

exit strategy

exodus 12.29-57

We're going to look at the rest of Exodus chapter 12 this morning. Last week God gave the instructions for the Passover, told the people that the moment of their departure was at hand and now it's time for the 10th plague to hit Egypt and the actual exodus to occur.

We want to look at this devotionally this morning. If we break down this text into sections we see 3 things happening: Death, Exodus and Regulations. And, in a very general sense, this is the pattern of God's redemption of us, so hopefully we'll pull some ideas about our own walk with the Lord out of what we see here.

I know that when I think of the Exodus I generally think of the deliverance aspect. God breaking the bonds that held the people as slaves in Egypt. But in reality, the deliverance was only one part of what He was doing. The Lord has made it very clear to Pharaoh and to the Israelites that He wasn't just freeing them, He was *redeeming* them. Meaning that these people now belonged to Him and to His purposes. God has said this a number of times to Pharaoh through Moses so far in our studies.

The exodus was just a part of the redemptive process. It was a significant part and a welcomed part, but it was just one layer of an everlasting plan that God had for these people.

I was reminded that God's plan for me is redemption. And redemption is something that is ongoing and everlasting. So, let's see what we can see thinking about how God has redeemed us from this text.

Exodus 12.29-30 - And it came to pass at midnight that the Lord struck 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 livestock. So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

Redemption starts with God revealing Himself to us, which the Lord has done, then presenting a choice to us to either choose His way or not, and then, either way, death has to come into our lives. Either in the form of our death for sin or the death of the Lamb who takes away our sin. For the Egyptians, this was a terrifying night. No one was immune. No one was too insignificant, being overlooked by God and no one was too great and therefore specially treated. When the Lord comes to town He comes for the prince and the pauper with both wrath and mercy in His hands. For those that do not choose mercy, the night is terrible and deadly.

This is why we cannot harbor sin in our homes or in our lives. No leaven was allowed in the homes of the Hebrews. Sin must be judged. It must be dealt with. God will not overlook it because of our stature or position, or because we think it insignificant. He can't give us a pass since we're such nice guys. When we sin against God He will respond because He is holy and just. Sin is deadly and it must be cut off.

Exodus 12.31-32 - Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, “Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the Lord as you have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also.”

‘Bless me as you go’? I don’t think so. After all of this, Pharaoh still didn’t recognize His position before the Almighty God. He was releasing the Israelites, but he still wasn’t surrendering to God. If we don’t keep ourselves humble and remember that we *belong* to God there is no limit to how hard our hearts can become. The selfishness demonstrated here is staggering. ‘Bless *me*’? While all of Egypt mourns, Pharaoh is still trying to figure out what he can get to benefit himself. Because he saw himself as worthy. As something great. We need to remember that we are people who’ve been redeemed. Bought by blood. Meaning God *owns* our lives now and *HE* gets to dictate what happens in those lives.

Exodus 12.33 - And the Egyptians urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, “We shall all be dead.”

It seems as though the Egyptians didn’t quite understand what they had been told. Though God had clearly said to Moses that this was going to be the last plague, the Egyptians feared that there was more and more death coming.

Here’s what I think we can take away from this verse: Sometimes when we’re struggling or when we’re in a trial we start to think that God wants to ruin our lives. But when we have thoughts like that we need to remind ourselves that that’s not who God is. It’s not what He’s said. He’s said that He has redeemed us in order to give us life more abundantly. He doesn’t want to ruin our lives, but to save them and fulfill them. And we should cherish His word as He has given it to us.

Exodus 12.34-37 - So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders. Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. And the Lord had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians. Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children.

So, God has revealed Himself, His power and His plan and now comes the exodus, the actual movement of the people down the road toward a new destination.

And, notice, God leads them out of Egypt, not into it. If men would’ve planned the salvation of the Hebrews we would have overthrown Egypt and kept the people there. It was a land full of abundance. A land full of treasure. A fertile land. But the Lord said, “I want you to move out, not in.” The Bible sometimes compares this world to Egypt. Our bodies are in the world right now, but our hearts and our minds should always be moving out further from this world toward the Promised Land that Christ has set before us. Spiritually speaking, we should always be en route away from Egypt, away from Sodom, away from Shechem and toward the city whose

builder and maker is God. That is part of the redemptive process. The Lord not only relocates our eternal address, but our passions and investments and our pursuits must be transferred from the old, worldly marketplaces to a futures market in heaven. I can't imagine any slave in the classic understanding being purchased and set free then wanting to go back to his old, abusive owner hoping to harvest crops for him from time to time. But that is something children of God tend to do when they're not mindful of where they should be going. It's a mistake we often make.

One more point to notice from the exodus: God provided for His people in ways they could not have anticipated. He paved the way for them and gave them favor for the journey. The Lord walks *with* us on the paths He sets us on. He never hangs us out to dry or sends us out alone. Instead He sends us down a road that He has already carved out. He knows the turns, He knows the perils, He knows what we'll need for the trip. In fact, we remember what Hebrews said, comparing us to people in the Old Testament and the great things that God did for them and in Hebrews 11.39 it says that God has provided things that are even better for us today.

Wherever the Lord sends you today, He's already gone out before to pave the way.

Exodus 12.38 - A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds—a great deal of livestock.

We're not quite sure who this mixed multitude was. But here's a warning we can take from them: Let's be careful about what we're packing for our trip with the Lord. You pack differently for different trips. If you're hiking a mountain, you're going to take a different bag than if you're heading to school. And the contents of the bag are going to be different. The trip you're taking will determine what sort of supplies you'll need. The road God sets before us is a spiritual road. It requires spiritual supplies. When we mix things into our lives we want to be sure they propel us spiritually, not just take up space or worse, weigh us down.

Exodus 12.39-42 - And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought out of Egypt; for it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared provisions for themselves.

Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night of solemn observance to the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This is that night of the Lord, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations.

God's timing is carefully planned. Why He waits 430 years sometimes and 7 years other times and on some occasions just a few moments, we don't know. But here we see that God's redemption process is carefully executed according to a specific timetable. And along that timetable there will be many moments of decision where the Lord speaks to us in direction and we must choose what we will do in response. We must say 'yes' to the Lord when He calls out to us. And I think His callings happen more often than I realize. We've got to be ready to move forward toward the Lord at a moment's notice. He'll provide what we need for the trip, the road is ready, but we've got to make a move when that time comes.

Exodus 12.43-49 - And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner shall eat it. But every man’s servant who is bought for money, when you have circumcised him, then he may eat it. A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it. In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it. One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you.”

We’ve seen death, exodus and now regulation. God didn’t just set His people free to live however they saw fit. He set them free to belong to Him and to go where He led according to His method and plan and purpose.

For the Israelite and the foreigner who wanted to follow the Lord there was one law. One system. What we should take away from that is that there is one way of Christian life. We may have disagreements about doctrines and we may have different liberties, but God is not made in our image and His plan is not made in our image. He has issued commands. He has established structures and set boundaries. He has put before us a road which is straight and narrow. And we do not get to live the Christian life however we want. We are to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God in submission and obedience and conformity. Though we are not under a Levitical law, we are under God’s will and His commands and those who love Him *do* what He commands. That’s exactly what Israel did:

Exodus 12.50-51 - Thus all the children of Israel did; as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. And it came to pass, on that very same day, that the Lord brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt according to their armies.

There is a great emphasis in this book on obedience. Would Moses, would Pharaoh, would the Israelites *do* what the Lord told them to do? Here the people obeyed. And because of that obedience the Lord was able to continue His redemptive work in their lives and get them going.

And obviously we want God to work in our lives. We want to move forward. For that to happen, some things have to happen in our hearts. We have to acknowledge God’s plan and submit to it. We’ve got to be His people. And we’ve got to go when and where He’s leading. If we will do that, He’ll move us and provide for us and work in our lives profoundly. And that’s been His plan all along - to save us and take us somewhere and do things for us. His plan is to redeem us, so be redeemed.