

The Story of Salvation: Exodus 6:1-9—God’s Plan of Redemption

By [Pastor Greg Doty](#)

*From a sermon delivered by Senior Pastor Greg Doty at Willow Creek PCA,
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Well, good morning again, everyone. It's so good to see all of you here with us this morning. If I haven't met you yet, my name is Greg, and I have the privilege of serving as the senior pastor here at Willow Creek, and I want to invite you this morning to turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Exodus, chapter six.

So far, if you haven't been with us for the first couple of weeks, here's just a really quick snapshot of what you have missed in the book of Exodus, the people of God, the Israelites. They are in slavery in Egypt. And rather than their life getting easier, it has gotten more and more difficult as the years and the decades and the generations have gone by, they now find themselves in slavery, and God provides someone to bring them out.

In fact, that's what his name means. The name Moses means to “draw out,” and God has called this one named Moses, who will go and will lead God's people out of slavery in Egypt. Moses left. He was about 40 years old when he left Egypt. He got married, he became a shepherd for his father-in-law, and God comes to him 40 years after that, so he's 80 years old, and through a bush that's on fire, but not burning up, God speaks to him.

God reveals Himself to Moses, and says, “Moses, here's what you're going to do. You're going to live up to your name, you're going to draw the people out, you're going to go back and you're going to bring them to the promised land.”

And Moses, promptly, kind of begins to throw up different barriers to God; “Not me. No, no, no, not I don't speak well. I'm not very good at this. You need somebody else to go. What will I say to them? What if they don't believe me?” All kinds of things.

But eventually, Moses, along with his brother Aaron, who is three years older than him, both return to Egypt to begin the process of bringing the people out of the promised land and this morning or out to the promised land. This morning, I want to read just nine verses of Exodus, chapter six.

*But the Lord said to Moses, now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh.
For with a strong hand, he will send them out, and with a strong hand, he*

will drive them out of his land. God spoke to Moses and said to him, I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty. But by my name the Lord, I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners.

Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel, whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. Say, therefore to the people of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession I am the LORD.

Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery.

God's word for us this morning, would you pray together with me?

Father in heaven, we pray now that as we come to Your Word this morning, words, that maybe for some of us, we've never read these words before. We've never heard them before, and they're confusing to us. Maybe we've heard them before, and maybe we kind of know how the story goes, Lord, wherever you have us, this morning, in our walk with you, I pray that through our time together, that we would see Jesus, that we see how the grace of Jesus just pours forth from this and speaks deeply and sweetly into our hearts. And so Lord, would you open up your word to us this morning that we might know more of him, and We ask this in His name. Amen.

There was controversy, there was drama, not just for a few minutes, not just for a few hours, but for days, in a place and in a time where there normally isn't a lot of controversy, there normally isn't a lot of drama.

It actually just happened a few weeks ago. Some of you may have seen it. Some of you may have watched it unfold. It was the NFL Draft.

There was a man, a young man named Shador Sanders, son of a famous football player, Dion Sanders, who was the quarterback at the University of Colorado, under the coaching of his father, Dion, who was all over the news because Shador was supposed to go in the top 10 of the draft. All the experts predicted it. All of the experts knew that this is what is going to happen, and so

with the first pick in the NFL Draft, I don't know what team it was, but I know that they didn't pick Shador Sanders.

And the experts, the pundits, began to talk and begin to say, "Oh, that that's okay. That's okay. This quarterback that they just picked. He's going to fit better with that team. We think he's going to be drafted 8/9, 10th, somewhere in there, because those teams need a quarterback."

Picks eight, nine and 10 came and went, and still he sat there, and day one came and day one ended, and he had not been drafted. And the whole bit of the talking heads on television, all they talked about was, "How come he has not been selected? These teams are making a mistake."

All of this is happening. This is not the way it's supposed to go. Maybe in the second round. The second round came and went, and he wasn't drafted. The third round came and went and he wasn't drafted.

And thus ended day two, and then day three finally happened. Round four came and he still had not been drafted, but not until the fifth round by the Cleveland Browns, was he drafted,

...and all the pundits and all of the experts were saying, "This is not the way that it's supposed to be.

"We know better. We understand this. We do this. This isn't the way that's supposed to be."

And I confess I didn't watch it all, but I watched enough to see they went from being confused to being *really* confused - to outright anger...

...because this is not the way that it's supposed to be.

One guy actually sued the NFL for emotional distress because he was so disturbed, because he believed (probably had money riding on it), but he believed that he should be in the top 10, and so this had caused him great emotional distress. He was so angry about the fact that "this is not going the way that I thought it was supposed to go."

And I wonder if you this morning, have ever felt that way. If you've ever looked at your life and thought, "this is not the way that I thought it was going to go, this is not how I thought it was going to end up."

As we enter Exodus chapter six, we find God's people, the Israelites, in the midst of one of those moments in their own lives, in their own story, as the people of God. They find themselves in a moment where they are thinking and feeling and living a moment of: "This is not how I thought it was supposed to go." Because in

chapter four, Moses and Aaron come back to the Israelites. They're back in Egypt, and they show up.

"Hey guys, some of you all remember me. Some of you probably don't. A couple of you might remember that I killed a guy and then I ran away. I'm back, and I'm here to bring you out, because God spoke to me."

"God spoke to you, really?"

"Yeah, here's what God said. Here's what's gonna happen."

At the end of chapter four, it says that the people of God believed, when they heard that the Lord had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and they worshiped. Moses and Aaron have come! We're here to bring you out. They believe. They worship. They bow down, they get together, they sing praises to God.

And chapter five, Moses says: "This is great. This is all going according to plan. Now next step, "Aaron, let's go talk to Pharaoh and tell him what God told us." And so they go in and they say to Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD:

"Let my people go three days into the wilderness and there to worship God."

This is how we're going to get out. And at that moment, you're left going, "This is great. This is how we see it happening."

And then the Pharaoh says:

"I'm sorry, who's the Lord?"

"I don't know who you're talking about."

"You see, I'm a god."

"I know it. All of my people know it, but I don't know who this Lord is that you're referring to. You know what your problem is? You Israelites, you Hebrew people, you guys are lazy." He's echoing, actually, the same thing that a previous Pharaoh had said, accusing them that they are lazy, they are idle.

"Here's what I'm going to do, rather than let you go. We used to supply all the material you need to make, the bricks that we've enslaved you to make. We're not going to supply it all anymore."

"You know the straw that you have to put into the bricks. Get it yourself."

"But... we won't be able to make as many bricks!"

“Oh, yeah, you will. You're going to make just as many bricks now as before, but you're going to have to work extra hard to get them.” And that's chapter five.

And not just that. The pharaoh, when he goes to the people, says: “Thus says Pharaoh.” (He's mocking them. He's mocking God). Moses and Aaron went in and said: “Thus saith the Lord.” Pharaoh says, “I don't know who that is, Thus saith Pharaoh.”

“If we're going to play that game, I'm better.” He's asserting dominance over them and over their God and over their religion, and the people, the ones who are trying to persuade the Israelites to make bricks. The overseers, who are also Hebrews themselves, begin to get beaten.

They get beaten because they can't make as many bricks as they used to, because they have to go and get the straw. And they cry out. They actually go to Pharaoh and say: “What you've told us to do is impossible. We can't do this. It's not it's not realistic.” And Pharaoh replies, “You're lazy, you're idle. Get back to work!”

He makes life so incredibly difficult. But while the people go and talk to the pharaoh, Moses and Aaron are standing outside waiting - maybe, maybe they'll listen to the people as they cry out. And so Moses and Aaron, they're standing there, and ask, “How did it go?”

And they look at Moses and Aaron.

And they say: “You made us stink in front of Pharaoh. We're a stench to him. It was bad before you got here, but it's worse now. Thanks for nothing, because you came in and said: ‘We're going to leave.’”

“And now it's not the way that we thought it was going to be. It actually stinks.”

And then Moses, at the end of chapter five, turns to God and says, “Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me for since I came to Pharaoh to speak your name. He's done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all.”

You can almost hear the anger in his voice. “God, this is not the way that I thought it was going to be. You told me to come and to bring these people out. You are going to deliver them. But it's gotten more difficult. What is going on?”

And maybe that's you.

Maybe you believed, maybe you thought, “If I come to Jesus and believe in Him for everything, it's going to be happily ever after. It's going to be all roses and

fairy tales and rainbows and butterflies. But you found that life is darkness and storms and hurricanes and trials and struggles and moments of brutal honesty – and you, before God, have said, “God, this is not the way that I thought it was going to be.”

“Because I didn't get that job that I wanted, I didn't get that degree that I wanted. I didn't get that promotion that I wanted. I didn't get that spouse that I wanted. I didn't have the children like I wanted. I didn't have the amount in my bank account to retire that I wanted.”

Were those your dreams? All of those things? And you begin to lament because it's not the way you thought it was going to be. Or maybe you're here this morning and you don't believe in Jesus and Christianity at all.

And you look around at people that you know are Christians, and you look at their life and say, “You know what? If that is what happens to Christians. I'm out. I'm good, my life seems to be easier than theirs.”

What's the answer?

What's the hope?

Chapter Six brings us that hope.

Chapter Six presents to you and to me, that great, amazing hope that we find in the grace of God, that when we find ourselves in those moments, maybe those seasons, where we go from confusion and drama to flat out anger: “God, I don't understand what you are doing,” God enters into that picture with His Grace and with His love and with His mercy. And here's what he says:

The Lord said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand, I will send them out, and with a strong hand, I will drive them out of his land.” God says, “My promise to you still stands. My promise still remains. Now I have you.”

In effect, this is what he's saying in that first verse. “I have you exactly where I want you.”

Man, that's hard to swallow sometimes, isn't it? “I have you exactly where I want you.”

Even in my fit of anger, God says, “I have you exactly where I want you.” And then God speaks to Moses again: “I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty. But by my name the LORD, I did not make myself known to them. I established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners.”

There's a lot of debate on what these verses mean. Where God says, "I revealed myself to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, but by My Name the LORD, I did not make myself known to them," because in some ways, God did reveal his name to them.

Here's a real easy, or maybe not easy, but simple explanation of what God is saying.

"I revealed myself to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, but not fully.

"I didn't reveal to them everything about who I am, everything about my name, but now you're going to see more than they got to see.

"You're going to see and witness and experience more of who I am than they even knew about. And here's what I'm going to do..."

Beginning at verse six and going through verse eight, God is going to say seven times - seven phrases that all begin with the words: "I will."

"I will."

"Here's what I will do."

The first three of those center around God's promise of redemption. In verse six: "Say, therefore to the people of Israel, I am the Lord. I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will deliver you from the slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with grace."

Eight acts of judgment, those first three "I wills."

"I will bring you out of the land of slavery, out of Egypt."

"I will deliver you from slavery to them."

Now, remember when it talks about slavery as it's kind of looking as a picture of our slavery to sin.

And what God is saying here is not just "I'm going to bring you out of that place. I'm going to bring you to another place, but what I'm really going to do is redeem you from your sinfulness."

"I'm pointing to something even greater that I am about to do in and through the work of my Son, Jesus."

He says, "I'm going to take you out. I'm going to remove you from that." And it sounds like he says the same thing twice:

"I am the Lord. I'll bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I'll deliver you from slavery to them." What he's saying is not the same thing twice. He's saying: "I'm going to physically take you out of where you are slaves, and I am going to take you and put you somewhere else, and I'm going to deliver you from the power that slavery has over you."

Because in their mind, (and they wrestle with this, we'll see this a lot as we go through the rest of the book of Exodus). At points, even just weeks after they leave Egypt, they're saying, "Let's go back."

Let's return to that. And that's so true of us. God is saying to us, Through Jesus, I'm going to take you out of your state of where you are living in sin, and I am going to take away sins. Sin's effect on you, sin's control over you. It's what Pastor Drew preached on about Romans seven, two weeks ago, that sin no longer has control over us. We don't live in it anymore because of Jesus. And here at the end of verse six, we're introduced to this idea of redemption in the Bible:

"I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment."

For many of us, redemption is not a word we use very often. Perhaps you use it, maybe at the arcade, when you go and you drop \$100 on Skee ball and you get all those tickets. What do you do with it? You go to the redemption counter, where you take all of those tickets that you've just spent \$100 on, and you get a bouncy ball and a pack of Laffy Taffy. And you're beginning to question life's decisions at that point, but you still had fun. And so you just chalk it up like that. It was fun and it wasn't worth it, but it was fun. And so what then do you do? You take those things that you got and you go and you redeem them for something else. And we try to take that idea and say, "God took his son and through His life, death and resurrection, we are redeemed by what he has done." And there's a sense in which that is true. His righteousness is given to us and our sinfulness was given to him. There is this exchange, there is this redemption of us, but to the original people who are hearing this of God saying, "I will redeem you," there was a different idea in their minds of what a redeemer was. It was actually a person, and here's what this person was, or who this person was.

A Redeemer was someone, a close relative, who acted as an Avenger, protector and provider, even if that involved personal loss. For instance, if there were a husband and a wife and the husband died, a redeemer was most likely a brother of the deceased husband. The brother would come in and say, I am this family's Redeemer. And if that husband had been murdered, he would be the one who would seek justice, whether the victim was intentionally or unintentionally killed. He would be the one who would seek to avenge the murder of his brother. He

would protect this man, his sister-in-law and their family, and he would provide for them, because they were left without a provider in their culture, even if it came at great personal loss to him.

So what God is saying to you and to me is: "I am that to you. I am your Avenger. That which has killed you, sin, that which rules over you, your sin, I will take care of it at great personal cost to me."

"I will be your protector. I will be your provider."

And yes, it will come at a great personal cost. For God would give his one and only Son so that we might be redeemed, so that we might be made new, so that we might become the people of God, not through our works, not through ourselves, but through him. So what God begins with by saying here, in our moment of confusion, our moments of anger and drama, is:

"I've redeemed you. I'm yours. You're mine. I've taken you from that place in which you were born, in your sinful state, and I have brought you out by the blood of my son."

Remember that. Come back to that over and over again. "That is what I will do."

The fourth and fifth "I will statements" in verse seven: "I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I'll take you to be my people. I'll be your God."

God is reminding them. He's also reminding us of His covenant with us, that He is our God and that we are His people. But if you're anything like me, sometimes you look at your life and the way that you've handled those things that haven't gone the way that you thought, the way that you process that, the what you cling to for not getting the things that you would love to get for life not being the way that you thought it was going to be is that you run after things, looking for those things to satisfy you.

You start to work harder, you work more hours, you forget your family, you neglect your spouse, because you want this thing so badly because God hasn't provided it yet, so you just doubled down on it, or perhaps you put it into different stuff that you can buy. You hope that those things, the vacation house, the condo at the beach, the boat, the whatever it might be. You hope that thing will satisfy you. Others might run after sinful things.

You might look for it in a person that's not your spouse. You might look for it in something that's on a computer screen or on your phone in the middle of the night that nobody knows about but you. You may look about for it on the pages of a book that just tickles your ears so much, it creates so much of a vision of what

could possibly be. And yet it's always a lie. And yet you long for it, you want it, and it takes you down this path in your mind that you know you shouldn't go. And as you base the reality of that, you come before a holy God, or you just drive into the parking lot on a Sunday morning and you think to yourself, What am I even doing here? I'm such a hypocrite. If they only knew - wait, God knows.

He knows about last night, he knows about this week. He knows what I saw and read and dreamt about. He knows what I long for and that it's not him. I can't sing, I can't pray.

"Pastor, shut up so we can go."

"I will be your God, and you will be my people."

God is saying to you, "I'm not afraid to get messy. I'm not afraid to take your mess on myself," and so if that's you, he says, "Come here, come here. I embrace you. I'm not ashamed of you. I'm not disappointed in you. I love you with a love that you can't even comprehend, because I gave my one and only Son so that you could be with me, and now I will be your God, and you will be my people. Come my people to me and find hope for your soul, even in the midst of all of those things that you've run after and turned to in the midst of life not going the way you thought it would go."

Finally, the last two verse eight, God says: "I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession I am the Lord." I love the fact that God bookends this. He begins and he ends with the same thing. "I am the Lord."

"I am saying this. I am God, and I'm saying this to you, and that this is true. And here's what I'm going to do, here's what I am doing. I'm taking you out of that land of slavery, and I'm going to bring you to a promised land, a land of relief, a land of rest, a land flowing with milk and honey, that points us to the greater Promised Land, that points us to Heaven itself, to points us to the presence of God and dwelling and being with him Face to face forever."

God doesn't just say, "I'm going to bring you into that land." He says: "You're going to take possession of it. It's not just enough to say, "I'm going to bring you there," and then, "I got you here. Figure it out."

He says, "It's yours. Take possession of it. You own it. It now belongs to you."

So in all of these things, it is what God is saying: "Here is what I will do for you."

And here is an amazingness to this that we actually miss in our English Bibles. All seven of those words that say, "I will," to you and me in English that sounds like a future word "I will. This is going to happen."

In Hebrew in which this was originally written and given all of these words for “I will” are in the past tense.

So what God is saying is: “I am going to speak of a future event in the past tense, meaning that it is so certain in my mind that it has already happened, an event that is future that has already happened.

What do we do? What do we do when we when we wrestle, when we struggle, when life isn't the way that we thought it was going to be? We go to God's promise that what will be is already declared. It has already happened.

Exodus, chapter six, I'm going to suggest, is to us the Romans eight of the Old Testament. Many of you, you might know this. The Apostle Paul is actually going to pick up this exact same idea, speaking of a future event in the past tense in Romans chapter eight, when he says this, it's one verse that I think captures verses six, seven and eight, he says: “And those whom He predestined, he also called, those whom He called, he also justified, those whom He justified, he also glorified.”

All of those are in the past tense, “those He glorified.”

It hasn't happened to us yet, and yet it has. “I will, I will, I will,” meaning that I have and my friends as believers in Jesus, that's where we run.

That's where we run. We run to Exodus chapter six, because it is the hope of the gospel that is laid bare for us here, and yet we have to look at verse nine:

“Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery.”

I love that. It says that because there's a realness and a rawness to that verse, that they struggled to believe it, because life was so much not the way they thought it was supposed to be, that even when they heard it, they still struggled with it.

We're going to see through the rest of the book of Exodus. It's a roller coaster. It is absolute. Up and down. They believe, they don't believe. They complain, they rejoice. They complain again. They complain some more. And it's just like us.

And despite the fact that they did not believe, because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery, because life was so hard, God kept going with his promise anyway.

How do we know the table that's right here before us? How do we know where to go in times where we're saying: “This isn't the way it's supposed to be?”

I came to church today and I heard about the love of God, and that you invite me to come to you, and you've forgiven me, But Lord, I just - man, it's hard. Where do I go?

We come to the table.

We come to the table and we eat and we drink, and we are reminded that we are loved no matter our circumstance, because it's actually exactly where God wants us to be. And yes, I will admit that is a hard pill to swallow most times, and yet it is true. Why?

So that we might see more of Jesus.

So what God told them: "I have you right where I want you." Why? Because I'm going to reveal myself in ways that your ancestors didn't even get to see so that you might see me.

Let's pray: Father in heaven. Thank you so much for your word.

Thank you that you can speak of a future event in the past tense, because it is so sure. So Lord, I pray for any who are here this morning that maybe they are struggling with life and it is not like they thought it was going to be. And maybe because of that, they have run after things that they should not have run after looking for that thing that's something to fill them, to bring them hope.

Lord, would you take us from that guilt to your grace and let us see and know the love of God that is lavished upon us in Christ Jesus to know that there is forgiveness and hope even when we struggle?

And so, Lord, I pray now as we prepare our hearts to come to this your table, that you would remind us once again, maybe even for some this is all new, and that you are revealing your great name to them. Lord, would you let us all see more of Jesus as we come, as we take and eat and drink of him we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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