

Receiving our New Identity- Devotions

Monday, February 20

Opening thought - how do addictions rob you & those close to you of real life / real living?

Read - Exodus 19:1-8. What do you see in these verses that focuses your attention on: The Power of God, The Grace of God and The Effect of God's Love on needy sinners?

Pastor Jerry read from "Leaving Egypt" and reminded us: *We begin our own journey into the wilderness when we honestly admit that life is a bloody mess, when we confess our powerlessness to defeat the enslavements of our lives. It's an exit strategy that defies conventional wisdom and quick fixes. But it's crucial for our successful navigation through the wilderness ahead.*

- How is the above statement true for the Israelites coming out of Egypt?

Upon leaving Egypt, God is establishing a new identity for His people. Once slaves and in bondage to the "ways and mindset" of Egypt, the Israelites are now to see themselves in a whole new light.

- How do verses 4-6 of Exodus 19 establish this new identity?
- How does the Apostle Peter do the same thing for NT believers in 1 Peter 2:9-10

Pastor Jerry reminded us that Christ becomes for us the foundation of our new identity, purpose, security & meaning in life. Where we once looked to other things, or people or achievements for meaning, purpose, security and identity, Christ has now become this for us.

Reflect - read back over Exodus 19:4-6 and 1 Peter 2:9-10 - use these as a point of prayer this morning- praising God for all he has done for you, thanking him for his mercy, confessing your sin and ignoring him and asking for strength to glorify Him today.

Later today - talk with your spouse / close friend about what you are learning about finding your identity in Christ.

Tuesday, February 21

Opening thought - when have you ever gotten to a really bad place (spiritually, emotionally)? How did you get out of it?

Read - Exodus 32:1-6

- What is happening to the Israelites and their mindset? Why are they so inclined to want to make an idol?

Pastor Jerry explained that the Israelites were, in a sense, saying - "I'm tired of waiting and what is happening is not fitting my time schedule" - even though there is visible evidence of God's presence everywhere (Shakinah glory, pillar of fire or smoke). And so they took matters into their own hands. They took control of their own lives.

- How does James 4:1-10 talk about this rebellion of heart? Can you identify with his words? Why or why not?

"Sin lives in a costume; that's why it is so hard to recognize. You'll never understand sin's sleight of hand until you recognize that the DNA of sin is deception . . . that we are all very committed and gifted self-swindlers." Paul Tripp, quoted in Leaving Egypt

- How do you see the truth of this quote in your own life?

Reflect - Pastor Jerry asked: "Why do we turn to other false and empty gods, even when we know it's going to be a destructive path? Answer: There is a disconnect between our identity in Christ and who we really believe God is (or who we are). Who are we? Egyptian slaves or the chosen, precious people of God? Who is God? Faithful, good, true, holy or indifferent, aloof, mean-spirited and uncaring?

- Talk with the Lord in prayer about these questions. Be honest. And then take time to share your thoughts from today's devotion with your spouse or close friend.

Wednesday, February 22

Opening thought - Where is God? When we're not sure, we look in odd places—in the energy surge of a shopping binge, in the thrill of high stakes poker. Of course, God is not really there. What is there is a feeling of the transcendent, a dopamine surge of glory that elevates us beyond our momentary pain. It's the illusive feeling of control—even if only for a brief time. It's a golden calf taste of Egypt's old securities... Our idols are touchstones of the transcendent. They give us a sense of control, of access, of intimacy and connection. It would be easy to point the finger at Israel if we didn't have a hundred different ways of manufacturing a sense of security in our own lives. We've got shopping therapy or chocolate therapy. We find the transcendent in a bottle of wine or in a moment of false intimacy through pornography. We seek security in wealth, in academic credentials, in reputation. When left unsatisfied, our longing for the transcendent leads to a frantic search for a more expedient way. We long for something we can touch, taste, see—and control."

- Write out your thoughts to this above quote

Read - Romans 7:18-24 How does the Apostle Paul talk about the ongoing and real struggle with indwelling sin?

- What are Paul's thoughts on God's Law and this struggle he feels?

Pastor Jerry spoke of the real choice that confronts us in our day-to-day living - to listen to the truth (of who God is and who He says we are in Christ) or to listen to the lies of the Serpent or our own flesh (in seeking to create our own identity, our own safe world, our own happy family, our own truth, etc.). This is our present, real struggle as believers; Paul had left "Egypt," but "Egypt" had not completely left Paul yet. We are new creatures in Christ, yet the struggle is real at times in our hearts and heads.

Reflect - Even though Israel builds a golden calf, as we do, God doesn't reject them or us. Instead He gave them His law. The law of God is indispensable in helping us comprehend and enjoy our new identity as God's beloved people.

- Read Exodus 20:1-3 - how is this good news for the Israelites?
- Thank the Lord for his Law which reveals God's love and our need for Christ!

Leaving Egypt: Receiving our New Identity - Exodus 19:1-8; 32:1-4

Testimony: Wilson Sims

- What is your addiction? (substance, lust, sex, control, gossip, anger, etc.)
- Idols rob you and slowly destroy you; starts with something good that ends up in an addiction.
- Truth is that what sets us free; but I must admit that I am in sin and a slave; new pain is now embracing your new identity day-by-day. 2 Cor. 5:17
- Hard to admit you have an idol or addiction; "you cannot come out of addiction without God"
- My #1 is God, my #2 is my wife, my #3 are my children, my #4 are my extended family and friends

In Scripture, *Egypt* - symbolizes slavery, bondage, all that is false & spiritual bondage

Last week - the Israelites had to face their fears; fighting against our addictions

- True and lasting freedom only comes ultimately thru the Passover lamb, Jesus Christ.
- Without Christ we will only "trade" addictions; but with Christ we can know true freedom

We begin our own journey into the wilderness when we honestly admit that life is a bloody mess, when we confess our powerlessness to defeat the enslavements of our lives. It's an exit strategy that defies conventional wisdom and quick fixes. But it's crucial for our successful navigation through the wilderness ahead. -"Leaving Egypt"

I. The Implications of Our New Identity -

At Sinai these former slaves are given their new identity - chosen people of God, God's treasured possession. God is saying - look what I did for you to bring you out of Egypt and slavery. You have real security and comfort now, in the strong arms of God.

The least people on the planet have now become the treasured possession of God. And they are given a task to worship God and be a light in a very dark world (new purpose).

See this same truth in the New Testament...

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

1 Peter 2:9-10 ESV

- Christ becomes for us the foundation of our new identity, purpose, security, meaning.
- See verse 8 in Exodus in Exodus 19

II. The Sabotaging of Our New Identity -

Sin lives in a costume; that's why it is so hard to recognize. You'll never understand sin's sleight of hand until you recognize that the DNA of sin is deception . . . that we are all very committed and gifted self-swindlers." Paul Tripp, quoted in Leaving Egypt

- Our addictions can be either obvious or subtle (we deceive ourselves and sabotage our new identity in Christ with our addictions).
- How do you get to the place where you don't even know what you are doing anymore?

- Because this addiction has taken over bit by bit
 - See - Exodus 32:1-4 ESV
 - Israelites are saying - "I'm tired of waiting and what is happening is not fitting my time schedule" even though there is evidence of God's presence everywhere (Shikinah glory, pillar of fire or smoke)
 - "Make us a god we can worship" so Aaron did so. And all the people worshipped and engaged in orgies and wildness.
 - Why did they do this?
 - Deep need for security, purpose, meaning; design for our children; deep need to control our lives or our world.
 - When that doesn't happen, we are tempted to take matters into our own hands; options that promise fulfillment on our schedule or timetable; to form our own gods.
 - Habit vs. addiction. What's the difference? But why am I doing these things is the real issue. What is going on in you that drives your activity? So look closely. Addictions are often good things gone wrong or perverted.

"Where is God? When we're not sure, we look in odd places—in the energy surge of a shopping binge, in the thrill of high stakes poker. Of course, God is not really there. What is there is a feeling of the transcendent, a dopamine surge of glory that elevates us beyond our momentary pain. It's the illusive feeling of control—even if only for a brief time. It's a golden calf taste of Egypt's old securities... Our idols are touchstones of the transcendent. They give us a sense of control, of access, of intimacy and connection. It would be easy to point the finger at Israel if we didn't have a hundred different ways of manufacturing a sense of security in our own lives. We've got shopping therapy or chocolate therapy. We find the transcendent in a bottle of wine or in a moment of false intimacy through pornography. We seek security in wealth, in academic credentials, in reputation. When left unsatisfied, our longing for the transcendent leads to a frantic search for a more expedient way. **We long for something we can touch, taste, see—and control.**" - "Leaving Egypt"

Why do we turn to other false and empty gods? Even when we know it's going to be a destructive path.

- Answer: There is a disconnect between our identity in Christ and who we really believe God is (or who we are).
- Who are we? Egyptian slaves or the chosen, precious people of God?
- Who am I, really? (Listen to your answers that you give)
 - And what voices are you listening to that beat you down and seek to steal your true identity (in Christ)? Truth of God's Law or the Serpent?
 - When you take the bait of the Serpent, we are seeking to create our own identity
 - Romans 7:21-24 - this is our present, real struggle as believers; Paul had left Egypt, but Egypt had not completely left Paul yet. We are new creatures in Christ, yet the struggle is real at times in our hearts and heads.

The Good News -

Even though Israel builds a golden calf, as we do, God doesn't reject them or us. Instead He gave them His law. The law of God is indispensable in helping us comprehend and enjoy our new identity as God's beloved people.

- God gives these people another opportunity to return to Him and then he gave them the

Law of God. (His Law is sweet, light, delightful, and good)

III. The Comprehension and Enjoyment of Our New Identity -

“Then God gave the people all these instructions: “I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. “You must not have any other god but me.” - Exodus 20:1-3 NLT

This is good news to those in bondage! The Law and the Word rewires us and converts us to love the truth and the cement our true identity in Him. The Law drives us to the Passover Lamb!