,” where the focus isn’t about how much weight you lift, but on how long your muscles remain under strain. It’s actually way worse than just lifting a weight quickly and being done. But what TuT does is build strength and endurance in those muscles in order to be able to endure *more* weight.

- TuT is uncomfortable. It’s hard. But it’s building you.

Isn’t this what waiting usually feels like? It’s a time of being stretched, under strain, your soul aches, you want to quit ... *but it’s precisely that tension God is using to build spiritual strength—to build godliness, maturity, and faith inside of you..*

- When we welcome the tension, we trust that God is using this time to shape and grow us for something greater.
- As **Isaiah 40:31** says, “*Those who wait on the Lord*”—those who endure the stretching—“*will renew their strength.*” God doesn’t waste the tension. He uses it to prepare us for what’s ahead.

What if waiting isn’t just about what you’re waiting for, but who you’re becoming while you wait?

During “that long period” in Midian, perhaps even while Moses was unaware, God was shaping Moses’ character. See, **with God, waiting time is never wasted time.** It was during that waiting period:

- Moses was learning shepherd skills that would enable him to shepherd Israel later on out of Egypt and in the desert.
- Moses was learning how to love and lead a family.
- God was adding to Moses’ compassion an **experiential understanding** of what it means to be an alien and sojourner in a foreign land.
- God was tempering Moses’ self-importance and breaking down his pride with the realization that he can’t accomplish deliverance on his own.
- By living in the wilderness, Moses was learning to rely on God.
- By working with the Midianites as a shepherd, he was developing skills to help him lead the Israelites out of their enslavement one day.
- One theologian said it this way: *“Moses was 40 years in Egypt learning something. 40 years in the desert learning to be nothing. And then 40 years in the wilderness proving God to be everything.”*³

³ Boyce

See, it was in the wilderness of waiting, not in Pharaoh's house, where he learned something much more important than the arts of Egyptian power. That was where he learned to walk with and trust in God. Moses said, "THAT'S what's valuable. Not all this stuff."

The story of Scripture is that God is always at work in our waiting ... with God, waiting time is never wasted time. Instead of **resisting** the discomfort of waiting, **embrace** it as a place where God is working and transforming us. Welcome the tension.

Avoid the Ditches

Funny enough, the same pastor who wrote the book I recommended a few weeks ago has another book called *Waiting Isn't a Waste*. In it, he says we often waste our waiting through unhelpful or sinful responses—he points out three in particular⁴:

Anger: Waiting and anger often go together, because **waiting makes us vulnerable**, and in anger, we try to fill the vulnerability gap by forcing change. But when it doesn't speed up the process of waiting, it just makes us more angry and frustrated.

Anxiety: If anger takes action, anxiety decides to just overthink the whole thing. Rather than blowing up in anger, we turn inward with a mental and emotional churning that's exhausting and debilitating. We try to literally think our way out of our waiting.

Apathy: **Anger** tries to force change. **Anxiety** overthinks the whole thing. **Apathy** stops caring. Apathy is **Proverbs 13:12**, "[Hope deferred makes the heart sick](#)," being lived out. It's responding to disappointments and delays with the self-protective posture of "*I just don't care anymore.*"

What God does in you while you wait is just as important as what you're waiting for.

These ditches—anger, anxiety, and apathy—are what happen when we try to navigate **waiting in our own strength**. These ditches aren't just **psychological** or **emotional** struggles; they reveal a deeper issue of the heart.

- At the root, we fall into these ditches because we're trying to take control in a world where we're not in control. Waiting exposes the idols of our hearts—the things we trust more than God to give us meaning, security, and hope.
- But this is where the gospel is different from every other solution. The gospel doesn't tell us to "try harder" to avoid the ditches ... it confronts us with the reality that we can't avoid them on our own, because our hearts are restless without God.

⁴ [Mark Vroegop](#), *How God Uses Our Waiting*

- In the gospel, we find the only foundation strong enough to carry us through the waiting without becoming angry, anxious, or apathetic, because we know God is working everything for his glory and for our good.

Invest in Today

One of the biggest mistakes we make during waiting is **thinking that waiting is passive**. Investing in today means we start seeing times of waiting as seasons of **preparation**, not seasons of **passivity**. In fact, **doing** is often God's remedy for **despair**.

- Waiting on God is never about sitting still and doing nothing—it's about faithfully stewarding today.

Lamentations 3:5: "The LORD is good to those who **wait** for him, to the soul who **seeks** him."

- Notice how **waiting** is paired with **seeking**.
- It'd be really interesting to ask Moses how he saw these 40 years. Part of me imagines he'd say, "Nah, those weren't *waiting* years; those were *working* years ... God was working *on me* and I continued *seeking* him!"

As John Piper says, "*Waiting for the Lord means **our action is essential**, but **his is decisive**. The farmer must wait for the harvest. But no one works harder than the **farmer**.*"

- Waiting's not about sitting back—it's about plowing, planting, watering, pruning ... while trusting God as the one who brings rain and growth.
- Or think about an **expectant mother** who is "waiting" nine months for her baby to be delivered. She's **planning**, buying, **reading**, buying, **stressing**, buying, **setting up a nursery**, buying, **researching**, buying ... she's not passive; she's active in her waiting.

Investing in today in your waiting looks like this:

- **Prayer:** 21 Days of Prayer and Fasting
- **Scripture:** Have your daily quiet time. Stay grounded in God's Word. Experience your waiting through the lens of Scripture, not Scripture through the lens of your frustration of waiting.
- **Community:** Use your waiting period to invite others to speak into your life. Surround yourself with saints who will encourage and uplift you, who will pray for you.

Priscilla Shirer says it like this: "Waiting is not the same as inactivity. Waiting is a commitment to continue in obedience until God speaks."

Trust God's Timing

Adrian Rogers: *“We can save a lot of time by waiting on God.”*

In times of waiting, we trust in God’s timing and God’s plan. Why?

²³During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. ²⁴And God **heard** their groaning, and God **remembered** his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

²⁵God **saw** the people of Israel—and God **knew**.

Those are four of the most beautiful verbs in the entire Bible:

- God heard
- God remembered
- God saw
- God knew

Those four words tell us everything we need to know about trusting God in our waiting.

Actually, when it says **“God saw,”** that’s the second time Exodus 2 uses that Hebrew word—**rā'â**.

- The first time was all the way back in **v. 11**, when it said Moses **“looked on”** and saw the burdens of his people.
- It’s the same word used again here in **v. 25**, when it says, **“God saw the people of Israel.”**

CHAIR: In the same way Moses was fully engaged, leaning in to what was happening to his Hebrew brother, that’s how God is looking at your life.

- I know, in your waiting it can feel like God is kicked back, chillin’, apathetic toward your situation. Like he’s just some spectator sitting back, casually watching your life play out, unmoved by your waiting.
- You need to know you have a God in heaven who **rā'â’s** you—who is leaned forward, fully engaged, emotionally invested, ready to act.
- He’s looking at your life. He sees your **struggles** ... he sees your **disappointments** ... he sees your **hopes** ... he sees your **tension** ... he sees you in your waiting.
- **God knew** their suffering. This wasn’t just intellectual knowledge—it was personal, intimate. God knew every detail of what they were going through: the back-breaking labor, the hopelessness, the tears. And God knows your story too. He knows the weight you’re carrying, the fears that keep you up at night, the prayers that haven’t been answered yet.

As you cry out, he’s not impartial to your pain. In your prayers, **he hears you**. In your waiting, where you don’t even know how to put your frustrations into words—when you don’t know what else to say—he hears you. Your **waiting is never wasted**—as **v. 23** says, your cries rise to heaven, and they don’t go unanswered.

We know that's true because **God remembers**. When the Bible says God remembers, **it doesn't mean he forgot something** ... it means he's about to **act on behalf of someone**. In **v. 24**, it says specifically that he **remembered his covenant with Abraham**.

- See, God's covenant with Abraham wasn't just about giving Israel land or descendants, or freeing them from Egypt.
- It was about a promise to bless the nations ... and through Jesus, that covenant extends to us.
 - **Galatians 3:29** says, **"If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."**
- **That means when God remembers his promises, he's remembering you.**
- Through Jesus, God stepped into our suffering. He didn't just see it from a distance; he walked in it, carried it, and redeemed it.
- He's acting not just for Israel's good, but for YOURS!

CONCLUSION

What if waiting isn't just about what you're waiting for, but who you're becoming while you wait?

- While we wait for God to move, he's working in us—shaping us, stretching us, growing us.
- Our hope in waiting isn't about the **destination or outcome God will provide for us**—it's about the **transformation God wants to produce in us**.

Our hope is not in a preferred outcome; our hope is in a Person.

- A Person who hears, remembers, sees, and knows you.
- A Person who has not forgotten you.
- A Person who guaranteed his promises with his own blood on the cross.

So trust his timing. It may not be what you expected, but it's always exactly what you need.

PRAY

Father, what you're doing in us while we wait is just as important as what we're waiting for ...

- *There's nothing so big it's out of your control ... nothing so small you don't care about it ...*
- *We believe, along with Lamentations 3, that you are GOOD to those who wait on you ... we declare today: YOU ARE GOOD.*