

# Lenten Devotional 2020

Saturday, March 21, 2020  
Day 22, Exodus 22

## **On the Side of the Weak**

*“Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt.” (Exodus 22:21)*

How should the community relate to each other and on what basis? Again, the exodus of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt tells us something about God. Now, on one hand God doesn't deliver Israel just because she is oppressed. There is nothing intrinsically valuable in the poor or the oppressed. God delivers Israel because of his covenant which he made with the Patriarchs. This itself is a pure act of God's grace—it is by grace that we have been saved. However, God does seem to side with the poor, the weak, the oppressed, the foreigner, the orphan, the widow, etc.

Why is this the case? Once more, we have to return to the creation mandate. What was God doing when he created? God makes life and he designs it to flourish—to bear his image. That is what we see in the garden, life flourishing. And, the human couple and their children were meant to expand that garden to the whole earth. Filling it and helping it to flourish in God's image. In short, humanity were to be co-creators with God. God rested from his work but assigned humanity theirs. Flourishing life is the creation mandate and the eschatological (final) picture.

So, God is on the side of the poor et al because they represent those for whom life is not flourishing. They are the ones exposed to the exploitation of the powerful. They are the ones on whom the economy is based—just like Israel in Egypt—and they are the one who are receiving death rather than life. Therefore, God seeks to give them the life he has designed for all people everywhere. And, of course, that blessing of life is meant to flow through God's human agents—Israel and the church. So, they are reminded as they get established to treat these weak people with care because Israel was once oppressed too.

This translates directly into the Christian life. We have received this great salvation by grace alone. We have been freely forgiven therefore we freely forgive. We have been blessed so we bless others. We enjoy life abundantly so we offer life to others freely. We have entered the kingdom so we invite all into the kingdom. All that we have is to be shared with others so they might know the God of creation who desire flourishing life for all people. That is how we are to relate to each other and the world.

## **Prayer**

God of good gifts, thank you for your mercy and grace. Thank you for rescuing us and setting us free. Help us to extend your grace to others as a way of life. Make us a generous people who remember what it was to be enslaved, but now free. Amen.