

ROAD TO



REDEMPTION

Book of Exodus

Overview of the Book of Exodus

Exodus: Road to Redemption

The book of Exodus is like an Adventure Story! We have the cruel villain (Pharaoh), the unlikely hero (Moses), the overwhelming disaster (slavery, captivity and plagues), the spectacular deliverance (crossing the Red Sea), the long journey (the wilderness), the mountain-top experience (receiving the 10 commandments), the rebellion (golden calf), and the grand finale (the presence and glory of God, through the tabernacle). It's a cracking read!

But at its heart it's the story of YAHWEH, the God who REDEEMS his people and REVEALS himself. Yes it's a story of freedom from bondage, deliverance from captivity, redemption from slavery for a people who can do nothing to rescue themselves, but ultimately it is about the God who redeems, a God who rescues, a God who desires a people who are his very own, to enjoy that rich relationship and to live as the redeemed people.

We've called this series 'Road to Redemption' because it's all about God redeeming the children of Israel from Egypt and forming a special relationship with them.

The word Exodus means 'departure' and at a basic level the book of Exodus is a travel journal! It is the journey of God's people out of Egypt to Mount Sinai, and on towards the promised land. Sadly, they never quite get there in Exodus. Instead, they find themselves in the desert, but now as a nation specifically aligned with God (as opposed to the idols of Egypt and the surrounding nations).

But at a deeper level it's the story of a nation, a people moving from slavery to freedom. It's a spiritual story with a people torn in two directions, needing to unlearn the ways and attitudes of the past and learning to live God's way. It's a story of people learning from their past mistakes and finding strength in God for the future! However ultimately, it's a story about God; a story of God revealing his name (YHWH), his character, his essence.

1) Author

Early Jewish traditions name Moses as the author. This is supported by Moses' unique education in the Royal Courts of Egypt, where he had the opportunity to learn and observe. The internal evidence of the book confirms Mosaic authorship, with conversations, events and geographical details which could only be known by eyewitnesses. Moreover, other biblical books refer to Exodus as 'the law of Moses' (Joshua 1:7, 1 Kings 2:3). Jesus himself also quotes from Exodus 20:12 and 21:17 with the words 'for Moses said' (Mark 7:10).

2) Date

The dating of Exodus has been problematic, because there are few historical markers which could identify the period of Israel's captivity. Most scholars would argue that 1 Kings 6:1 places the Exodus around 1445BC.

3) Setting

Exodus begins in the Egyptian region of Goshen, with the people travelling out of Egypt, moving to the southern end of Mt Sinai to receive God's commandments, and the instructions for building the Tabernacle.



The Journey to Mount Sinai

1446/1260 B.C.

Among the many theories regarding the route of the exodus, the traditional route to Jebel Musa is considered by many scholars to be the most plausible. Beginning at Rameses, the Israelites journeyed to Succoth, but these two sites are the only ones on the route identified with certainty. From there they traveled to Etham and Pi-hahiroth, where they crossed the Red Sea. From there they traveled to Marah, Elim, Rephidim, and finally Mount Sinai.

4) Importance

Exodus is the second book of the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses) and it's where we find the stories of the Ten Plagues, the first Passover, and the parting of the Red Sea. This is the book in which God first lays out his expectations for the people of Israel (known as the Ten Commandments), as well as how God will dwell with his people in all his glory (the Tabernacle). Most of the rest of the Old Testament is about how Israel meets (or fails to meet) these expectations.

Exodus fulfils the promises made in Genesis to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, especially Genesis 15:12–14, where God projects forward to the period where God's people will be sojourners for 400 years.

It has been argued that Exodus is one of the most important books to understand – vital for our comprehension of the rest of the Old Testament. The psalms celebrate it, the prophets predict a new exodus patterned on the first. And then we come to the person of Jesus, the one who redeems us from our slavery to sin, the one who consecrates us to God, the one who reveals his glory and dwells amongst us by his Holy Spirit.

5) Characters

God (Yahweh) – the creator of heaven and earth and the divine being who chooses the nation of Israel to represent him on earth and serve him and him alone. YHWH frees his chosen people from the tyranny of the Egyptians and then gives them his expectations of how to live in and enjoy a relationship with God. Finally, God sets up camp in the midst of the new nation: they are his people, and he is their God.

Moses – the greatest of the Old Testament prophets who serves as a mediator between God and people. Moses 'negotiates' with Pharaoh for Israel's freedom, passes God's laws on to the people of Israel, and even pleads for mercy on Israel's behalf when they anger God.

Aaron – Moses' brother and right-hand man. Aaron assists Moses as a spokesperson, and eventually is made the high priest of the nation of Israel.

Pharaoh – the chief antagonist in the Exodus story. Pharaoh enslaves the nation of Israel, commits genocide, and is just a bad man! Pharaoh is worshiped as part of the Egyptian pantheon: a lesser god laying an

illegitimate claim to God's people. God defeats Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt by sending a series of ten devastating plagues, and finally destroying Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea.

6) Themes

A key verse is Exodus 20:2 *"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."*

Some key themes are:

a. Redemption

The entire book is about God hearing Israel's cries for help, rescuing them from their oppressors, and making them his own. However, redemption is not just about 'freedom FROM', it's also 'freedom FOR'. God's people were not redeemed from slavery to form their own identity and pursue their own lifestyle. They were redeemed for a rich relationship with YHWH, living his way, enjoying his presence. So the repeated phrase 'let my people go...' is accompanied with a purpose 'so that they may serve me' (7:16, 8:1, 8:30, 9:1, 9:13).

God's redemption of Israel from slavery foreshadows his work to redeem the nations through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 6:17–18). We have been redeemed from SLAVERY TO SIN, but redeemed for WORSHIP (14:1–15:21), TRUST (15:22–18:27), HOLINESS (19:1–20:21), JUSTICE (20:22–24:18), for the holy God to dwell among us in all his glory (25–31).

b. God's Name

Exodus is where God reveals his name: YHWH or LORD (3:14–15, 6:2–8, 34:6–7). In Exodus we meet a God who is holy (3:5), sufficient to save (3:14), perfectly faithful (6:4), severe in justice (10:2), abounding in compassion (34:6–7). We meet a God who keeps his promises (Genesis 15:13–21), provides in abundance, protects, forgives, judges and longs to dwell among his people. YHWH is indeed our incomparable and inexhaustible God!

c. God's Presence

God hears the cries of Israel and remembers his promises to Abraham back in Genesis. God then meets Israel in the wilderness: he is high atop a mountain, and they are on the plain below. God is closer to the people, but still a way off. By the end of the book, God

is dwelling in the middle of Israel's camp in the wilderness. Moses believes that it is God's presence among the people, that sets Israel apart from every other nation in the world (Exodus 33:16).

d. Covenant & Law

Like the rest of the Torah, God makes a solemn, binding agreement with the people of Israel, establishing himself as their God and them as his people. This relationship comes with certain expectations, with benefits for obedience and consequences for disobedience. From chapter 20 onward, we start seeing more and more directives for the people on how to live as the people of God.

Katy Davis, experienced Biblical Studies researcher, writer and lecturer, suggests the main theme of Exodus is 'YHWH's redemption of Israel as his people so that he can dwell among his nation and be their God'.

7) An Overview of Exodus' Story and Structure

God has promised Abraham that his descendants would be a mighty people, they'd possess the land, and through them the whole earth would be blessed by God. Whilst in Genesis we see God working through a family, in Exodus we see God working with an entire nation.

Act 1: Prologue (Ch 1-2)

Exodus picks up where Genesis leaves off: Jacob and his descendants migrate to Egypt and begin to flourish! A new Pharaoh notices the Israelites multiplying, so enslaves and oppresses them. Afraid of an uprising, he orders that all Hebrew sons should be cast into the Nile at birth. But one baby boy escapes this fate: the Hebrew Moses grows up in Pharaoh's household, an outsider living in a foreign country. When adult Moses kills an abusive Egyptian slave driver, he flees the country.

Note that chapters 1 & 2 span a period of about 80 years (the rest of the book covers a period of less than 2 years).

Act 2: Redemption: God saves Israel (Ch 3-18)

Forty years later, God appears to Moses as a burning bush and commissions him to deliver Israel from the hand of Pharaoh. Moses, with the help of his brother Aaron, confronts Pharaoh on God's behalf: "Let My people go" (Exodus 5:1). Pharaoh refuses, and so God

sends those famous Ten Plagues upon the Egyptians. When the last plague kills Pharaoh's son, he finally allows Israel to leave.

The Israelites celebrate the first-ever Passover, and then set out into the wilderness. Pharaoh changes his mind and sends his army to recapture them. God saves Israel miraculously by parting the Red Sea and allowing Israel to escape their would-be captors, and then uses the sea to wash away Pharaoh's army. This whole section is focused on YHWH, who redeems his people and is in their midst.

Act 3: Revelation: God makes a covenant with Israel (Ch 19–24)

The Israelites leave Egypt and make their way to the foot of Mount Sinai in the wilderness. God descends on the top of the mountain (a theophany), and then something amazing happens: God makes a covenant with the nation of Israel and the generations to come. Because he has redeemed them, they are to be his special people, living his way. God speaks the Ten Commandments directly to the whole nation of Israel. He is to be their only God, and they are to live as his people, honouring him and pursuing justice. This covenant is sealed with a ceremony and a feast.

Act 4: Presence: God longing to dwell in the midst of his people (Ch 25–31)

God makes plans for a place of worship. He's going to come down from the mountain-top and dwell in the midst of the people of Israel. But in order for this to happen, the people need to prepare a portable tabernacle for him. God gives Moses the plans for the tabernacle, the sacred furniture, and the garments for the priests. There are detailed instructions about the ark, the mercy seat, the lampstands, the curtains, the altar, the courtyard, the lamp of presence, the incense, and anointing oil. God commissions the craftsmen and commands his Sabbath.

Act 5: Rebellion! God's people rebel against their redeeming God (Ch 32–34)

Already things aren't going as planned. While God is giving Moses laws for the people, the people start worshipping a golden calf. God is furious with His people, as is Moses. Moses pleads with God on Israel's behalf, and God reveals his character as a compassionate and forgiving God. There are, of course, consequences for rebellion.

Act 6: Worship! God's glory in the midst of his people (Ch 35-40)

Israel builds the tabernacle, bringing their gifts and their skills.

The book of Exodus ends with the glory of the LORD filling the

tabernacle. God is now dwelling among His chosen people, Israel.

However, now there's another problem: how will the people live in the presence of such a holy and powerful being? The answer lies in the next book, Leviticus!

8) Recommended books on Exodus

- Exodus (by Alec Motyer): The Bible Speaks Today
- Echoes of Exodus (by Alistair Roberts & Andrew Wilson)
- Exodus (by Philip Graham Ryken): Preaching the Word series

EXODUS STUDIES

Introduction

'The Old Testament is the word of God for the Christian church. That is, it is a means by which God speaks words of judgment and grace to the community of faith... At the heart of things, the Old Testament serves to bring people face-to-face with the Father of Jesus Christ, and in that encounter God speaks.' (Terrence Fretheim).

Exodus will bring us to behold the beauty of God with a new perspective. We will come to savour the gospel of grace with fresh delight, and behold the God of glory with clearer vision.

Let us be clear, though. Exodus will take time and thought if we would glean its gold. Like the wilderness journey between Red Sea and Promised Land, we must embrace a persevering patience. If we take the time to read, wrestle and reflect through Exodus slowly, we won't be disappointed.

Essentials for your community in Exodus

Reflect on spiritual renewal together every week

We want you to experience spiritual renewal as you find your own story in the Exodus story. Every study begins with space to reflect and seek renewal together. Feel free to make that time your own but PLEASE don't ignore or move past it.

Read the section of Exodus (in the study headings) before your community meets.

We want you to finish the series with a worship-filled understanding of the whole book of Exodus, and its place in the Christian story. Every study has a short space to make sense of the current section of the Exodus in light of the whole. PLEASE take the time to read the current section before you come.

A Quick Word on the Study for Leaders

PLEASE don't make either of these mistakes:

- (1) simply rolling through question after question until you get to the end of the study, or
- (2) ditching the study all together and going rogue.

Our team has thought through the whole book, the themes of each week, and the studies are flexibly and thoughtfully designed to help your community grow deeper with God in Exodus. We want you to use the studies. But the goal is not the study, it's meeting with God together in deep study of Exodus.

Some thoughts:

- 1. Be prepared.** Read over the study and passage beforehand. Highlight some key questions you want to prioritise. Replace or re-shape a question to best engage your group. Get your hands on a commentary (see our bookstore) for when you're not sure of a question or confused by a verse.
- 2. Be flexible.** Sit in the same question or topic for a while if it's helpful. Ask impromptu follow up questions to get people to really express themselves, or share what they truly feel. Jump around a bit if you think it will be helpful. Remember, the goal is not the study.
- 3. Be empowered.** You should expect God to be speaking, and the Spirit stirring the community. Move in the direction of someone's question or sharing, if as a leader you think God might be at work behind it, but equally feel empowered to lovingly and gently shut a tangent or direction down, if you think it is unhelpful.

Please reach out if you have any questions on the studies, or Exodus generally. Be encouraged God is with you and your communities, and we can't wait to hear stories of his work!

Nick Wood
Assistant Pastor

Spiritual Practice Sermon: Community

Sunday 21st July (See page 16 for related article)

Collect for 8th Sunday after Trinity:

Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. The troubles of my heart have multiplied; free me from my anguish. Look upon my affliction and my distress and take away all my sins. (Psalm 25:16-18)

Almighty God, whose never-failing providence governs all things in heaven and earth: we humbly ask you to put away from us all hurtful things, and to give us whatever may be profitable for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Connect Group Study: Community

The Spiritual Practice of Community - Romans 12:9-21

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Before meeting, listen to the teaching on this practice, and read the article on this practice in your Renewal Journal.

1. Reflect together on the teaching/articles. What resonated? What was challenging? What questions do you have?
2. What does community look like in the ordinary pattern of the world? How is a biblical vision of community different from that? Coming down to reality, how could/should that actually play out in a 21st century church like ours?
3. Making sure to be gentle with your words: how would you describe our community? What do we do well? What might we be missing? Why do you think our community looks like it does?
4. Instead of offering criticism or falling into grumbling, let's humbly look at ourselves. How do you currently 'practice' community? What would the next step (or steps) look like for you to embody the community you hope to experience?
5. Read over Romans 12:9-21 slowly, and spend some time praying that over your group and our church. Choose an idea or phrase to pray for yourself, your group, and our church.

Sermon 1: Exodus 1-2

Sunday 28th July

Collect for 9th Sunday after Trinity:

But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, for he has been good to me. (Psalm 13:5-6)

Grant us Lord, we pray, the spirit to think and do always such things as are right, that we who cannot do anything that is good without you, may in your strength be able to live according to your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Connect Group Study 1

The God who is Present in Providence - Exodus 1:1 - 2:25

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Hopefully having read Exodus 1:1-2:25 before you came today (do it for next week if you forgot!):

1. Share what you found confusing, interesting, important or soul-stirring.
2. Summarise this broader section of Exodus, and how it fits into the whole story.

How do you know when God is at work in the world? How do you discern God's hand in something?

Read Exodus 1:1-22

1. How do we reconcile God's promises to Abraham and co. (Genesis 12:1-3) with what we find in Egypt? Where is God present in Exodus 1 (explicitly and implicitly)?
2. Have you ever felt like God has been absent in your life? How do you make sense of that apparent absence? Bonus question if you want to go there: why do you think God doesn't just show up?
3. How is Pharaoh presented? Why do you think the most powerful figure of the ancient world is anonymous, while two obscure Hebrew midwives are named? What's significant about these women?
4. How do you see the shape of Jesus in God's way of moving in Exodus 1? What do you learn about living with faith in a broken world?

Sermon 2: Exodus 3:1 – 4:17

Sunday 4th August

Collect for 10th Sunday after Trinity:

Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me. Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me. (Psalm 31:2-3)

Let your merciful ears, Lord God, be open to the prayers of your people; and so that they may obtain their petitions, make them to ask such things as will please you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.. Amen.

Connect Group Study 2

The God who is Near and Far - Exodus 3:1 - 4:17

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Hopefully having read Exodus 3:1-4:17 before you came today (do it for next week if you forgot!):

1. Share what you found confusing, interesting, important or soul-stirring.
2. Summarise this broader section of Exodus, and how it fits into the whole story.

Do you tend to think of God as immanent (near in grace), or transcendent (high in holiness)? Should we think of them as distinct?

Read Exodus 3:1-22

1. What signs of God's distance do you see in Exodus 3? His nearness? What do you notice about how Moses and God interact together?
2. What do you make of God's name (3:14)? Is his name the same today? Should Christians approach God in the same mould of Moses?
3. Where do you see the gospel shape in Exodus 3? How should Jesus be cast in new light as we receive Exodus 3? How is the immanence and transcendence of Exodus 3 illuminated in light of the gospel?
4. How could the nearness of God change the way you move through the world? How could the distance of God?

Sermon 3: Exodus 5:22 - 10:29

Sunday 11th August

Collect for 11th Sunday after Trinity:

For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live! (Ezekiel 18:32)

Lord God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: grant us such a measure of your grace that, running in the way of your commandments, we may obtain your promises, and share in your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Connect Group Study 3

The God who is Greater - Exodus 5:22 - 10:29

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Hopefully having read Exodus 5:22–10:29 before you came today (do it for next week if you forgot!):

1. Share what you found confusing, interesting, important or soul-stirring.
2. Summarise this broader section of Exodus, and how it fits into the whole story.

When do you find it hardest to trust God? How do you walk in faith when what lies before you feels insurmountable?

Read Exodus 6:28–7:13

1. What three words would you use to describe Moses so far? Do you think his constant fears and concerns are fair? What do you think God thinks of them?
2. Why do you think Moses plays the role of God, and Aaron as his prophet (7:1)? What are we supposed to make of this snake-vs-snake battle (7:8–13)? How does the mention of wise men/sorcerers/magicians/secret arts illuminate what's going on (7:11)?
3. Thinking about God's power on display here, and what's about to come (plagues, passover, Red Sea etc)... What do you make of God intentionally hardening Pharaoh's heart (7:3–4)? In fact, why not just free the people and not bother with Moses and Aaron at all?
4. How does this supernatural struggle mirror our present moment? How does God's activity in Egypt mirror his activity in Sydney? What does 7:6 look like for you and me?

Sermon 4: Exodus 11:1 – 13:16

Sunday 18th August

Collect for 12th Sunday after Trinity:

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I call to you all day long. Bring joy to your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you. (Psalm 86:3-5)

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and constantly give more than either we desire or deserve: pour down on us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord. Amen.

Connect Group Study 4

The God who Saves through Passover - Exodus 11:1 - 13:16

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Hopefully having read Exodus 11:1–13:16 before you came today (do it for next week if you forgot!):

1. Share what you found confusing, interesting, important or soul-stirring.
2. Summarise this broader section of Exodus, and how it fits into the whole story.

Read Exodus 12:1–30

1. How do you feel after reading this chapter? Does the killing of the firstborn males feel extreme? Why do you think this is the final 'plague' God has been building toward?
2. Let's walk through some details to help make sense of Passover:
 - Why is it significant that this punishment is described as a judgment on 'the gods of Egypt' (12:12)?
 - Surely God knows who's an Israelite and who's not. Why the hyssop and blood on the doorposts? Why the need to kill a Passover lamb (12:21–23)? Why the careful details about the kind of lambs chosen (12:5)?
 - Why does God tell Israel 'the blood will be a sign for you' (12:13)?
3. How are the details of this last plague mirrored in Israel's oppression in Egypt? How does this make Passover more meaningful for the people of God?
4. If it isn't clear yet, Passover majorly foreshadows Jesus and the NT isn't shy about it (see John 1:29 & 13:1). How does understanding Passover with greater depth add colour and beauty to the gospel? Then in reverse, how does the gospel help us make sense of our difficulties understanding the Passover?
5. Why do you think God sets an ongoing festival and practice for Israel's future life? Should Christians celebrate Passover? Do we give enough weight to commemorating or celebrating what we believe, not just talking about it?

Sermon 5: Exodus 13:17 – 15:21

Sunday 25th August

Collect for 13th Sunday after Trinity:

O LORD, do not forsake me; be not far from me, O my God. Come quickly to help me, O Lord my Saviour. (Psalm 38:21-22)

Merciful God, it is by your gift alone that your faithful people offer you true and acceptable service; grant that we may so faithfully serve you in this life that we fail not finally to obtain your heavenly promises; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Connect Group Study 5

The God who Saves Deserving of Praise - Exodus 13:17 - 15:21

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Hopefully having read Exodus 13:17–15:21 before you came today (do it for next week if you forgot!):

1. Share what you found confusing, interesting, important or soul-stirring.
2. Summarise this broader section of Exodus, and how it fits into the whole story.

Think when you're alone and you come to pray: where do your heart and mind go first? What do you think that says about your experience of God?

Read Exodus 15:1–21

1. Looking over this song, what lines or thoughts speak to you? Why?
2. Moses' and Miriam's song doesn't just rehash fact, but Israel's experience of salvation. What portrait of God do they paint? Find three words to capture the song.
3. Read Revelation 5:9–14. This scene echoes Exodus 15 as worship pours forth around the throne beside a 'sea of glass' (4:6). Why are these words more than just songs? Why is praise and worship so important?
4. How has salvation changed and marked Israel? How has (or should) salvation change and mark us?

Sermon 6: Exodus 15:22 – 16:36

Sunday 1st September

Collect for 14th Sunday after Trinity:

Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice. Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always. (Psalm 105:3-4)

Almighty and eternal God, grant that we may grow in faith, hope, and love; and that we may obtain what you promised, make us love what you command; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Connect Group Study 6

The God who Patiently Provides - Exodus 15:22 - 16:36

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Hopefully having read Exodus 15:22–16:36 before you came today (do it for next week if you forgot!):

1. Share what you found confusing, interesting, important or soul-stirring.
2. Summarise this broader section of Exodus, and how it fits into the whole story.

On a spectrum from poison (1) to perfection (10), how would you rate the way Christians speak about each other/their church? What about general grumbling? If you're game: what about us?

Read Exodus 16:1–36

1. 3 verses and 3 days turns Israel's praise to grumbling, even wishing for death and slavery (15:24, 16:3). How can people who have seen God's miracles and salvation grumble like this? If you were going to rate sin by severity, how highly would you rate grumbling?
2. Read Matthew 6:9–13 and John 6:30–42. What parallels do you notice? How does this connect God's provision today? Challenge us where we're sitting?
3. Read Philippians 2:12–16. Why do you think Paul puts grumbling so at odds with holiness? What's the difference between appropriate concern/questioning and grumbling?
4. What do you find comforting about how God treats Israel? How Jesus treats us? What can counteract and change a grumbling heart? How do we become a different kind of 'people of God'?

Sermon 7: Exodus 17:1 – 18:27

Sunday 8th September

Collect for 15th Sunday after Trinity:

They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the LORD was my support. He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me. (Psalm 18:18-19)

Keep your church, Lord God, with your continual mercy, and because the frailty of man without you cannot but fall, keep us always under your protection, and lead us to everything that makes for our salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Connect Group Study 7

The God who Works through his People - Exodus 17:1 - 18:27

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Hopefully having read Exodus 17:1–18:27 before you came today (do it for next week if you forgot!):

1. Share what you found confusing, interesting, important or soul-stirring.
2. Summarise this broader section of Exodus, and how it fits into the whole story.

Share a time God spoke powerfully in your life. What was it like? How did you know it was from God?

Read Exodus 18:1–27

Jethro is first introduced as 'a priest of Midian' with the name Reuel (Ex 2:16). You might immediately think he's some pagan priest, but Midian was a son of Abraham (Gen 25:2) who presumably worshiped God (Gen 18:19), and interestingly Reuel translates to 'a friend of God.' Jethro was a gift from God to Moses in Ex 2 (see Eliezer's name 18:4), and he is a gift of God to Moses again here in ch 18.

1. Jethro's advice is spicy, because he is partly redefining what the prophetic role of Moses means. How is Moses supposed to discern whether Jethro's advice is in step with God, or not? How do we discern whether someone's advice is in step with God? Especially when there isn't an obvious yes/no from Scripture?
2. God works through his people. Jethro to Moses; Moses to judges; judges to the people. The church is full of Spirit-filled and Spirit-gifted people who God uses to build his people (Ephesians 4:1–16). And yet... Israel goes on to stuff it up. NT churches stuffed it up. Modern churches still stuff it up. How does Exodus 18 teach us to embrace and empower people, yet remain in step with God?
3. How can we simultaneously be (1) confident that God often uses us to speak into each other's lives, and (2) humble that we aren't God and often get it wrong? What do you notice about how Jethro offers his wisdom? Think about the language we use as Christians: do we over-spiritualise? under-spiritualise? How could we capture this in how we speak?
4. Do you believe that God has gifted you and wants to use you? Do you know how God has gifted you? How do we find the shape and the space for the 'works of service' (Ephesians 4:12) God has for us?

Sermon 8: Exodus 19:1 – 20:7

Sunday 15th September

Collect for 16th Sunday after Trinity:

Declare what is to be, present it-let them take counsel together. Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Saviour; there is none but me. "Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other." (Isaiah 45:21-22)

Lord, Let your continual pity cleanse and defend your church, because it cannot continue in safety without your aid, keep it evermore by your help and goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Connect Group Study 8

*The God who Covenants: Holiness, Love & Law (1) -
Exodus 19:1 - 20:21*

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Before reflecting upon any part of the laws in Exodus, it is essential to remember that we are witnessing the establishment of a covenant (a deeply binding relational commitment between parties). These 'laws' are primarily a relational reality. Our best analogy is the marriage covenant where two people are joined together. Their vows simultaneously mark the relational commitment and expectation of both parties. We are witnessing the ancient covenant ('marriage'), of God and his people.

Read Exodus 19:1–20:1 & 24:1–17

1. Should Christians still keep OT law? Why do we interpret some laws differently from others (like the Decalogue here in 20:1–21 vs following laws ch 21–24)? How does old covenant vs new covenant change things?
2. Understanding 'the law' is a complex task with many parts. However it's not theoretical, as we will deepen our vision of the Christian life as we answer it. So... *split into four groups to think about NT passages, then come together and try to fit the puzzle pieces together.*
 - Read Matt 5:17–48: think about how Jesus speaks about the law.
 - Read Mark 7:15–19 & Acts 15:22–29: what's the underlying principle of both.
 - Read Rom 13:8–10 & Eph 6:1–4: think why/how Paul speaks about the commandments.
 - Read Rom 8:1–17: think about what Paul says and doesn't say about the law.

A Reformed Approach to the Law: The Reformers considered the law in three categories: moral (summarised by the Decalogue, where God has revealed the universal ethic of good); civil (social and societal regulations of behaviour); and ceremonial (the regulations of worship in sacrifice and cleanliness). We are no longer bound by the Mosaic covenant, because we've been brought into the new covenant in Christ. The ceremonial and civil remain part of the old and so we read it as contextual wisdom, not binding law. We do however continue to follow the moral law, especially the Decalogue, as Jesus reaffirms and deepens its implications in his Sermon on the Mount.

Read Hebrews 12:18–29

3. How is 'the new' mountain different from 'the old'? What continuity remains between the 'old' and 'new' (esp. how Heb picks up on Ex 20:1 and 24:17)?
4. Read v28–29 slowly by yourself, pondering these words: (1) receiving; (2) thankful; (3) worship; (4) reverence; (5) awe. Share your thoughts together.

Spiritual Practice Sermon: Sabbath

Sunday 22nd September (See page 22 for related article)

Collect for 17th Sunday after Trinity:

Hear my voice when I call, O LORD; be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, LORD, I will seek. Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, O God my Saviour. (Psalm 27:7-9)

Lord, we pray that your grace may always uphold and encourage us, and make us continually to be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Connect Group Study: Sabbath

The Spiritual Practice of Sabbath - Exodus 20:8-11, 31:12-18, 35:1-3

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Before meeting, listen to the teaching on this practice, and read the article on this practice in your Renewal Journal.

1. Reflect together on the teaching/articles. What resonated? What was challenging? What questions do you have?
2. How is a biblical picture of Sabbath different from a secular day off? What do you think we might be missing by not having an intentional practice of Sabbath? What is stopping you from practicing Sabbath?
3. What is the difference between Sabbath as an obligation or burden, and Sabbath as a gift that breathes life and strengthens us in grace?
4. We've talked about four parts for a grace-filled Sabbath as Christians: (1) stop; (2) rest; (3) delight; and (4) worship. Which do you find easiest and which hardest? Share some ideas of what this could look like in practice.
5. Take some time by yourselves to reflect: what do you hope a spiritual practice of Sabbath could look like in your life? What is your immediate next step (or steps)? Share with your group if you feel comfortable.

Sermon 9: Exodus 20:12-21

Sunday 29th September

Collect for 18th Sunday after Trinity:

Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love. Like your name, O God, your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with righteousness. (Psalm 48:9-10)

Lord, give your people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow you the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Connect Group Study 9

*The God who Covenants: Holiness, Love and Law (2) -
Exodus 20:1 - 17*

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Read Exodus 20:1-17

When Jesus was asked 'which is the greatest commandment in the law?', he replied: love your God & love your neighbour because 'all the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments' (Matt 22:34-40). He is pulling two essential texts (Deut 6 and Lev 19) to ultimately summarise the Decalogue in positive language: love your God (commandments 1-4) and love your neighbour (commandments 5-10). Therefore, we as Christians come afresh to Exodus 20 with obedient hearts ready to learn how to love God and neighbour well.

But before reflecting upon any part of the laws in Exodus, it is essential to remember that we are witnessing the establishment of a covenant (a deeply binding relational commitment between parties). These 'laws' are primarily a relational reality. Our best analogy is the marriage covenant where two people are joined together. Their vows simultaneously mark the relational commitment and expectation of both parties. We are witnessing the ancient covenant ('marriage'), of God and his people.

1. Fun question to get you started: If you were going to go down for breaking one of the commandments, which one would you like to break?
2. Commandments 1-3: Why do we need v4-5 if v3 already says 'no other gods'? Do you think v4 is just speaking about little man-made gods? What do you make of God calling himself 'jealous', and why the mention of punishment of generations vs love to generations? v7 is literally 'do not take/carry/lift up the name of YHWH your God in vain' – more than just 'oh my God!'; what do you think this means?
3. Commandments 5-10: Why do you think honouring parents matters so much, and how does it connect to long life in the land? Why do you think murder/adultery/stealing/false witness/coveting matter so much to God? 'Coveting' is often the modern forgotten commandment: what does it mean; why do you think it matters; and what does it look like?
4. These commandments define relationship with a holy God, and Jesus summed them up as 'love' – What good thing does each commandment seek to preserve/protect/produce? What positive lies behind the prohibition?
5. Someone set free by God's grace should be more motivated to live a right relationship with God. How does being a child of God, knowing God as Father (Romans 8:14-17), shape our approach to these commandments?

Sermon 10: Exodus 21:1 – 24:18

Sunday 6th October

Collect for 19th Sunday after Trinity:

The LORD is my light and my salvation – whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)

Lord God, without you, we are not able to please you; mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Connect Group Study 10

*The God who Covenants: Holiness, Love and Law (3) -
Exodus 20:22 - 24:18*

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Before reflecting upon any part of the laws in Exodus, it is essential to remember that we are witnessing the establishment of a covenant (a deeply binding relational commitment between parties). These 'laws' are primarily a relational reality. Our best analogy is the marriage covenant where two people are joined together. Their vows simultaneously mark the relational commitment and expectation of both parties. We are witnessing the ancient covenant ('marriage'), of God and his people.

1. What do you do when you come to parts of the Bible that feel confronting/incongruent with what you know of God? How do you reconcile this?
2. Split into three groups to read a section of 'the Book of the Covenant', then come together to share. Don't get bogged down or caught in the weeds of the specifics yet. Each group should (1) quickly summarise the subjects of the section, (2) share the key principles and purposes within, and (3) raise any questions/concerns, or aspects you find interesting/important.
 - Group 1: Read Exodus 21:1-36
 - Group 2: Read Exodus 22:1-31
 - Group 3: Read Exodus 23:1-19
3. Some of these laws are quite confronting and confusing. On a scale of 1 (flipping out) to 10 (totally at peace), how do you feel after reading these? How do some of these laws rub against who we know God to be?
4. How willing are you to accept and sit with a tension like this? With difficulties like this, which of these responses do you tend towards: (1) doubt, (2) overwhelm, (3) I-need-to-fix-it, or (4) I'll-just-ignore-it?

For thought only, here are several Christian approaches interpreters take that may help us:

- These laws have a radically foreign context that may not gel with our worldview, and we may even be missing key historical background to truly make sense of them.
 - 'These laws were specific to Israel's impending entrance into the Promised Land..given to serve a purpose for the Israelites at this particular stage in redemptive history!' (Peter Enns)
 - The details may be difficult, but they have been transformed by Jesus into the new covenant. Discern the underlying principle, rather than worry about the details.
5. How does Jesus fulfill these laws (more than just not-breaking-them)? How does standing this side of Exodus help you appreciate God more?

Spiritual Practice Sermon: Friendship

Sunday 13th October (See page 29 for related article)

Collect for 20th Sunday after Trinity:

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters. (Psalm 23:1-2)

Almighty and merciful God, of your bountiful goodness keep us from everything that may hurt us, that we may be ready in body and soul cheerfully to accomplish whatever you want us to do; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Connect Group Study: Friendship

The Spiritual Practice of Friendship - Proverbs 18:24

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Before meeting, listen to the teaching on this practice, and read the article on this practice in your Renewal Journal.

1. Reflect together on the teaching/articles. What resonated? What was challenging? What questions do you have?
2. Do you think intentional friendship matters for a deep Christian life? What makes a friendship deep, meaningful and valuable?
3. Do you think we (us as Christians, us as a culture, or us in this room) are good at friendship?
4. What does friendship look like for you right now? Do you find the sort of friendship we're talking about easy or difficult? What are the obstacles you're facing that keep you from deep friendships?
5. Take some time by yourselves to reflect: what do you hope a spiritual practice of friendship could look like in your life? What is your immediate next step (or steps)? Share with your group if you feel comfortable.

Sermon 11: Exodus 32:1 – 33:6

Sunday 20th October

Collect for 21st Sunday after Trinity:

The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbour his anger for ever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. (Psalm 103:6-14)

Merciful Lord, grant to your faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve you with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Connect Group Study 11

The God who is Jealous and Just - Exodus 32:1 - 33:6

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Hopefully having read Exodus 32:1–33:6 before you came today (do it for next week if you forgot!):

1. Share what you found confusing, interesting, important or soul-stirring.
2. Summarise this broader section of Exodus, and how it fits into the whole story.

What comes to mind as 'the worst sorts of sin'? What makes these worse than others? Do you think other cultures or other historical periods would make the same assessment?

Read Exodus 32:1–33:11

1. Why do you think the golden calf is such a big deal? Consider details in the passage; Israel's ancient historical context; and parallels to other parts of Exodus (ideas: ark, altar, festival, revelry, tabernacle, singing).
2. Why is God's anger so intense? Do you think the golden calf and God's response is about the seriousness of sin, or something else?
3. What do you make of God 'relenting'? How can God be *immutable* (unchanging, Malachi 3:6) and *sovereign* (Ephesians 1:11) and yet here change his mind?
4. How does the golden calf debacle add to our understanding of God? Where do you hear echoes of Christ? How are you supposed to 'apply' Exodus 32 as a Christian?

Sermon 12: Exodus 33:7 – 34:35

Sunday 27th October

Collect for 22nd Sunday after Trinity:

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

Father in heaven, keep your household the church steadfast in faith and love, that through your protection it may be free from all adversities, and may devoutly serve you in good works to the glory of your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Connect Group Study 12

The God who is Glorious and Good - Exodus 33:7 - 34:35

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Hopefully having read Exodus 33:7–34:35 before you came today (do it for next week if you forgot!):

1. Share what you found confusing, interesting, important or soul-stirring.
2. Summarise this broader section of Exodus, and how it fits into the whole story.

How have you experienced God's glory? His goodness?

Read Exodus 33:12 – 34:35

1. Why do you think this story comes after the golden calf incident? Why does Moses seek God like this after Exodus 32?
2. God is always present (Psalm 139). So, what do you think God means by 'My Presence' in 33:14? Is God's presence something we should expect to experience? How does having the Holy Spirit shape our expectation of God's presence?
3. What's the connection between God's goodness, glory, presence, and his name here? After this glorious revelation, why the rehash of law here in 34:10–28?
4. Why do you think Moses' face shines? Read 2 Corinthians 3:11–18. After these past chapters of Exodus, Paul's words carry extra weight. How do we 'contemplate the Lord's glory'? What should we expect?

Sermon 13: Exodus 35:4 – 36:7

Sunday 3rd November

Collect for All Saints Day:

Father, all powerful and ever-living God, today we rejoice in the holy men and women of every time and place. May we with them know your forgiveness and love. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

Connect Group Study 13

The God who Dwells with His People (1) - Exodus 25:1-31:18, 35:4-39:43

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Read Exodus 25:1-9 & 40:1-38

1. Did you expect a book called 'Exodus' to climax with 12-chapter-long IKEA instructions for an ancient tent? Why is this the climax of the book? Leave Christian theology behind and put on Moses' dusty sandals: what's your reaction/emotion/thought as God instructs you with 25:1-9?
2. Why do you think God is so exact and demanding about the materials, pattern and construction of this thing? Think over the past themes and events of the book... how does the tabernacle pull them together and fulfill them?
3. What was the function of the tabernacle? What did the tabernacle 'do' for Israel? And what did Israel 'do' with the tabernacle? What are we supposed to make of the tabernacle as Christians?

There are many echoes of creation throughout Exodus with none more clear than the tabernacle instructions. 'The LORD said to Moses' occurs seven times in c25-31, the first six describing construction and the seventh a renewed Sabbath command.

Peter Enns writes: 'In the midst of a fallen world, in exile from the Garden of Eden—the original 'heaven on earth'—God undertakes another act of creation, a building project that is nothing less than a return to pre-Fall splendour. The tabernacle, therefore, is laden with redemptive significance, not just because of the sacrifices and offerings within its walls, but simply because of what it is: a piece of holy ground amid a world that has lost its way.'

4. How does the above quote change our understanding of the tabernacle? How does the tabernacle fit into the greater story of Scripture?
5. We often leave the 'old stuff' behind as Christians. How does the tabernacle as a 'good', fill, shape or challenge your vision of God right now?

Sermon 14: Exodus 25:1-31:18, 35:4-39:43

Sunday 10th November

Collect for 23rd Sunday after Trinity:

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if you hear his voice... (Psalm 95:6-7)

God our refuge and strength, the author of all godliness, hear the devout prayers of your church: and grant that what we ask in faith we may surely obtain; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Connect Group Study 14

The God who Dwells with His People (2) - Exodus 25:1-31:18, 35:4-39:43

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

The temptation is to gloss over the meticulous detail of these passages on the tabernacle as unimportant or irrelevant. Yet about a quarter of the book is dedicated to these instructions. Let's seek God where we normally might not expect to see him.

1. Check out some pictures of what people think the tabernacle may have looked like, and some diagrams of its layout. What stands out to you, or seems confusing?
2. Split into five groups to read different parts of the tabernacle, asking (1) Why does this part matter to the purpose of the tabernacle?; (2) How are the details of the instructions important?; and (3) Are there any links to other passages or themes in Scripture? (you might like to check cross-references or study Bible notes if you have them).
 - Group 1: The Ark (25:10-12); the Table (25:23-30); the Lampstand (25:31-40) and the Oil for the Lampstand (27:20-21).
 - Group 2: The Tabernacle itself (26:1-37) and the Courtyard (27:9-19).
 - Group 3: The Priestly Garments (28:1-43).
 - Group 4: The Consecration of the Priests (29:1-45).
 - Group 5: The Altar of Incense (30:1-10), the Atonement Money (30:11-16); the Basin for Washing (30:17-21); the Anointing Oil and Incense (30:22-38); and Bezalel and Oholiab (31:1-11).
3. Have each group share a quick summary of what they looked at, and then some of their highlights, reflections, confusions and questions.
4. Lift your head out of the weeds. How do you appreciate or see God differently because of the tabernacle? How does your understanding of the gospel fit into what we've seen?

Sermon 15: Exodus 25:1-31:18, 35:4-39:43

Sunday 17th November

Collect for 24th Sunday after Trinity:

Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Lord, we pray, absolve your people from their offences; that through your bountiful goodness we may be set free from the chains of those sins which in our frailty we have committed: grant this, heavenly father, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

Amen.

Connect Group Study 15

The God who Dwells with His People (3) - Exodus 25:1-31:18, 35:4-39:43

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Read John 1:14 & 2:13-25

1. We've gotten a taste for how important the tabernacle/temple was to Israel. How would they have read these verses about Jesus for the first time? How does this speak into the 'incarnation' of Jesus, and the claim of the Christmas message?
2. Really think about Jesus as a person. What would it have been like to talk with him as the literally embodied tabernacle? Could you imagine the weight of his words and the meaning of his presence? Now... rethink the reality of what we're doing when we pray.

Read Ephesians 2:19-22 & 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

3. The next theological step is about Christians. What does it mean that the church is 'a holy temple in the Lord' (or tabernacle)? How should that change how you look at yourself? Each other? The church?
4. Take a few minutes to reflect with God: You are the new tabernacle because you are in Jesus, the perfect presence of God. God dwells within you even more meaningfully and beautifully than if you walked into the Holy of Holies... how do you need to wake up to that truth in your life?
5. Coming back together: commit some time to prayer now. Focus on praising and delighting and marveling that God is with you.

Spiritual Practice Sermon: Worship

Sunday 24th November (See page 33 for related article)

Collect for Sunday before Advent:

In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!" (Revelation 5:12)

Stir up, Lord, the wills of your faithful people, that they may produce abundantly the fruit of good works, and receive your abundant reward; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Connect Group Study: Worship

The Spiritual Practice of Worship - Exodus 40:1-38

Go around your community for everyone to share:

1. How has God spoken to you this week?
2. Where have you noticed God's presence or absence this week?
3. *Each week have one person share for 2-3 minutes and be prayed for:*
What does seeking spiritual renewal look like for you right now?

Before meeting, listen to the teaching on this practice, and read the article on this practice in your Renewal Journal.

1. Reflect together on the teaching/articles. What resonated? What was challenging? What questions do you have?
2. What do you think of the idea that every person is worshipping something (even if they aren't religious or spiritual)? How does that challenge you as a Christian in the seemingly 'non-spiritual' parts of your life? If worship is all-of-life, why intentionally think about praise as a practice?
3. Why do you think music is such an embedded practice of worship in Scripture, and in our churches? What if we don't enjoy singing, or easily connect with God in that way... should this still be a spiritual practice?
4. What do you think about the importance of head/heart/hands when we worship? Which do you find easiest and which difficult?
5. Take some time by yourselves to reflect: how could you creatively integrate a spiritual practice of worship into your life? What is your immediate next step (or steps)? Share with your group if you feel comfortable.

Conclusion to Exodus - Reflection and Prayer

Feel free to use the below as much as you like, but devote this week to reflecting on the Year of Spiritual Renewal, our series on Exodus and your own spiritual life to date. Then spend an extended time in prayer and/or worship together.

Reflection Questions:

Have you experienced anything unexpected or disappointing through life and faith these past months? Surprising and uplifting? How has God been present with you?

How has your understanding of the gospel, the world, God, and the Christian life grown through this series? Which passages/themes stuck out to you most?

How have you experienced spiritual renewal in these past months? How has your pursuit of spiritual renewal been shaped?

Consider where we've come so far, and look ahead to where we're going. How are you personally hoping to grow in spiritual renewal? What are you tangibly going to put in place?

How can we pray for each other in our journey of spiritual renewal?

Additional Notes



The Bridge Church