

REMEMBER THAT HE RESCUED YOU

Exodus 13:1-16

Good morning...Its a privilege to be able to open Gods word and preach the gospel with you. And today we're going to do that from the OT in the book of Exodus 13:1-16. But before we get into our text, let me get you up to speed with whats going in the story.

The story of the Exodus is arguably the most robust gospel picture in the OT. That is, it mirrors and points to the grace of God toward sinners in sending the Son of God to come as a man, as our deliverer from evil and mediator with God, to rescue us from the power of sin and redeem us as His own.

The first 12 chapters are about the slavery of the people of God in Egypt and God's plan to set them free. The Israelites were enslaved in bitter service to Pharaoh for 400 years. And they cried out to God, whom they assumed had forgotten them.

But God heard their cry and sent a deliverer, Moses, to rescue His people from their slavery to Pharaoh so that they could be free to serve and worship the Lord. Moses went to Pharaoh, called him to release God's people, but he refused. So God brought 10 plagues in judgment against Egypt and their false Gods.

But Pharaohs heart was hardened after each one. Until the 10th plague, where the first born of every house in Egypt, including Pharaoh's, was killed. Every 1st born not under the blood of the Lamb. God told His people to take a spotless lamb, kill it and put the blood on the doorpost, which caused death to passover them over.

And so finally Pharaoh let the people go, kicks them out. But the Lord had prepared them so they were ready. And that gets us to ch. 13 as they're heading out of town. So let's read Exodus 13:1-16 together. Pray.

You might be like...what's with consecration, breaking a donkeys neck, the first to open the womb? I invited a friend today, really?" I get it, sounds a little strange. But stay with me, there're deep gospel riches to be mined in this passage.

And so, the way I want to do this is, I want to give you three themes that stand out in this text and come from the overall theme of this story, that will help us understand it's meaning for us.

The first is Consecrate. We see this in vs. 2 (consecrate all the first born). To consecrate means to set apart as holy unto the Lord. It's a giving of ones self completely to God because He's worthy of everything that we are and everything we have being submitted and subjected and surrendered to Him.

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Another theme of this text is Redemption. We see the word redeem 3x in verse 13 and again in vs 15. So consecration and redemption, which we're going to see are related. And the last theme we see in this passage, 1st in verse 3, that is remember.

"Remember this day." Vs 8-9 talks about making sure your children remember this day. Vs. 14-16 says, remember by writing the Law of God on your heart and mind. There's a strong theme of remembering here. These words are going to help us get to the heart of what Gods communicating to us.

So, let's look at these one by one. First consecration. In vs 2 God says, (read). God's saying, the first born of everything is mine; He's taking ownership of every firstborn.

But in ancient times, the first born is symbolic of much more. When the original readers read this they would've known that in God staking a claim on the first born, that meant He was staking His claim on everything.

Because the first born held the family name, took over responsibility for the family, carried the family inheritance. He was the family security, identity, and legacy. And Gods saying, I want it all. The firstborn and everything he represents, all that you are and all that you have, I want you to give to me.

Notice the timing, they've just been released. They're not even to the Red Sea yet. Like, do we need to do this on the road, how about when we get to the Promised Land? This gives us an indication of how important this is to God. Actually, this is what this rescue is all about.

God freeing His people from bondage to Egypt (false gods) so that they'll be His and serve/worship Him. This is a great text to help us not buy into the cultural pressures (world and church) or front load the gospel with entertainment, and sensory overload with the hopes that people will buy in and eventually learn about God and true salvation. It won't happen, the way you draw is the way you keep.

God didn't send Moses in with Starbucks and pass out surveys to find out their preferred method of travel. God initiated, revealed Himself, scared the noodle out of everyone (got their attention), got them out, and as soon as they're rescued, gets right to the point-you need to give it all to me. He stakes His claim on them, and expects them to submit to Him.

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And here's why this matters. Because who you are is determined by whose you are. Who you are, your identity (meaning, purpose, value in life), is rooted in whose you are. This important in talking about consecrating ourselves to God, because we tend to give ourselves to things that we think we want to define and validate us.

And that's sinful idolotry. Sin is when we give ourselves over to something that's not God; to the created instead of the creator. And we commit ourselves and define ourselves based on these things rather than God; by other people and how they see us, accomplishments, appearance, accumulation of wealth/stuff.

The bible calls that sin. It's not just us choosing something else. It's us rebelling against our creator. Sin is believing the lie, that your identity, value and worth is better off attached to body image, career advancement, retirement fund, social media fan base, anything rather than God.

When you do that, something other than Jesus becomes your functional savior (deliverer). Something else makes you right, justified, confident. But, Paul tells us in Gal. 5:1, that is precisely what keeps us enslaved. And whatever that thing is, we give ourselves to. We worship it. We sacrifice to it. And we expect satisfaction and fulfillment in return, but it never delivers.

Instead, what ends up happening is, we sacrifice our time, money, relationships, marriage, family, our health to things that never satisfy as promised. Because the promise is based on a lie. When we give something other than the Lord claim to our lives, it only leads to sin, slavery and destruction.

And so, God's telling Moses, consecrate yourselves to me. You did belong to Pharaoh, now you belong to me. So give it all to me cause it's mine. And to the degree that we believe that, it will truly set us free and bring the joy and satisfaction we desire. Because belonging to God is what you were made for.

But the questions probably floating around out there, what right does God have to make that kind of demand of me and my life? To claim my life as His? I'm glad you asked. I think there's two reasons in scripture that God has a right to claim all of our lives as His.

The first is that He created us. By nature of being our creator, he has ownership. By nature of being the one created, He has the rightful claim on us and we're responsible to live our lives consecrated, fully given, to Him. But we didn't, that's the original problem.

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Instead of trusting and submitting completely to God, man said, I can do it on my own. I'll make my own way, do it my own way, I'll call it mine and I'll take the credit. But no matter how we try to rationalize it, the argument lacks logic and objectivity. We're His creation, we belong to Him.

The second reason that God has a rightful claim on us is because He's Redeemed us. This speaks of salvation. This is the point of our salvation. God not only made us, but after we rebelled against Him as creator, He saved us. And in our salvation He has and is recreating us to be like Him.

To redeem is to purchase back or regaining possession (save/rescue) in exchange for a payment, or the clearing of a debt. How did God do this? If you read ch. 12 you'd see that, in order for the Israelites to be saved from the plague of death, it required the sacrifice and blood of a Lamb. That was the payment in order to be saved. But redemption goes even a little bit further.

Look at vs. 13 (read). It's interesting that God uses a donkey as an example to talk to us about redemption. In the ancient world the donkey was an animal that used to bear burdens, transport people and goods; it was a work horse. And I think there's 4 things we need to be aware of from this verse.

First, the donkey was considered unclean and therefore an unacceptable sacrifice to God. Just like us, because of our sin, we're unclean. Even our best works are unacceptable to God. Therefore we need an acceptable sacrifice to be made outside of us, for us. We can't do what it takes to please God. So the question to ask is, what hope do we have of ever being accepted by God?

The second thing we learn is that we need a substitute. Vs. 13 says, "Every firstborn of a donkey [unclean] you shall redeem with a lamb [clean]." The payment to buy you back is that the one who is clean is sacrificed for the one that's unclean.

We see Christ so clearly in this. The Son of God, The Lamb of God left heaven to enter this unclean world to live among us, as us. But he didn't become unclean like us, he was pure and righteous. And He willingly took our place as the sacrifice for our sin. The clean for the unclean. And this substitution goes far beyond simply the killing of a lamb on our behalf.

This was a 2-way substitution. Jesus took our sin upon himself and died on the cross in our place, as our substitute. And in turn, He gives us His righteousness and holiness as a substitute for our sinfulness.

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So that, when we stand before God, not condemned in our sin, but wearing Christ's robes for righteousness and therefore accepted and blessed before the Father. Not our works, the works of our substitute.

And this is where things get serious. Vs. 13 goes on to say, "if you will not redeem it, you shall break it's neck." We need a substitutionary sacrifice because we ourselves are unacceptable sacrifices.

But, the third thing is that, if we don't have that substitute we're doomed, condemned to die. Without the perfect sacrifice of Christ, that completely removes the death penalty of our sin, we're all without hope.

So, if we don't trust in the sacrifice of Christ for redemption, the only other option is to be condemned to death, to be doomed like the donkey. God says, if the donkey isn't redeemed by a spotless lamb, the donkey dies, you break it's neck. That's the result of not having your sin debt paid for by the sacrifice.

And if it ended there, it would be bad news. But there's a gospel promise, let's read on (read vs 14). Every time a father would sacrifice a lamb, vs. 14 says, his son would ask why? Why daddy?

And the father is to say, "Because the strong hand of the Lord rescued us out of slavery. Because the Lord killed the firstborn in Egypt to rescue us, but He saved us through the sacrifice of the blood of the lamb.

And the son would learn and understand, I need a substitute. These lambs have to die for me. And he would learn about who God is and who he is. That God's Holy, and he's sinful. But that God has remembered His covenant and provided a way of escape, a substitute-the clean for the unclean.

And for us today, we have the fulfillment of that promise, of all that these sacrifices represent and point to. We have Jesus and we can live in the promise that there is a substitute who did come and freed us, not from physical slavery, but from worse, slavery to sin and the impending death that all sin deserves.

And that brings hope, and produces faith. That's the hope we have today. And that's why God-our Redeemer who calls us to consecrate ourselves to Him-is so adamant about remembering all of this. To remember is to recount, reflect upon, meditate on.

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In vs. 3 Moses says to the people, “Remember this day, remember the day of redemption, remember the mighty hand of the Lord that saved you out of slavery.”

In vs. 8 he says, you need to tell your sons, what the Lord did for you. In vs. 16 he says, your story of redemption is to be written on your hands and hung between your eyes (never to leave your sight, always on your mind).

Remember what the Lord did for you, who He is to you. Remember as a family, as a community, remind one another. God saying, you must never forget what I’ve done for you, who I am to you.

This is so important, He tells them, this is going to be a yearly festival, every spring when the first born of your flock are being born, because you need to remember this and pass it on from generation to generation.

We need to know the gospel, and know it well, so that it shapes the way we live our lives, relate to people and created things. That we would be consecrated to Him, surrendered, because our remembering isn’t just for us, it’s also for our retelling. That we would tell our children and those far off. Remember.

And here we are today, still remembering. Remembering the gospel, the good news that one sacrifice has been made for all. The good news that the wrath of God toward sin has been satisfied on Christ for those who trust Him. The good news that the blood of Christ is pure and powerful to remove the stain and guilt of our sin.

That’s what we remember today. And instead of killing a first born lamb, we remember and worship the first born Son of God who was killed in our stead. To remember that The Lord has rescued us by His strong hand. To proclaim the reality of the saving power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our lives.

And to look forward to Jesus return when He’ll make all things new. When we will see Him face to face and worship Him in glorious celebration of what God’s accomplished through the sacrifice of the Lamb.

Do you remember what He’s done for you? Is your life consecrated to Him? Really? Are you living your life set-apart from this world and fully consecrated to Him? If not, let repent this morning

Remember. Remember that the Lord has rescued you. Remember what the Lord has done. Pray.