Saved! – Now what?

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[0:00] Well, a question to ask when you think about the gospel is what is the end goal of the gospel?! When we go out speaking the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection, of the forgiveness that he has brought, what is it all leading to?

Now, some of you reflexively will say, well, for the glory of God, and you would be absolutely correct, and we take that as a given. But the question is, how is God glorified? When someone comes to believe in Jesus, does the whole process just stop there?
The question is, if a person is saved, now what? If a person is rescued by the Lord Jesus Christ from sin and death and hell, what comes next?
What is a person saved for? What does God want them to do with the gift of salvation they have received? What we'll see this morning in this passage is a model for how the deliverance that God brings then brings people to active participation in the work of the Lord.
Each person, whatever circumstances in which they've become a believer, plays a valuable part in the body of Christ. A place that God has prepared for them, good works prepared in advance for them to do.
[1:24] And this chapter of Exodus will show us two great things. First, how God delivers people. And secondly, how he then uses those same people for his purposes.

In doing this, we'll reflect for ourselves on how the Lord is using us where he has called us to. For you as members of this church, how he has made you part of this body.
Now, obviously I've not been here before, but I know you've been in Exodus for a while. We're diving back in at an interesting hinge point in the book of Exodus. Chapter 18 is one of those chapters that I think initially you read, and it just seems really innocuous.
The father-in-law visits, gives some advice, and leaves. And it doesn't seem hugely significant initially. It's also worth noticing this chapter is out of sync time-wise with the rest of the book.
In 18 verse 5, they are encamped at the foot of the mountain of God at Sinai. But in chapter 19 verse 2, they will find that they arrive at Sinai.
[2:30] So this story has been moved to this point. And any time that an author of any book of the Bible moves something out of sequence, you have to ask, why has he put this here?

What does the author of Exodus want us to know at this moment, before we hear God's law and all that happens at Sinai? Because we're between two big narratives.
God's big rescue narrative has been in the first 18 chapters. And we're about to hit the law narrative, where God instructs his people. And over the first narrative, Jethro has actually been the bookend.
Jethro appears right at the start and right at the end. Both times, Moses has a meal with Jethro before he goes to meet God on the mountain. But look at the difference between the first meal with Jethro and the second.
One in the wilderness, Lord having brought Moses to flee from his people before he goes back to rescue them. But the second meal, having rescued the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt.
[3:34] And when Jethro arrives this time, rather than being the one that rescues Moses in the wilderness to give him a family, Jethro is now welcomed into Moses' big family, the one that he didn't have before.

One thing that's going on in this chapter as well, though, if you remember back to last week, Joe preached on Exodus 17. Israel have just been attacked by the Amalekites. And they are a pagan nation that's come against them.
As Joe preached last week, that God would judge his enemies. They've been sent away. But there's really strange similarities between that story and this one. Both stories, you have pagans

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who turn up in front of Israel, the Amalekites and Jethro.
But where the Amalekites come and attack Israel, Jethro comes and greets Israel. In both chapters, Moses is given a hard task, which he sits down to and has to do all day.
And yet, God provides help for him. God is showing us something about the nations here. It's not just that they will be against God's people, but as we see in Jethro, that they will be included in God's people.
[4:51] Jethro shows us that God's deliverance of his people is achieving something far greater among the nations. And it's the first beginning glimpse of his covenant promise to be a blessing to all nations, becoming true in human history.

Now, there are just two really straightforward points this morning. And our first point is that news of God's deliverance brings the nations to worship.
News of God's deliverance brings the nations to worship. Now, you'd have to go all the way back to chapter 4 to see last time we saw Jethro.
Jethro waving as Moses goes off to Egypt to see his people. And at some point in the intervening time, Moses has sent Zipporah, his wife, and his two kids back to his father-in-law.
We don't exactly know when that happened. But since then, the whole Exodus narrative has happened and Jethro has heard the news and has brought their wife and kids back to Moses.
[5:57] But in a story this big, why give so much time to a family reunion? It hardly seems like a significant moment to us. But slow down and look at what's highlighted in this passage.

Look at verses 3 and 4. The author of Exodus slows down to tell you again the name of Moses' first child. Verse 3, Gershom, a sojourner in a foreign land.
As if this child is representative of Moses' 40 years in the wilderness in Midian. But he's named the second child, verse 4, Eliezer, God is my help.
A child named after the help that he received in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and from Pharaoh. Sons who tell the names of the story of Israel, of the rescue that Moses has gone through. From a runaway shepherd hiding in Midian to the leader of God's people, leading them out of slavery. God has done everything that he said he would do and has remained faithful.
[7:08] And that theme of confirmation runs for this whole section. Moses and Jethro go to the tent and you can kind of imagine the chat, can't you? And Jethro comes in and says, Moses, what happened?

You didn't have over a million freed slaves with you last time I saw you. And then Moses gets to relay firsthand the story of the Exodus. Now verse 8 highlights this.
Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh, to the Egyptians for Israel's sake. all the hardship that had come upon them in the way and how the Lord had delivered them.
Telling the story of the miracles that God has performed, of his verbal sparring matches with Pharaoh to bring the people home. Imagine being Moses, being able to tell the story of the astonishing destructive might of the plagues that God brought on Egypt, of the Passover and God's faithfulness to his people.
of crossing the Red Sea on dry ground as walls of water tower up to the sky. God, through every trial, every obstacle, every moment of fear and discouragement for his people, has remained faithful as a deliverer.
[8:27] He has provided for them in the wilderness. He's kept them safe from their enemies. And Jethro has come to learn, as Moses has, that this God is a God who is not just going to say he can deliver, but is going to deliver his people fully.

God who keeps his promises. And Moses tells Jethro this. What does Jethro do? Well, wonderfully, immediately rejoices.
But what else could you do? You see your son-in-law all of a sudden with a nation of over a million people rescued from slavery in Egypt by a God who is full of compassion and kindness, who has delivered his people.
And that word deliverance just keeps coming up again and again. Verse 9, delivered from the hand of the Egyptians, from this powerful nation. Verse 10, Blessed be the Lord who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh and has delivered people from the hand of the Egyptians.
Jethro praises God that he cares for his own son-in-law, for his own family, but also for saving this huge nation of people.

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[9:45] Jethro has learned that this God is a deliverer who keeps his promises. But not just that. Look at verse 11. Jethro has also learned that God is above all other gods.

Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people. Now I know.
It's a very important phrase in the book of Exodus. If you turn back to chapters 3 and 4, you would hear that God knew of the suffering of his people and was going to act.
Pharaoh, when he rejects Moses, calls to let the people go, says that he does not know the Lord, so rejects him. For at the entire plague narrative, the Lord keeps saying that he is bringing these plagues so that the people will know that he is the Lord, that the Egyptians will fear him and his people will follow him.
It's a lesson that Egypt failed to learn, bringing the plagues and the closing in of the Red Sea upon them. It's a lesson that Israel are struggling to learn as they grumble with God in the wilderness.
[11:01] But it's something that Jethro knows. He is absolutely assured that this God has kept to his word and is able to do what he says. This pagan priest has come to believe that this God is greater than any God he has ever worshipped.

And if you read verse 11 carefully, it's as if the gods of Egypt themselves have dealt arrogantly with the people, as they have put their king, Pharaoh, and their people, Egypt, against the people of Israel.
And yet those gods have proved to be nothing at all. And thus Jethro rejoices in the work of the Lord. What is response in his joy?
Well, to worship, to bring sacrifices, to honor the Lord. The news of God's deliverance has brought this pagan priest to worship God.
And even more remarkable than that alone, he shares a meal with Moses and Aaron and the elders of Egypt in the presence of the Lord before God's face.
[12:11] This pagan priest isn't kept on the sidelines and told, well, you're not part of Israel so you can't join in. He is brought in to the family of God's people because he has come to believe in the Lord, the true God.

He's responding rightly in worship and so he is invited in. In some senses, Jethro here is doing a far better job than the grumbling Israelites are at responding rightly to the Lord.
But he is welcomed in fully to God's people. Jethro here sums up what this whole exodus has been about. Not just God saving Moses and his people, but through the news of that deliverance, God saving yet more people.
That the news of God's works for his people would go beyond the borders of Israel and begin to bring in and rescue many others. That God's covenant promises would be fulfilled among the nations.
And if that's the case, then this story should actually feel very familiar. This is what God continues to do through the gospel of Christ today. That news of God's salvation begins to save others.
[13:25] The deliverance that we receive from sin to eternal life in Christ. The good news that saves us is the news that is then taken out to the nations through which others are saved.

That foreigners to the covenants hear the good news and are welcomed in. And Jethro is a good model for us. It's worth thinking, how are we ourselves responding to the news of the deliverance we have received in Christ?
Because it is right that we worship and praise and right that, as Roman says, we live as living sacrifices. Do my responses to the good news of the gospel look more like a joyful Jethro or a grumbling Israelite?
It's good to ask ourselves that question sometimes. We can catch ourselves short. We may have been Christians for a long time and just begun to grumble a little bit. And it's good to see here that we are invited to joy remembering what the Lord has done through Christ.
But also, let me say, if you have come to believe in the Lord Jesus, there are no second-class citizens in God's people. If you have come to believe, then you are fully in.
[14:41] Jethro, the pagan priest, believes in the Lord and is brought fully in to God's presence to enjoy a meal with the elders of Israel. If by faith you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, you participate fully.

There are no second-class citizens in the kingdom. And so, we have every reason for joyful worship and praise. And every reason, therefore, to go and tell people of the works of the Lord that there

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might be many Jethro's out there who hear of God's works and come to put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
We tell people of a God who sent Jesus to die for us. A God who has saved people for himself, who truly loves us and is full of compassion, who takes strangers and makes them family.
But, like Jethro, we also need to go out and speak the word of a God who is supreme above all other gods. The only true God making every idol and every other religion in the world false.
And invite people to come to Christ who is the only way. Compassion and supremacy, both of those things in the God in whom we believe. And we trust that God will use that gospel, that truth about him and his deliverance to bring many others to know him.
[16:11] That's not where this story ends. It's not where the time with Jethro ends. Every one of the people that God brings to believe in him then has a role in his kingdom.

So our second point this morning, verses 13 to 27, the purpose of God's deliverance, that each one might have a role in his people. Now, as we were reading the second half of this passage, I reckon it brought up some quite strong reactions for some of you.
For some of you, you heard that on seeing Moses struggling, Jethro, the father-in-law, begins to give unsolicited advice as if he runs the show and you immediately thought, well, he's definitely a father-in-law, isn't he?
For some of you, you see Moses trying to lead the people of Israel and all of a sudden you imagine Jethro with a management consultant badge giving a restructuring plan and you just kind of rolled your eyes.
And as with the first section, we could be forgiven for wondering exactly why this is here. If verses 1 to 12 have Jethro as a model of responding to the deliverance that the Lord has given in the Exodus, well, this second part is all to do with being on the verge of receiving the law, that God is going to give Israel something through this man that is going to be important for all the rest of their life as a nation, a structure that will enable them to live out of the commands the Lord gives them.
[17:46] Because Moses is currently acting as a bottleneck in Israel. He isn't doing anything wrong, yet both he and the people we hear are exhausted.

And God in his kindness has brought Jethro to them for this moment to play his part in the kingdom. So look with me at verse 13.
The day after the big family reunion, the celebration, Moses is immediately back to work in verse 13. And Jethro goes to find his son-in-law essentially at the end of an endless queue of the Israel Citizens Advice Bureau staffed exclusively by Moses himself.
In verse 13, Moses' job comes of long hours. He's there morning till evening answering question after question after question, dispute after dispute for all of the people of Israel.
And Jethro asks Moses what he's doing. Why is one man solving the grumbles of so many people? It's good to remind ourselves if we're to go back to chapter 12, verse 37, that 600,000 men left Egypt and all of their wives and all of their children.
[18:59] Over a million people are bringing all of their problems to one man. No wonder it's taking all day and everyone is exhausted. Imagine waiting in a queue that long for your complaint.

So Jethro asks Moses why and in verse 15 Moses says, the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a dispute they come to me and I decide between one person and another and I make known the statutes of God and his laws.
Now Moses is faithfully acting as an intercessor but the task is so far beyond him. And Jethro says in verse 18 it is wearying him and the people.
And so Jethro gives his advice and it's important to see the context of this advice. Jethro isn't trying to usurp Moses or the people or the Lord.
Look at verse 19 I will give you advice and God be with you. Verse 23 if you do this God will direct you. Now Moses is receiving advice from a man who's putting his newfound faith in the Lord immediately into effect.
[20:08] It's an advice given in the sight of God for the good of Moses and the good of Israel. So in verse 19 he says you shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God and you shall warn them about the statues and the laws and make known to them the way in which they must walk and what they must do.

So Moses' role as mediator here is preserved. His is to be the God-facing role to be the intercessor for the people before God and to bring the words of God to the people.

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a role that will involve teaching the people how they must walk speaking the law to them. Moses' role is intercession and instruction and is therefore a priestly role one that later in Exodus Moses will pass on to Aaron and the priesthood for the generations of Israel.
But there is another role for the rest of Israel in verse 21. Look for able men from all the people men who fear God who are trustworthy and hate a bribe and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands of hundreds of fifties and of tens.
Here we see an Old Testament qualification for eldership. These people must be God-fearing men of Israel trustworthy bribe rejecting.
[21:36] Jethro knows that the human heart is very quick to evil to subvert justice for one's own gain so not everyone in Israel should lead and not everyone in Israel should have the same kind of leadership some responsibility for thousands for hundreds for fifties for tens based on their ability and their godliness.

Moses is to hand over responsibility for judgment to these men that they might lead this nation. in verse 22 let them judge the people at all times every great matter they shall bring to you but any small matter they shall decide themselves this will be easier for you they will bear the burden with you.
Moses' role is maintained there will always be things that need to be brought to the top to the highest authority but in so many things by wisdom by fear of the lord and application of his word these men will be able to settle judgments for the people to lead which will free Moses up to do the work of the intercessor to teach Israel the law of God and speak his word and verse 23 therefore you will be able to endure and all his people will also go to their place in peace it must have been such a ginormous relief to go from one man serving a queue of millions to lots and lots of leaders among God's people taking his word speaking it to one another and making wise judgments based on what he has said to them and in verses 24 to 27 Moses puts all of Jethro's advice into effect but we might miss how astonishing the story actually is if we forget where Jethro was five minutes ago the pagan priest has become one of God's people put his faith in the lord and now is being given as a gift to Israel in God's kindness he has given the people
Moses as a mediator but in God's kindness to Moses he has given him Jethro and all these other elders to lead Israel together it's another sign of the lord's goodness but also of his plan to include those who come to put their faith in him right at the heart of his people to give them good works that he planned in advance for them to do so the question is well what would we do with Jethro and this here it preserves the role of Moses as an intercessor but we see a significant parallel of this in the way that we think about the gifts that Christ himself gave to his church now Christ is far more of an intercessor than Moses was ever able to be he's not prone to the same weakness as Moses he doesn't have the same limitations the same frailty he doesn't have to intercede between the people and God Jesus is God he intercedes at the throne of God itself and under the new covenant we all come on equal footing to the Lord we all possess the same spirit we can all learn from the same word and yet Christ we're told in Ephesians still gave the church gifts a structure and leaders for his people who taking notes it's Ephesians chapter 4 verses 11 and 12 where he says he gave the apostles the prophets the evangelists the shepherds and the teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry for the building up of the body of Christ there are some specific roles those given to teach to evangelize to shepherd and as Jeff Lewis says they will bear the burden with you this has I think quite clear parallels in eldership those qualified and chosen to serve not to be Christ for people but under Christ to do the work of the leadership they have called to to serve as under shepherds over the people of God the elders of this church are gifted to you by the Lord to help you grow and mature as disciples of Christ and so it is right and good that you lean on them that you come to them when you need help that you receive God's gift of generosity and the leaders that he has given to you and it's not just elders but any that you would call leaders in this church small group leaders aspirational women's workers future elders maybe even for you if you're a leader in a Christian union given to those people that you may serve them because the body of Christ is meant to be a team effort Israel was and this is how the Lord has made his church to be if you call yourself a believer in the Lord Jesus and you are a member of a local church then you have a role we're all called to speak the truth in love to one another but the truth is that God delivers people so he can fit them for works of service in his kingdom that he's prepared in advance for us to do nobody's meant to do any of this alone we all need one another to speak God's word to each other and to put that into practice in every area of our lives because sometimes the Christian life is less than obvious

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what does it mean to be a Christian teacher what does it mean to raise a teenager to know the Lord Jesus what does it mean to interact as a Christian in a sports team friends we need each other to help answer those questions and to grow together to apply the truth of God to every area of our lives when someone is saved they get to participate in that together so if you are someone who believes in Jesus if you are a member here then you have a role here it's important that you understand the Lord has gifted you to this church to serve him and to serve the people here and so as we come to a close

[27:50] I just want to remind us of that parallel that we are given both times that Jethro appears in this story back in chapter 2 a meal with Jethro before hearing God at the burning bush on the mountain and here we are again another meal with Jethro on the same mountain where instead of a burning bush we're about to see a burning mountain as God speaks to all of his people to give them the law God has heard and kept his promises and yet for us in Christ we have so much deeper greater assurance of those promises in him we see true deliverance from death from sin to eternal life forever a deliverance that we deepen in our knowledge of as we get to know Christ more and more over time and through that knowledge we help each other grow side by side those whom God rescues he uses you are brought into Christ to play your part in the body and so think how has the Lord gifted you to these people to serve among them how can you use your time and talents to serve his kingdom and if you're here and you're just investigating the Christian faith and not yet a believer hear of the deliverance that's on offer in Christ

Jesus is both a compassionate saviour but also lord and judge over your life but know that if you follow him you will be given a place in his body and in his church and made useful the works of service planned in advance for you to do that should excite you if God has delivered you in Christ he fits you to be useful in his kingdom and Lord willing we will all be able to do so with that let's ask for the Lord's help as we close Father God we thank you for the deliverance that you brought to Jethro to the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt and for the picture that that is of the deliverance that we have received in Christ as you rescue us from slavery to sin and into eternal life with Christ forever Lord help us to know that deliverance for ourselves and to know the part that we each play in your kingdom and in your body as you lead us and guide us

Father may that deliverance be one that we love to speak of that lovers may come and hear it coming under the sound of the gospel and responding and putting their faith in you and also we ask and pray in Jesus name Amen that who is who is who is who is

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