

If you're clapping, you can clap. It's fine, it's quite okay. All right. You were not sure whether to clap or not. For those of you who don't know me, especially the people that are new, I am Reverend Captain Gideon Muhima. I serve here as the youth pastor, and I am privileged to be sharing the word of God with us today. How many of us by show of hands were at the youth camp? Yes, I thought so. I was wondering what was up. Some of our facilitators were there. The Kajinas, thank you very much. Please clap for them. They did an excellent job. For those of us who were there, we really enjoyed. It was that *kokonyaring* kind of camp. We feel sorry for those of you who didn't come. It was also-- The theme was Walking In The Light. Children of the light. That last day was a bit too much light, for those of you who were at the camp. There were some phones that were stolen and they were recovered. Money was stolen and it was recovered and the culprit, we're still praying for to also recover spiritually especially, and physically, yes, physically. There was a bit of-- they had to exorcise the truth out of him, so to speak. Other than that it was an excellent camp, really enjoyed. I too was ministered to by-- I don't know whether Zack is here? In his absentia please clap for that guy. Last month he took us through some excellent teachings, in December, the first two Sundays of December. He was preparing for the camp and now he's also going to be preaching at St. Nicholas, Kalerwe soon. Continue to pray for him, the Lord has good plans for him. I pray he joins me soon. I am saying this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

I also want to appreciate Phillip. Thank you for leading the prayer. You sort of prayed my whole sermon so we're just going to say The Grace and go, right? Thank you so much.

Happy New Year. Praise the Lord that you're here. It's something to be grateful to the Lord for, right? Yes. Most of you have claimed or heard this is your year. It's also mine. We bless the Lord. Most years are mine. All of them I guess, I don't know, but this one is going to be quite the year. The Lord is going to fulfill his purposes in my life and your life. Hallelujah! That's what is going to happen this year. We will leave it at that.

As you've seen, this year the archbishop and the leadership of the province of the church of Uganda thought that since we've been dealing with family the last two years, this year we're going to specifically deal with children. That's going to be the concentration this particular year. As you've seen, that theme and that particular verse, that's where the emphasis is as far as children are concerned.

We are specifically going to be looking at raising a godly generation this whole year. As a result-- When you read that verse, it might not make sense how it is connected to children and raising a godly generation. To most of us it might make sense. What we've decided to do is that we're going to be teaching the series this whole month, we're going to be teaching from the book of Exodus. We're going to start today with chapter 1 of Exodus. Please pray with me as I share in this series. There's a lot that the Lord has been revealing and I pray that I will be able to reveal these things to you through being His mouthpiece. Let us pray and then we'll get into it.

Father, I thank you for your word. I thank you Lord that it is life changing. It transforms. That your word brings alive things that were dead, that your word continues to sustain us, your word makes us whole. As we dig in, I pray Lord that your word will cause us to be the people that you want us to be. To be as transformed as you desire us to be. To pursue the things you've called us for, in Jesus name. Amen.

We're going to study today Exodus chapter 1, but before going to that, I just want to give you a very, very brief background about the book of Exodus. If you removed the title Exodus, it would seem like it is just a continuation of Genesis. All right? Obviously, it was written by the author, Moses. He was writing from Genesis right through to Deuteronomy. Exodus is just one of those particular books that brings out a lot of things in terms of raising a generation, a godly generation. Right from Genesis chapter 46, all through to 50, Moses-- I mean, sorry. We're looking at Jacob, his sons, and how they move in to Egypt. They settle into Egypt and they multiply, the increase in number, but this Exodus event is a fulfillment of the promise that was given by God himself to Abraham. In chapter 12 and chapter 15 of Genesis. When you read chapter 12, Abraham is called out of that land, called what? Ur, yes. He's called out of that land called Ur and, you know, he was an idolater, he was just a sinner. An ordinary folk sinner. God somehow calls him out, he listens to God, leaves the place to a place that he doesn't know, a people he doesn't know, but just because God called him. There was a promise that God gave. If you read in Genesis 12:2, 3. If you turn there he says, "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you. I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse you, and all peoples on the earth will be blessed through you."

This is God's intention for Abraham, and through Isaac, through Jacob, a nation begins. An exodus sort of sets the stage. The point of

Exodus is to do three things and those are the three things that I am going to be talking about today through the book, and through chapter 1. First thing is to illuminate on the eternity of God. The eternity of God, which is what Philip was talking about. He's eternal. The second is the intentionality of God. God is intentional in the things that He's doing. The third is that God is exceptional. He is eternal, He is intentional, and He is exceptional. Chapter 1, that's what we're going to be looking at throughout Exodus chapter 1. If you'll turn with me to Exodus chapter 1, as you can see, verse 1 says, "These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family. Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah." They list the names. Verse 6 says, "Now Joseph and all his brothers and all the generation died, but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful. They multiplied greatly, increased in number and became so numerous the land was filled with them." Please note, God is fulfilling the promise He made to Abraham. God made a promise to Abraham hundreds of years before and He is fulfilling it. Not only is He fulfilling it, He is ensuring that His purpose continues on even in a sinful world. Remember the first instruction He gave man? What was the first instruction? Be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth. He gave that instruction to man when man was not yet sinful. When man was in the full image of God, and that was the image that God wanted to multiply and fill the earth. That is what God's intention has always been. Now, man sins in Genesis chapter 3 and all goes to hell nearly wiping out the human race through the flood. By his grace, He chooses again to pick one man to start it off again. Sin still multiplied and continued until and so God chooses to pick up a man, Abraham, and through him raise a generation. Raise a people, raise a nation. God's eternal bird-eye view-- Bird-eye view, for those of you who are-- Bird, *ekinyonyi*. Okay. His eternal bird-eye view looks past all the wickedness, the near extinction of mankind and starts the redemptive plan with Abraham. He starts the plan with Abraham. We ask ourselves why. Why does He make this promise? Why does He want to fill the earth with people with his image? Why does He want them to fill the earth? How come He is making sure, He is seeing to it that these people that He has promised Abraham are going to fill the earth, why does He do that?

When you read Habakkuk chapter 2, God speaks to the enemies of His rule with the woes that He's talking about. "Woe unto you..." But suddenly between the woes He says something very peculiar. "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." That's His intention. That the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God. Really, if you could only picture what that would look like-- Revelations kind of paints the

picture but imagine every one of us understands God, or knows God, or has an experience with God. The earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea. Elsewhere, God desires that all nations, towns, tribes and peoples know that God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is His redemptive plan that when you know Him-- because Jesus said that to know Him is eternal life, to serve Him is perfect freedom, that is who God is.

We're starting off this year and hopefully that as we begin now, as you begin to think about your own life, as you begin to think about what God could be doing in your life-- I would like for us to pay close attention to who He reveals Himself as this particular Scripture. The Psalms are littered with definite clarity on God's eternal purpose for the whole world and not just a small significant people. He didn't just have plans for Israel only, nor did He just have plans for the Christians only, God has-- He's eternal. He is God over all creation regardless of whether or not you respond to him, regardless of whether or not you belong to him. He is God. Psalm 96:3 says, "Declare his glory among the nations, His marvelous deeds among all peoples. For great is the Lord and most worthy to be praised. He is to be feared above all gods, for all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens and the earth." Psalm 22:27-28, "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord and all the families of the nations will bow down before Him for dominion belongs to the Lord, and He rules over the nations." The Lord is King over everything. Psalm 10:16, "The Lord is King forever and ever. The nations will perish from his line." We know that God's eternal purpose is to fill the earth with the knowledge of Himself. He wants people to know Him. Once again, why? Why would God want people to know him? Why can't everyone just be like, "Hey, you know what, thanks for creating me but can I do my thing?" Why would God want everyone in the world to know Him? Could it be that He is egotistic as some have said? Or egoistic? Could it be that God is selfish? He just wants his thing and if He doesn't get His thing He's going to punish you? Or you're going to just suffer? Sometimes we portray God as that kind of a person. If you don't do this for God, He won't do the other for you. What is it for you? Why would God want you to know Him fully? Why would God want you to be consumed by Him?

Let me remind you of what John and Genesis say. In the beginning, God. All that is beautiful, all that is all that is pristine, all that is glorious, all that is powerful and all that is honorable finds its source in God alone. Everything that we know that is beautiful and bright, brilliant starts with God and God alone. He is the beginning. You see,

God is not just a know-it-all. He doesn't force Himself on you. He's perfect. This is what God says, He is perfect, He is eternal. He goes past time. There is nothing evil about Him and He knows it. It's not pride to state a fact. Yes. "I am the Lord your God." He is your creator. Without Him there's nothing, you can do nothing, you will be nothing. There is nothing you can do, there is nothing you can be, without Him. God is not being arrogant or prideful in saying, "I am the bread of life. I am the source of life", because He is who He is.

The undertone of the theme of Exodus is that God's holiness is permanent. It is unadulterated, it is irreversible. By holiness we're saying that He is set apart. There is none like Him. God is God and that's all there is to it. Nothing. He is holy, set apart. He calls His generation, this nation, to Himself. That is why He says, "Be holy as I am holy. Be set apart as I am set apart. I am not like those other gods." You must not be like those other worshippers of those other gods.

This is how Paul puts it, and it was shared in the reading and also in the prayer. "The son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him all things were created. Things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. Whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities. All things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things and in him all things hold together." This is the kind of God you want to have your faith in.

Number two. When we look at God being intentional. We'll read very carefully verse 6 and 7 about how He-- The number continues to increase. A whole generation of leaders, fathers, brothers, passed on. The Joseph's passed but a new one came and years later they are multiplying. God's intended purpose continues on. Even when they're not in the land that God had promised Abraham, His redemptive plan to restore mankind, to have all nations display His glory, this is what was being threatened at this time. In Exodus 1:8 says, "Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. "Look", he said to his people, "the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country." When we see how God continues to work. You see, verse 11 says, "So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor and they built Pithom and Raamses as store cities for Pharaoh." Verse 12 says, "But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread." The more they were challenged, the more the enemy wanted to suppress

God's plan, the more the plan succeeded. God is intentional. He's eternal. His plans cannot be thwarted. Nations will get to know who He is. Whether or not you're enslaved, whether or not you're oppressed, His purposes-- He is watching carefully. As in Jeremiah, He is watching his word carefully for it to be fulfilled. He promised Abraham that all nations will be blessed by these people and here we are over 3000 years learning about the Lord our God through these people. Because of this, because of his intentionality I would like you to think about your own life and how God has been intentional regardless of the oppression in your life, regardless of the people that are tormenting or oppressing you, regardless of the thoughts of the mindsets that you have. God's purpose continues.

The third thing that we're going to be looking at is the exceptional God. We looked at the first, the eternal God. The second, the intentional God. The third is the exceptional God. When we read from verse 10 to 14, when you read through we see the enemy prevailing amidst the darkness we see that Pharaoh plotting against the flicker of light and hope. Imagine you are those people. Stories have been told, there is a God who promised our fathers that we will be a great nation but where they are it seems like a legend now. It seems that God is the farthest thing from them. It seems like there is nothing they can do about their situation. It is done. Finished. They're slaves. You see, this Pharaoh was not acting on his own agenda, there was a much bigger play here. The enemy, the true enemy, Satan himself was at play and he was using Pharaoh to destroy anything good that would come out of these people. This enemy opposes God's rule, opposes His reign and His authority. He does this by influencing God's very creation. Here we might either be those being oppressed or those oppressing. I sure hope to God that it is the former in here. That you have experienced oppression from the enemy, but sometimes it is possible that you could be the very vessel that the enemy uses to oppress others. Pharaoh was a tool in the enemy's hands and he was out for blood. He wanted to wipe the entire nation away if he could, but he needed them so he used them to do his own agenda, to make his own purposes fulfilled. You see, the enemy's MO, modus operandi-- It's the one? Yes, that one. There are two things that the enemy does. As I studied Exodus 1, I saw them standing out very clearly. When Pharaoh decided to use taskmasters and make them slaves, first is to break their backs-- That's what the enemy does, he breaks your back, and what that does is he frustrates your plans, frustrates your efforts, your dreams, your purpose, your hopes, your future, everything is frustrated. Breaking your back. When you are hopeless-- think about it even today. When you have no hope, when you have no idea what is

happening, what is going to happen, we're always grasping at straws and trying to survive and so you take any job, you marry any person, you just be there because life is just hard. What is life? Sometimes some of us days are just like that. Every year you're promised this is your year, and it's the same as the other year and every day is a new day. Bless the Lord. "This is the day," but it is not the day. It is not the month, it is not the year. We're very excited about the year, we're very excited about everything but somehow some of us have been frustrated by the enemy and our backs have been broken, our plans frustrated, our hopes diminished. Perhaps because we are not looking at the eternal God, the intentional God, and the exceptional God. Perhaps last year you struggled way too much because you were carrying loads you shouldn't be carrying. You were telling God, "No, I got this," and He's like, "Trust me, there is nothing you have got." "I've got this year. This is the year."

The second way that the enemy does this is break their spirit. He breaks your spirit. He creates despair, destroys the things you hold dear. Last year-- I have never attended as many funerals in one year, both with a collar and without. We lost close friends. I was here a lot of the times in funeral services and I was seeing people lose hope, like a flick of light, just snuffed out. The enemy uses that situation to bring you down, to break your spirit. You've lost jobs, you've lost-- you're hopeless. You failed at one thing or another and you feel like, "What is going on?" Again, God seems so distant, so far from you, you'd have no clue where to turn. Praying has become a drug. You just go to a prayers' session and you're like, "So here we are God. Okay, bye." Reading the word is no longer as exciting, you're not hearing Him anymore. There is absolute darkness in your life and, for some of us, that has been last year. God, who is light, seems to be far because there's so much darkness you're seeing.

See what happened in verse 15 to 21. It shows the progression of evil, breaks your back and breaks your spirit. Made them slaves, removed their identity then went after the children, their heritage, their legacy, their very existence, the firstborn sons. The enemy was strategic, he was after them. Yet, somehow, God's plans prevail. This is the exceptional God. When you read verse 15 to 21 shows how deep the progression had gone with the enemy. Yet God, in a remarkable way, in an exceptional way, used the Hebrew midwives that the enemy was sending to kill they were the same midwives that were saving these young boys. This is how God is remarkable. He preserved the nation of Israel. Even amidst the darkness there was still light. He was the light. He was the hope of Israel, and they didn't even know it. Most of

them were into idolatry because after living that long in slavery in a foreign land, not hearing God's word, it is quite possible that many of them were accustomed to the way of life of the Egyptians of the day, numerous gods, and God still had his purpose prevail.

This is the charge I have for us today, as we think about this whole month-- and we're going to be studying the book of Exodus. Next Sunday you can come having read the entire of chapter 2 and we will be discussing that. For us here it is possible that we may be feeling like we are under the yoke of slavery. Slaves to our work, slaves to our homes, slaves to our relationships we might be in, slaves to our own thought patterns that are destroying us, we may be slaves to our own laziness in studying the word and spending time with this God. This is true light, the eternal God, the exceptional God, intentional God. You may be tired of it all. Tired of what seems to be like empty promises by priests and prophets and apostles of our day claiming this is your time. *Bitwale*. These are the things that you have, maybe you are tired of all of that. May be it is time to leave all of that behind and pay attention, close attention, to the eternal God, the exceptional God, the intentional God.

If for you God feels like He's a distant character in a history of your life you and you're just holding to the thread of hope, hoping maybe, just maybe, today might be the day. Maybe, just maybe, this year might be the year. Let me give you news, good news. Every year, every day that you live is your year, is your day, because for as long as you have breathe God has allowed you to have that day. Every year, every day, every month, every second you are alive, every moment you are awake, that is God's grace to you that you may experience Him, the eternal God, the intentional God, the extraordinary God. Maybe this is the year when everything turns around because you have turned away from the darkness right before your eyes to see the light everywhere else. Maybe this is the time that you choose this day, that you choose this day, I will no longer pay attention to the enemy. That every breath that I take, every moment I'm awake-- Yes. We know that song, don't we? Now it's time to stop singing it, it's time to live it. That He is the one who consumes us. That this year we will be about His agenda, His purpose. That we will be paying more attention to what He is doing, not what we want Him to do in our lives because He owns us. If for as long as He is Lord of your life, He owns you, so you have no business trying to figure out what you want Him to do with your life. No. He's got it covered. Please, He's God. Are we together? Rest in that, rest in the knowledge that He's eternal, He's intentional, and He's extraordinary.

I ask you to look beyond your circumstances. I ask you to look beyond your distress. Look past the enemy, past his schemes to break your back that you labor in vain. To look past his schemes to break your spirit that you may hope for nothing. To look past the grave of your inadequacy, your inability or inefficiency or hopelessness, your despair. Look past all of that. Look beyond all of that and see the cross of Christ. That is the place he fulfilled his promise for you. That at the cross, there we find the redemption, there we find our hope, there we find our purpose. Through time, through purpose, and through the extraordinary we see the eternal God, we see the intentional God, we see the exceptional God. I charge us today, let this be the time that you close your eyes to all that has failed you and turn it to Jesus the author and perfecter of your faith. The eternal great I am. The King of kings and Lord of lords, the holy one of Israel, the one who remains, who is, who was and forever will be. This God, the eternal God, the exceptional God, the intentional God.

Let's bow our heads. As you think about this God and how His purposes and His plans for you are far beyond what you can ever imagine or think, how He wants you to be a part of what He is doing, now He wants you to change your mindset from looking at your difficulties, at your inadequacies, at your failure, and to see His success, His power, His glory, to honor Him with your life. Whether you're in pain or in anguish, or whether you're in victory and in success, this, this is the God who calls you out. I want you to be reminded by the words of Paul when he says, "Once you were you were alienated from this very God. From this eternal, intentional, extraordinary God. You were alienated and you were enemies in your mind because of your evil behavior, but now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy, set apart, a holy nation, God's own people without blemish and free from accusation. Continue in your faith, brothers and sisters, established and firm and do not move from the hope hailed out in the gospel. The gospel is true, is the power of God unto salvation. God, through Jesus Christ's stretched his hands wide open, nailed them on the cross that you may be free. That you may enter into his rest and there find joy, find hope, find satisfaction in him. He is your identity. He sustains you. He completes you."