

## **AHA! NOW I get it!**

Exodus 1:8-2:10

Matthew 16:13-20

Sometimes, no matter what, you simply have to do the right thing.

Let me start off this morning with a bit of a paraphrase:

Our story begins with a new king. Now the new king absolutely did not like, in fact probably hated, the old king and had zero interest in any of that old king's advisors. Anything they had to say was at best a waste of time and at worst a lie. Along with a short historical memory this king has a taste for power and puffing himself up and is more than a little prone to anxiety.

He looks around at the census numbers of the foreigners in his land and discovers that the numbers, especially of one ethnic group, is growing quickly and may someday out number his good ol' home folk. He begins to imagine a scenario where this all goes horribly wrong and so he responds by manufacturing a political crisis - which is quite easy to do, after all – that he uses to spread his own fear and hatred through the whole nation.

What if? Remember the old ways? They're ALL bad people! Fake media news! (No, wait, wrong story.) Soon the home folk hate, dread, fear their neighbors, so for the king to become ruthless is easy. In fact, I suspect that a lot of people WANTED to see the king become as ruthless as possible.

Besides which, with enough effort, maybe "those people" will come to see themselves the way we think of them – as less than human.

But no. The spark of hope seems to grow stronger rather than weaker; the foreigners continue to multiply and to grow. Desperate measures must be taken!

The king has worked hard to get the population in a panic, he has aimed all the negative power at them and something has to happen.

Does any of that sound familiar? It should. It's happened all-too-often in human history. And most of the time it isn't noticed until AFTER it happens with the clarity of 20/20 hindsight.

But let's continue:

At this point the King orders the first recorded ethnic cleansing campaign.

Now it won't be the last: King Edward I, Cromwell, the "Highland Clearances", the "Trail of Tears", the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the murder of more than 1 million Muslims, the "cleansing" after the Balkan wars that claimed more than 1 million lives, the Armenian genocide that killed 1.5 million, the German extermination of more than 6 million; those are among dozens of examples.

No, it won't be the last; but the Pharaoh orders the cleansing campaign and, of course, he calls on the women, the keepers of life.

Now let me take a quick tangent; in this story the women cause all the trouble. Most of the people in this drama are unnamed, but two midwives are identified, by name, for refusing to follow the Pharaoh's command.

When summoned before him and asked why the Hebrew boy children keep showing up on the play ground, they make up a story and start talking about "lady parts" and you know how Pharaoh REALLY doesn't want to hear about that. So the women continue with their resistance to the Pharaoh's infanticide policy.

And God blesses them for working justice.