

Grace Mercy and Peace are now yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

I know it doesn't feel like it, but we are very quickly approaching the end of the church year. I know we still have thanksgiving and Christmas before we reach our new year, but in the church year we only have 2 more weekends left. We are about to start a new year and it begins with the season of advent. Advent is taken from the Latin word *adventus* meaning arrival or coming. We start our church year waiting for the coming of our Lord. Waiting for Him to come down to redeem and save us. We await the arrival of our messiah. The culmination of advent is Christmas, the birth of our savior, and the season of advent also forces us to look forward to the day that our savior returns and comes again in glory as we look for His second coming. We begin every year in the life of the church waiting on the arrival of our Lord.

Waiting is the theme of our Old Testament passage. This waiting isn't about a calm silent night or preparation for a baby to be born but instead a violent and painful. This waiting is filled with anguish and agony as the people of God toil under a foreign nation. As they are made slaves and forced to work for the benefit of others at the expense of their own blood sweat and tears.

The Hebrews haven't always been slaves in Egypt, in fact their arrival in the land of Egypt was a good one. The great patriarch Jacob brought about 70 of his relatives to Egypt where His son Joseph had been given good standing. Jacob was fleeing a horrific famine in the land of Canaan and was seeking a place where food might be found. In Egypt he found such a place. For many years this extended family grew into a small nation. Living peaceably in the land. For many years, life was good until a new pharaoh felt threatened by the large numbers of foreigners living in his lands. To keep the people of God in check the Pharaoh set them to forced labor, building cities and roads that they might not grow larger and become more threatening.

Think of the great injustice that has been cast upon the people of God. One moment they are laboring in their own fields, with their own animals, taking care of their families. Having enough to put food on the table and maybe even a little more. With a single command all that is ripped away. Instead of providing for their family they are made a laborer in a work camp. Building cities for others, driven to make bricks and work the fields. Their lives are made bitter and brutal with back breaking labor. To make matters even worse, pharaoh orders that all male Hebrew children that are born to be put to death by being thrown into Nile. The suffering is immense, forced labor mixed with the tears of families. A grave injustice. A brutal and bitter life for the people of God.

Where is the justice? Where is the action on God's part? God is awesome in power, frightening, merciful and jealous, never to be taken lightly. He has shown this throughout the lives of the people of God. Yahweh, Lord of Sabaoth, angel armies hang on his every word. This is the God who swallowed the world up in the flood yet had mercy on the faithful and protected Noah. This is the God who brought low the arrogance of man at the tower of Babel. This is the God who accomplished the impossible and gave Abraham and Sarah a son in their old age. This God of awesome power and might, of mercy and faithful love for His people is seemingly gone. Injustice reigns. Children are being killed. The people of God in forced labor. Their cries and groans go out to God. There is a feeling of indifference from on High. Where is the God of passages ago? – The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – The God of creation, flood, the God of promises and faithfulness? You can practically hear the people shouting: Where are you God? Get down here and fix this! Make this right!

This cry isn't a very difficult thing for us to understand. We look around the world and can ask the same question. Senseless violence is so commonplace, it is almost surprising to have a week without it. We see famine and extreme poverty destroy families and countries all around the world. Injustice reigns all around us. We do not

even have to go far outside of ourselves to feel this. There are moments in all of our lives where we can ask where is the God of creation, flood, the God of promises and faithfulness? Where are you? Get down here and fix this! Make this right!

How does this God respond? Exodus chapter 2 records for us how God reacts. It is written: During 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. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.

God hears these cries, He remembers the promises He made, He sees the injustice and God knows. God Then acts. The God of creation, flood, the God of promises and faithfulness does something unexpected. Outside of Egypt a man tends a flock. His name is Moses and Moses was born a Hebrew in the land of Egypt, raised an Egyptian royal and now shepherds a family flock in self-exile after he killed an Egyptian beating a fellow Hebrew.

One day he is leading the family flock past Horeb, the mountain of God. As he is guiding the flock he comes across an odd sight, a bush on fire, yet it remains whole. Wondering about this strange sight he wanders close to this burning bush. From the midst of this bush God calls out to him: Moses, Moses. Here I am, comes the reply. God instructs Moses to not come any further and to take his shoes off because the ground on which he walks is holy. It is here that Moses encounters this seemingly absent God. God identifies himself and tells Moses: I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. This God of awesome power and might, of mercy and faithful love for His people. This God is now before Moses and Moses is terrified. He hides His face from this powerful and wonderous God. Moses is afraid to even look at God.

God hasn't been distant or far off, he intimately knows the strife and evil the people of God are suffering under. He says: I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Can you image the joy of Moses hearing this? Years and years of prayer and agony is about answered. Injustice set right; slaves set free, infant children saved from their murderers. How will he do this? This God of creation, flood, the God of promises and faithfulness. He has come down, what will he do? What out of his infinite wisdom and power will he do to rescue His people?

God speaks again: Come, I will send you Moses to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." The Shepard becomes the means by which God will rescue His people. Moses is the chosen tool by which God will accomplish his will.

Moses knowing himself well ask the question you or I would ask. Who am I? Who am I to bring the people out of Egypt? What makes me so special? God answers this charge: But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." It isn't just Moses who goes to Pharaoh, to the people of God, it is God. God has come down to deal with this injustice and he walks with this exile shepherd Moses to accomplish this. He also makes Him a promise that on this mountain Horeb, the people of God will worship, he promises success to Moses the people will be free of Egypt.

God even goes a step further; He sends Moses with God's personal name. It isn't just Moses that goes, but the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob goes with him, The God of creation, flood, the God of promises and faithfulness walks with you. I AM WHO I AM goes with you, the Great I AM, Yahweh God walks with you. God works in unexpected

ways and through unexpected means. This great God Yahweh accomplishes the rescue of His people from Egypt with this shepherd in exile Moses, with the one bearing the name of God, Yahweh. Through Moses, the people are freed, lead for 40 years and make it into the promised land. That same God Yahweh The God of creation, flood, the God of promises and faithfulness – Fixes the mess. He saves the people from injustice and evil and delivers them to the land he promised.

What about the injustices we see in our world? The senseless violence that takes lives and seems so commonplace in our world. The extreme poverty that leaves families hungry and hopeless. The death that faces our young and the corruption and evil that is all around. We see this corruption and evil in ourselves as we participate in injustice. As we hurt and harm our neighbor through our words actions and deeds. Even our personal moments where we wonder: Where is Yahweh? Why does he seem so distant to our troubles and problems? We are caught in our own sins and the brokenness of this world. This isn't the way things are supposed to be. When is he going to come down here and fix this?

That same God Yahweh The God of creation, flood, the God of promises and faithfulness – Comes down to fix this mess. Yet Yahweh does not do this the way we would expect he could send His angel armies or even fell the evil of the world with a word from His mouth. Instead he comes down. He himself is here to deal with this. He comes by an unexpected mean, a baby born to a virgin. Yahweh himself comes, Jesus the Christ. He Descends from above, He has come down, not to liberate a people in slavery to Egypt, but to Free His people from the power of sin, death and the devil. To destroy injustice, free the captive, to destroy the sin of the world and the sin of His people. To deal with the things we see around us and makes us ask where is God?

This Jesus, the God of creation, flood, the God of promises and faithfulness lives amongst us in this mess, sees the hurt firsthand as he sees death, injustice and sin all

around us. He takes all that he sees upon himself and takes it to the cross. This includes the all evil that we see around us. He takes it the cross and puts in the grave with him. In His death the injustice of the world dies. The hurts and wondering where God is answered on Calvary. In Christ's death they are defeated and crushed.

In Jesus resurrection something greater than a land of milk and honey is found. New life springs forth. A life that points us to the hope that is to come. Where Jesus will return and make all things new. All injustice, death, pain and sin this world has will gone. No more will we ask where is God, for He will be with us, drying our tears and welcoming us into this new and perfect creation. Not a burning bush, but face to face.

As we wait, as we experience this season of advent and await this great joy. We walk the world bearing the name of Yahweh. We know how things should look. We have a hope that points us to what Jesus has won and done for us. Like Moses where it seems a simple man or woman walks, Yahweh goes with them. Those who bear His name, also bear His presence as they work as His agents in the world. Transforming it and pushing back against the evil that has already lost in Christ.

We go forth bearing the name of Yahweh

To work against the injustice in the world

To feed and clothe the weak and poor

To care for the forgotten

To resist sin and temptation

To fight the evil, we all face in the world.

To tell others about the victory that we have over all of these in Christ.

To wait, for the day all injustice and sin is trampled under Yahweh's feet and all things are new. Let us wait with hope for His coming. In Jesus' name, amen.