

The Passover

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Date: 11 November 2018

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[0 : 00] All right. How's it going, Winne-Hawper? How you doing? Good? All right. Cool. Pleased to be here. So we are continuing in our march through Exodus. Exodus, pun intended.

So, I know, I know. Please don't run for the doors. It's not going to be like this the whole way through the sermon, all right? And Exodus is a great book. It's an amazing book because it's not just the story of Israel.

It's not just for the Israelites. It's actually, it explains our story of redemption as God's people as well. It's our story of redemption and deliverance and freedom in Jesus Christ. And so if you have your Bible and you want to turn there, we're going to be in Exodus 11, and we're going to be reading some excerpts from Exodus 11 and also Exodus 12.

And so last week, we looked at the plagues, and what we saw was we saw a God, and we've just been enjoying the love of God today. He's been really highlighting that.

And so we saw kind of the love of God towards his people, how it was being worked out, him going to war against the place they were at, Egypt, the house of slavery for the Israelites.

[1 : 04] And so he was going to war, and he was basically decreating Egypt. He was uncreating them. He was taking their position and their power, the essential power of Egypt, and bringing it to nothing.

That's what was happening. And so God, what he was doing, he was not only uncreating Egypt in a natural, physical way, but he was also making a mockery of the gods that they worshipped, because every nation, if they were powerful, they could point to their gods and say, this is the God who is making us powerful.

This is how we're succeeding. And so not only is God uncreating Egypt and making them look foolish, he's embarrassing and making a spectacle of their gods by showing his own might and his own power against them.

And what I love about this is, you know what? God didn't choose to save his Israelites really quietly, right? He didn't come to them and say, you know what I'm going to do is I'm going to do the beam me up Scotty thing, and they're going to be here, and then all of a sudden it's like rapture, and everyone's like, whoa, where the Israelites are at, and then boom, they're in the promised land. Happy-go-lucky, no. He wants to put his power on display. The whole point, we'll see this time and time again throughout the book of Exodus and repeated as the Israelites, when they sing songs, remembering this moment in their history, that you know what?

[2 : 21] We remember, we are shown how God saved us by his mighty hand and his outstretched arm. He shows us, and that's what I love about our God. He doesn't save us in a weak way. He saves us in the most powerful way.

The most public way, and so that we can't doubt his work in it. That's what I love about it. And so the plagues were this great indictment against the Egyptians, but it wasn't just an indictment against the Egyptians.

What he was doing, he was after his people's hearts as well. We remember, we kind of covered this a couple weeks ago, as the prophet Ezekiel talked about when God said, hey, remember, I visited your people while they were slaves in Egypt, and I told them to put away the gods, but they didn't. They loved and worshipped the Egyptian gods as well. So he wasn't just going after the Egyptians. He was also going after his own people's hearts because they were idolatrous and worshipping false gods.

So after nine plagues, after nine plagues, you would think Pharaoh would catch a wake-up by this time, right? You'd think he would be like, you know what, man, things have gotten really, really, really bad here.

[3 : 28] I'm going to let his people go, but he's not. He stubbornly refuses, and so we have this tenth and final plague. And if you thought God was being rough before, he's taking the gloves off now. And this plague, ultimately, what it does, it results in the liberation and deliverance of God's people from Egypt.

But here's what I love. It doesn't happen the way that we would expect. So let's jump into Exodus verse 11. Let's start in verse 1. It says this, The Lord said to Moses, Yet one more plague, yet one plague more, excuse my dyslexia, yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Afterward, he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will drive you away completely. And then verse 4. So Moses said, Thus says the Lord, About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle.

So we see what's happening in this plague. God is coming after the firstborn sons of every household. So why? Why would God do that? Well, what's going to help us is some cultural understanding in those days.

See, back then, in those ancient days, in those times, the firstborn son was extremely significant to a family. He was the chief representative of that family's hope and future dreams of success and prosperity and all those things.

[4 : 58] And it was carried on him. It was put upon his shoulders. Now, you'll also remember, earlier in the Exodus story, Pharaoh, and how he was going after Israel's future and hope and their sons.

He went after not only Israel's firstborn sons, he was committing genocide against all of Israel's sons. He was going after them, right? And so we see that God here is unlike Pharaoh. He's being a little boy. He's being much more merciful than Pharaoh was. Not every boy is going to die. Just the firstborn child would, but he would be a representative of each family being under God's judgment. Exodus 11, verses 6 to 9 says this, There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been nor ever will be again.

But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, Get out, you and all the people who follow you. And after that I will go out. And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. Then the Lord said to Moses, Pharaoh will not listen to you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.

[6 : 13] So God promises he's going to visit with one last plague. And Pharaoh, his heart is hardened yet again. And Moses, he actually goes out very angry because of Pharaoh being stubborn and refusing to listen because he knows what it's going to cost.

He knows what it's going to cost Pharaoh's people. And so we see next in Exodus 12 how this all plays out. You know, again, it's not what we would expect. Just a warning if you're new to the story. It gets a little bit weird. Just hang in there, okay? Exodus 12, 1 to 3 says this, The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, In the land of Egypt, This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month, every man shall take a lamb, according to their father's house, a lamb for a household.

Okay, check, sweet. So first God says get a lamb. All right, awesome. Okay, every family needs a lamb. Okay, all right, what's coming up next? Verse 5, Exodus 12, Your lamb shall be without blemish.

[7 : 16] All right, sure, without blemish, no spots or anything like that. He's got to be a male, a year old. And you may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the month.

And when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel, or when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. Hmm, interesting.

Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat. Wow, this is getting even more interesting. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

They shall eat it. So God's saying, guys, listen, I'm going to set you free, and here's how I'm going to do it. It's a little bit odd, right? Let's continue on. Verse 11, In this manner you shall eat it, your

belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand.

Be ready to go. You are going to be coming out. You've got to be ready. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast.

[8 : 26] And on all the gods of Egypt, I will execute judgments. I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are.

And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations.

As a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast. The last little section I want to read, we're going to jump to verse 21 of the same chapter in chapter 12. When Moses called all the elders of Israel, sorry, then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans and kill the Passover lamb.

So we're seeing this repeating again. And God's like, hey, just in case you didn't hear it the first time, we're going to be, you know, we're going to make sure this gets in your ears. Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin and touch the lintel in the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin.

None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning, for the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians.

[9 : 42] And when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you.

You shall observe this right as a statute for you and your sons forever. You need to remember this. And when you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service.

And when your children say to you, what do you mean by this service? You shall say, it is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover. For he passed over the houses of the people of Israel and Egypt when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.

And the people bowed their heads and worshiped. Then the people of Israel went and did so as the Lord had commanded. Moses and Aaron, so they did.

At midnight, the Lord struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon and all the firstborn of the livestock. And Pharaoh rose up in the night and he and all his servants and all the Egyptians and there was a great cry in Egypt for there was not a house where someone was not dead.

[10 : 56] Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night, Pharaoh did, and said, Up, up, go out from among my people. Both you and the people of Israel and go, serve the Lord as you have said.

Now, we read this and we read and we hear the firstborn dying and every house was visited with death and a cry and a well rising up in the land of Egypt like never been heard before and we think, Man, that is so awful.

What an awful picture. How seemingly unfair. But let's not forget that up to this point there had been 400 years of God's people being enslaved and mistreated and abused.

Let's not forget the Pharaoh who wanted to commit genocide and did commit genocide against the people of Israel by killing their innocent sons. And so we see after all this time, after this 400 years of Israel, God's people being oppressed and abused and suffering, we finally see that freedom was finally coming and freedom was finally come and we think, Man, this is going to be amazing.

God, what are you going to do? And then he gives them this whole thing. You're thinking like, Really? This is how you're going to do it? You're going to give us instructions for a meal? Sure, whatever. However, this is a familiar story, this Passover story.

[12 : 19] It's a very familiar story to anybody that's raised in the church. But it's okay to admit that, you know what, when you think about it, you kind of dig into it, it's a little bit strange. And although it's not normal, it's so packed with meaning.

And we're going to look into that because it shows our need and it shows God's provision and salvation. So here's a question. Isn't it odd that the Israelites had to do all this so they wouldn't come under God's judgment?

I mean, aren't they the victims in this story? Let's remember, they're the ones being oppressed. They're the ones being abused for so long. Couldn't God easily have just sent the plague on the

Egyptian homes? Surely, he could have made the distinction between the Egyptian and Israelite homes.

I mean, he actually did that in some of the other plagues, right? He sent a lot of the plagues just on the Egyptians, but he kept all the Israelites in the land of Goshen safe. And sure, yeah, God could have easily done it that way, but he chose not to.

You know, he chose not to because he was showing us something vital. And it's this, that what set them apart, what set Israel apart was not what we would expect. See, we see God make a distinction between the Israelites and the Egyptians, but it's not that the Israelites were the good guys and the Egyptians were the bad guys.

[13 : 38] It wasn't that the Israelites were doing all the things right and worshiping God and being devoted to him and him alone and the Egyptians were these like wicked, idolatrous people who were just like, you know, just like raging with sin.

It wasn't that at all. See, what we realize in this story and we look at what the Bible actually says about this moment and it's full is that Israelites aren't the victims here, right? They're, they're just victims, they're sinners too.

And we, we see that because we know that they were worshiping the Egyptian gods and here's the thing guys, though the Israelites were suffering, they, they were still sinners and I want us to recognize this is just because we suffer doesn't give us the right to sin.

Just because we're sinned against doesn't give us the right to sin and oftentimes that's what happens when, when someone sins against us or we feel oppressed or life's difficult, we kind of feel like God should give us a hall pass on this, right?

We should just be able to go and sin without any consequences. It's like my kids, you, all of a sudden there'll be some crying and screaming and I'll go, what's happened? It was like, well, he hit me and I was like, why did you hit him?

[14 : 44] It's like, well, he hit me first, you know, and that seemed like a justifiable response. You're just like, well, I got to hit him because he hit me, right? Or let's get a little bit more serious here. I'm a pastor and we counsel people and sometimes, you know, there's a couple will be coming and my spouse cheated on me and okay.

And then after a while they think, well, my spouse cheated on me so you know what? I'm going to get a little something on the side too then. They think it's okay.

Well, I was sinned against first. I was hurt. I was abused so I'm going to do it back. See, people who are hurt can turn around and also do some of the most hurtful things as well and we have to realize that.

just because we're sinned against doesn't give us a whole pass to disobey God and to hurt others. We have to understand that every sufferer is also a sinner and God tells the Israelites that just being an Israelite isn't going to get them off the hook from this plague and here's the thing because the Passover has to do with death, right?

And here's the thing, guys, death is coming to every door. It's going to come to your door at some point. It's going to come to my door at some point. It's going to come knocking on our doors and that's true for them and that day and it's true for us too.

[16 : 08] Death is going to visit us. The Bible warns us that it happens because of sin, right? And it wasn't supposed to be this way. Death wasn't the natural order of things but because of sin and the fall, death, that's what happens now because we're under God's judgment.

The Bible warns us that sin's wages is death and here's the thing, we all labor in sin, every single one of us. We labor in sin all our lives and our paycheck at some point is going to be death.

That's what we get paid in and in this final plague, the ultimate consequence of sin is brought upon the firstborn in one night. One day for all of us, the ultimate consequence of our sin will visit us to you and there will be no distinction.

Romans 3.22 says this, for there is no distinction for all have sin and fall short of the glory of God. It doesn't matter who you are, it doesn't matter what you've done, it doesn't matter what's happened to you.

Whether you're a drug dealer, whether you're an addict, whether you're a prostitute, whether you're a John using prostitutes, whether you're a pastor, guess what? We're all sinners.

[17 : 15] We're all in the same category. Okay? It didn't matter if you were an Egyptian on this night, it didn't matter if you were an Israelite on this night, everybody was coming under the same judgment.

And this is why God intervened and he did it in a different way and he gave them the Passover instructions. God told Israel the way they were going to be saved from this impending judgment. He would look for a specific mark of distinction. Right? And it wasn't based on ethnicity or position or power or levels of righteousness.

It was based on the blood of an undeserving substitute. That was the mark of a distinction. God provided them an undeserved substitute. God provides us an undeserved substitute.

Death had to come. Someone had to die. Why? Hebrews 9.22 says, without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. It's just a Bible truth.

[18:14] God wants us to know that. God wants us to realize that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. And then we see God made a way for Israel to be saved. They were to take the blood of an innocent, spotless male lamb and put it on the doorposts of their houses.

They would sacrifice the lamb as blood would spill out and they would take that blood sacrifice and they would put it on the doorposts of their houses. And then what would happen? God is going to pass through and he would look and he would see the blood on the outside of the door and he would pass over that home.

He would pass over that door not allowing the destroyer to enter the house, right? And so we often think about God kind of skipping over the homes but I want you to think about this. Literally that word Passover can also mean halt.

And so imagine this, God going through the land of Egypt and the destroyer coming with him and he's going through and he sees blood over a doorpost and he hovers there.

He hovers over that door and the destroyer looks and he says, I can't go in there. I need to pass on to somebody else. And so we see this amazing picture of this God who protects and he loves his people that are under the blood.

[19:30] What stood between an Israelite home and a destroyer? The blood of a sinless lamb. That was it. They were hidden. They were protected under the blood of the lamb.

I think you all know where this is going, right? Right? This isn't just Israel's story. This isn't just their reality in that moment. It's our story. It's our story and it's an amazing story and we can get so used to it that it becomes a little like stale but this is an amazing truth.

It's a wonderful truth. We can celebrate and we want to celebrate all the time that this is true. We also are hidden and protected under the blood of a sinless lamb.

His name is Jesus and Jesus is our greater substitute. Jesus is the lamb that was slain for the forgiveness of our sins. His blood covers us and we are hidden in him.

I love that. God is our hiding place. Under the blood, under his hovering presence, we are protected, we are covered, we are hidden.

[20:36] In Jesus, our sins are forgotten, death is defeated, we are set free from the house of slavery just like Israel was because Jesus is our Passover lamb and because he's our Passover lamb, sin doesn't have dominion over us anymore.

The Israelites weren't nicely asked to leave Egypt at the end of the 10th plague, right? Let's listen to what it says in verse 33. This is how it plays out at the end. The Egyptians, Egypt, they were urgent with the people to send them out of the land in haste.

They didn't want them hanging around anymore. The house of slavery wasn't holding on with an iron grip anymore. It says at the end of verse 39, it says that they were thrust out from Egypt.

I love that picture. The house of slavery that kept us and had a hold on us. All of a sudden, Jesus' blood comes and we're hidden under his blood and what happens? The house of slavery can't hold us anymore and we don't drag ourselves out willy-nilly.

No, it says we're thrust out. God calls us out and he pushes us out and we come out with like a bullet from the house of slavery. I love this picture. And Egypt just didn't send them out poorly.

[21:51] Like, they came out loaded. It said they came out with the plunder of Egypt. The Egyptians were like, get out. We're going to give you clothes. We're going to give you our jewelry, you know. We're going to give you whatever livestock we have left.

We just want you to go. And so they went out, man. They didn't go out as poor, impoverished, weak, impotent slaves. They came out loaded. And that's what the beauty of God's salvation is, is under the blood where the death passes over us and we're thrust out of the house of slavery and we're thrust out with the riches of darkness.

God says, I will restore the years the locusts have eaten away. And that's what he does and that's his promises we have because of the blood of Jesus. It's an amazing thing.

So finally, I want to end with this. What's our response? What's our response to this gift of salvation in Jesus? So God came and he spoke to Israel.

He gave them the Passover instructions. Christians, right? But you know what? They had to believe it. They had to believe it and they had to obey it.

[22 : 59] Because if they didn't, they would have been just like the Egyptians. And here's the thing, guys. Salvation comes through faith alone. Faith in God's Passover lamb, Jesus Christ, and what he's done for us as our substitute.

And I want to invite you, if you're here now, I want to invite you if you've never done this. If you've never believed in Jesus and his sacrifice for your sins to stand in your place, man, I want to invite you to believe in that good news today.

Believe in that Passover lamb, which is Jesus Christ. And for those of us who are here and are Christians, if I could have the band come up, we, I just want us to remember, we are saved, we're being saved, and one day we will be saved.

becoming a Christian starts with faith, but it's a life lived in faith. It starts with a response to the good news of what Jesus has done and trusting and believing in that and not believing and trusting in ourselves, but it continues in that.

We never stop living in faith. And it's not faith in our works. It's not faith in our competence. It's not faith in how much scripture we have memorized. It's not faith in how many times we've been to church.

[24 : 13] It's not faith in that I teach a Sunday school class. It's not faith in any of those things, right? It's faith in God's Passover lamb. It's faith in that and that alone. And we must never stop believing and trusting that God is going to do what he promised.

We must never trust in anything for our salvation except the blood of Jesus. We have to be convinced it is enough.

It's not faith in Jesus' blood plus a little bit of my something something. No, it's faith in him and him alone. It's faith in his blood that has to be enough because that's the only thing that is enough.

And let's remember this. You and I are hidden in him. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we are hidden in him. Like Romans 6, it's this powerful passage. Go home and read it and rejoice in God over the promises in that because it reminds us that we're united in Christ.

We're united with him in his death. We're hidden in him. We're covered in him. We're raised to new life to walk in him. And it reminds us that we are dead to sin and alive to walk with God in Jesus Christ.

[25 : 23] Therefore, it promises sin has no dominion over us. And you know what? Oftentimes, as I pastor, I meet with people, people are so beat up trying to fight their sin and they become so focused on their sin that their identity becomes their sin and that's how they try to manage their sin.

They're in the gospel of sin management. Instead of the gospel of the blood of Jesus that sets us free from sin, it says you have no dominion over sin. And so I remind them, guys, we have to pray this over ourselves and we have to remind ourselves of this all the time.

I have to wake up and say, Jesse, remember, sin has no dominion over you. You have been thrust out of the house of slavery. Are you here today and feeling beat up by sin?

I want to invite you, invite you to remember that promise. you are under the blood of Jesus and you have been thrust out of the house of slavery.

Don't manage your sin. Don't let your sin issue become your identity. Press into the blood of Jesus and him and him alone. As we take communion, let's rejoice in that.

[26 : 33] If we need to repent, let's repent. But let's realize that we get to do that. We get to come to a throne of grace and our repentance and receive the help we need and be forgiven. And like that picture that Haley gave us, man, the Father reaches down and kisses us in love and righteousness and in his peace.

And that's what he does. Because it's the blood of Jesus, sin has no dominion over us anymore.

Let's come to communion thanking Jesus and celebrating that in him we aren't in Egypt, we aren't in the house of slavery.

We get to live for Christ. We're thrust out of the house of slavery with his glorious riches all around us. Let's pray.

God, you've come and you showed us your great salvation with power and mind and strength. Lord, many of us here can confess that. We can remember that when you came and saved us for the first time. But Lord, for many of us this could be a time long since past and we could feel so far from you at times.

We could feel like, man, sin's got it right again. We can feel trapped and slaved but we need to be reminded that under the blood of Jesus, man, the house of slavery doesn't want us anymore.

[27 : 55] The house of slavery can't hold us anymore. They thrust us out because you, God, came and visited it with your power and you decimated it. You made a mockery of it and you defeated it.

Lord God, thank you that you defeated death. Thank you that you defeated sin and its dominion over us. And I pray as we come that we would come in faith, come in faith to your table to celebrate you.

As we take of the cup that represents the blood that you shed for us and your body that was broken for us, come with thankfulness and reminded this is why I'm not in the house of slavery anymore.

This is why sin has no hold on me anymore. I am free to live to Christ. Lord, for those who are here and they're hearing that you are the Passover lamb for them for the first time and for the first time this is actually good news to them.

I thank you for that. I thank you for saving. I thank you for saving those people. Have your way for the next few minutes. Minister to our hearts deeply and richly.

[28 : 59] Amen. Amen. Thank you.