

Leaving Egypt - Facing our Fear -- Devotions

Monday, February 13

Opening thought - what are some fears you have faced or are currently facing?

Read - Exodus 6:2-9

- What actions & attitudes do you learn about God in this passage?

- What is sad and sobering about verse 9

Pastor Jerry gave us the background on this chapter in Exodus describing the descent into slavery of God's people Israel. Originally they had gone down to Egypt to escape a famine but then stayed for many years - growing in numbers and causing concern for the new Pharaoh (Exodus 1:8). Feeling threatened by this growing immigrant group the new Pharaoh schemed to take advantage of the Hebrews by enslaving them. The same is true of our enemy - Satan. Who prowls around to take advantage of our own fallenness.

- How do the following passages point to this reality?
- 1 Peter 5:6-11; Ephesians 4:25-32

Not only does Satan seek to deceive and enslave us, but our own flesh is susceptible to being deceived and enslaved to all kinds of passions and pleasures that run counter to the gospel. God wants to take us from places of slavery and addictions and spiritual strongholds and bring freedom and liberty. This is more than just addictions, but seeking to get at root issues underneath these fears and places of deep struggle.

- How does James 1:12-15 speak to this reality?

Reflect - Pastor Jerry spoke very specifically about Exodus 6:6 when he stated that whatever our bondage is, there is a God who comes to us with mercy and compassion to deliver us. Jesus himself has come to free us and make us free indeed. God does not shame us or blame us for the addictions we are caught in. He has taken on the shame and blame for us in his Son, Jesus Christ. Those who are His children run to Him for their deliverance. Bring to God your fears, your addictions, your spiritual battles and look to Him for your freedom and deliverance. Know that He is for you and his grace is enough.

Tuesday, February 14

Opening thought - how would you answer these questions: "Who are you, as God sees you?" "What defines you?" "What do you think about yourself?"

Read - Exodus 6:2-9 & John 8:34, 43-44

- What do you learn about how God sees the Israelites and how the Israelites see themselves (from the Exodus passage)?

- What does the John passage teach us about how Jesus sees all mankind?

Pastor Jerry reminded us that the Israelites freedom begins with understanding who they are, not with examining their present situation or circumstance. The reality is that they are God's people. They belong to Him. And God has promised to give them the land of Canaan.

Yet they see themselves as slaves, nothing more. Freedom from Egypt seems hopeless to them.

- How do you see this perspective in the following passages? Exodus 5:20-21; 14:10-12; Numbers 11:1-6

Pastor Jerry very clearly reminded us that: All of us, regardless of our spiritual state, are susceptible to the bondage and fear that Egypt symbolizes. No matter who you are and where you are in your spiritual journey we can all easily turn back to worthless things instead of faithfully holding on to Christ and finding our joy and satisfaction in Him. From here on out, Egypt will symbolize: evil desires, false worship, false religion, unwise choices, spiritual compromise, and idolatry in all its forms. And we can subtly and easily be drawn into this "slavery" even as believers.

- What can this slavery look like? What might be some areas of slavery for you?

Reflect - The common experience for Christians is that at salvation we are delivered out of "grosser" forms of addictions or bondage. And yet inner, deeper bondages remain and can form as we continue on in our journey of faith. We have a new identity in Christ and yet parts of our life still look like "Egypt." We even rationalize these sins and addictions. Spend time talking with the Lord about your life and where remnants of "Egypt" still remain.

Wednesday, February 15

Opening thought - what comes to mind when you think about Passover? Why?

Read - Exodus 12:1-14; Hebrews 9:11-14 - What do we learn about the cost of sin and true deliverance from these passages?

Pastor Jerry spoke about abandoning our addictions so that we can experience true freedom in Christ. Over time, these bondages get comfortable. And the thought of breaking them can produce great fear and anxiety within us. So how does God deliver us?

- “On that night I will pass through the land of Egypt and strike down every firstborn son and firstborn male animal in the land of Egypt. I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt, for I am the LORD! But the blood on your doorposts will serve as a sign, marking the houses where you are staying. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. This plague of death will not touch you when I strike the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 12:12-13 NLT)
- God himself acts for us to deliver us, yet we must believe and actively trust in the form of deliverance He is providing.

How does Jesus speak to this same truth in these passages?

- *John 1:29, John 8:31-32*

Reflect - *The cost of true deliverance is high and bloody. And for the full redemption of mankind, nothing less than the sacrifice of God himself will do. We cannot deliver ourselves from our sin and addictions. We are powerless to do so. (Ephesians 2:1-3). Yet God has acted for us and on our behalf. Why would we return again to anything that seeks to diminish the glory of God and intrude on the freedom given to us in the gospel? Why would food or drink or money or sex or anything else become to us "more important" than Christ?*

Talk with the Lord - praise him for your salvation; thank him for His Holy Spirit in you; confess your idolatry and addictions; confess his power alone to deliver you; thank him for loving you enough to expose sin and slavery.

Leaving Egypt - Facing our Fear

Exodus 6:2-9

Takeaway Truth - *God's people are delivered through the shocking & bloody sacrifice of the Lamb of God.*

Our theme for this year as a church is - Healthy Discipleship

- Looking at our emotional health
- Talked about stress and how it effects us at all levels (spiritual, emotional, physical)
- Advent - we looked at our doctrinal beliefs of the first / second coming of Christ
- Vision - what is a disciple and how we make disciples
- Now - Egypt and the Israelites: Finding God in the Wilderness Places (helpful to see the beauty of the gospel and the causes behind issues in our lives). Even coordinating this series with the introduction of our Recovery ministry (see bulletin insert for this)

God wants to take us from places of slavery and addictions and spiritual strongholds and bring freedom and liberty. This is more than just addictions, but seeking to get at root issues underneath these fears and places of deep struggle.

4 stages of the Exodus:

- o Egypt: Facing Our Fear
- o Sinai: Receiving Our New Identity
- o Wilderness: Entering the Furnace of Transformation
- o Home: Experiencing New Identity and Mission

Historical context of Exodus 6

- Famine that the family of Jacob is living in; Joseph sold into slavery and then becomes second in command over all Egypt. Jacobs family is given he land of Goshen and increase and multiply greatly. 600,000 people by the start of Exodus. They went to Egypt to meet a need (hunger) and then stayed longer and eventually became slaves.
- Victimized by the sin system in Egypt. Exodus 1:8 - intimidated and schemed to take advantage of the Hebrews. Thus they enslaved them. The same is true of our enemy - Satan. Who prowls around to take advantage of our fallenness. Don't miss this.
- Israelites also forgot who they were and had adopted the ways of the Egyptians. See Exodus 5:20-21 (NLT)
 - o They were accepting the identity as slaves and wanted Moses to leave them alone in their slavery.
 - o Exodus 6:5 - God is responding to Israel with compassion not blaming and shame. God is going to rescue and save them. Fact. Compassion and love.
 - Whatever our bondage is, there is a God who comes to us with mercy and compassion to deliver us. Jesus has come to free us and make us free indeed. God does not shame us and blame us for our addictions. He has taken on the shame and blame for us in Christ.

God responded to their enslavement with compassion and mercy, not shaming and blaming.

The Israelites freedom starts with understanding who they are! They are God's people. Then God promises to give them the land of Canaan.

- o Sadly the people's reply is less than excited or full of faith
- o See verse 6 of chapter 6
- o Later, after they are delivered, they will sit around and talk about how they missed their days of slavery!!
- o Read 6:6 again!

All of us, regardless of our spiritual state, are susceptible to the bondage and fear that

Egypt symbolizes.

- No matter who you are and where you are in your spiritual journey
- From here on out, Egypt symbolizes evil desires, false worship, false religion, unwise choices, spiritual compromise, idolatry in all its forms
- These can be subtle for us; See Deut. 6:12 - "land of slavery"
 - What would this slavery look like?
 - All of us start our lives in Egypt as slaves. It's spiritual bondage and psychological oppression
 - John 8:34, 43-44 - we are born in this slavery and bondage. Created in the image of God yet deeply fallen and broken and dead to God and his ways. If God does not rescue us we continue our lives as children of wrath and slaves to sin. Sobering!
- Even those who have experience salvation, can find themselves living an Egyptian lifestyle.
 - Common experience that at salvation we are delivered out of "grosser" forms of addiction. Dramatic. And yet inner, deeper bondages remain and can form as we continue on in our journey of faith. New identity and yet parts of our life still look like "Egypt."
 - Romans 7:14ff - even Paul speaks this way
 - James 1:3-15 - temptation comes from within us! This reminds us that even good desires that we have can become "ultimate" for us and we make them idols. Thus, back in Egypt.
 - E.G. - we want comfort and we look for it from God or in a bottle, a needle, porn, food or the internet. If we do this long enough, it's hard to break these habits. And thus we become slaves.

Over time, these bondages get comfortable. And the thought of breaking this bondage, is terrifying and produces great fear. Fear of failing again before God and giving up my addictions.

How does God deliver us from "Egypt"?

- Exodus 12:12-13 (NLT)
- God delivers his people on his own! Out of Egypt the stench of death rises - cattle and children. Freedom is costly! It takes blood and death to purchase our freedom.
- Kill the lambs and spread its blood over your home

Takeaway Truth - *God's people are delivered through the shocking & bloody sacrifice of the Lamb of God.*

Our sins and offenses require death - this is the price for our freedom!

- *John 1:29 - Jesus' blood gives us the way to real life; even now!*
- *John 8:31-32*