

Week 5: “Do You Trust Me?”

1. READ

Pastor Watley’s Scriptures: Exodus 12 : 21 – 24 New International Version (NIV)

²¹ Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. ²² Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. None of you shall go out of the door of your house until morning. ²³ When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down. ²⁴ “Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants.”

Further Reading: Proverbs 27 : 22 New International Version (NIV)

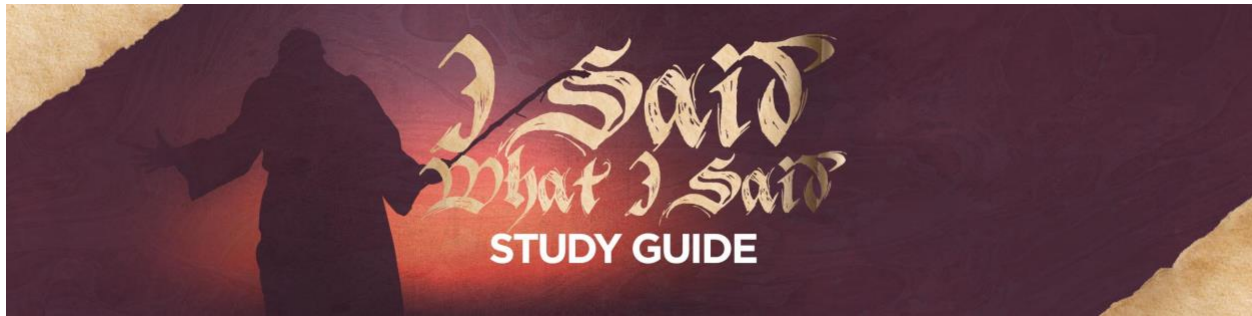
²² Though you grind a fool in a mortar,
grinding them like grain with a pestle,
you will not remove their folly from them.

Hosea 4 : 6 New King James Version (NKJV)

⁶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.
Because you have rejected knowledge,
I also will reject you from being priest for Me;
Because you have forgotten the law of your God,
I also will forget your children.

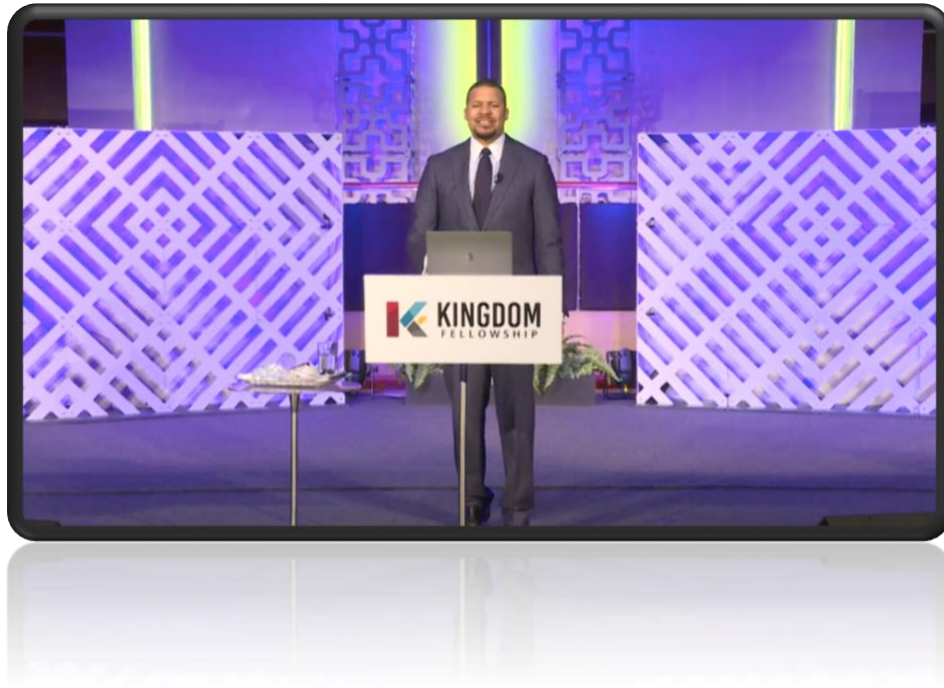
Jeremiah 29 : 11 - 14 New International Version (NIV)

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.”



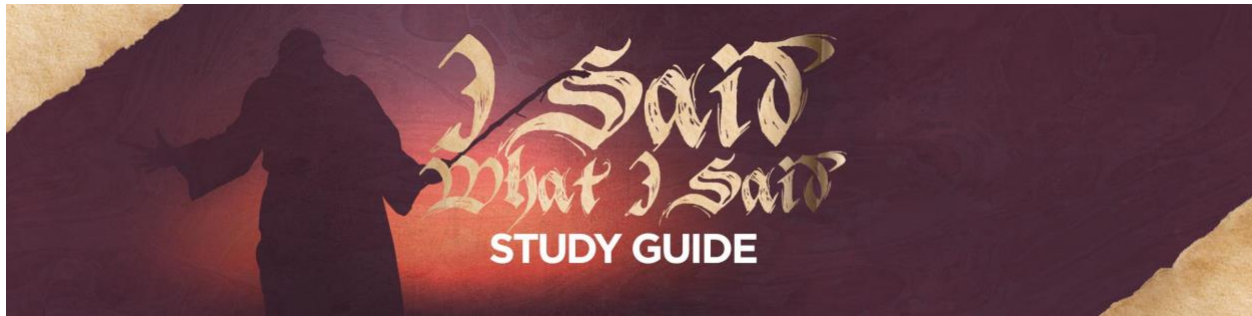
2. REFLECT

[Make sure to review this week's sermon!]



As we mark the last Sunday in January, we are blessed to have made it through the first month of a new year. Praise God! This month, our Senior Pastor Rev. Matthew L. Watley has been exploring the life, legacy, mission, and ministry of Moses through the sermon series entitled “I Said What I Said.” During this series, we have been able to explore various elements of Moses’ life, and apply the valuable lessons we’ve learned to our own lives. As we move forward with this series next month, we will continue to delve deeper into the important moments that shaped the trajectory of Moses’ story.

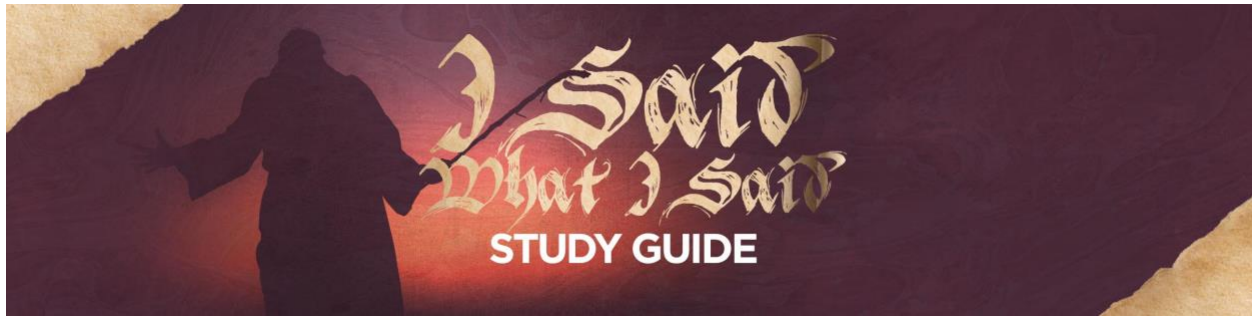
In our lesson for week five entitled “Do You Trust Me,” Pastor Watley encourages us to remember that our trust in God is foundational to our faith. In fact, our trust in God is what usually keeps us from having to learn the same lessons or relive the same mistakes. Many times we only trust God when we understand the direction we’re going in. If we can clearly see the reason for going in that direction and the possible outcome, we are happy to follow God. And yet, as Pastor Watley points out, “theology is faith seeking understanding, not understanding seeking faith.” We have to make the decision to trust and follow God regardless of what we see!



In our scripture for this week (Exodus 12:21-24), we see this principle at work as the Children of Israel prepare for Passover. As they are told to sacrifice the lamb in a particular way and spread the blood over the doorframe, I am sure that they still were a bit unsure. How would this blood on the door prevent my children from dying? And yet, they obeyed the command. This is why trust and obedience are inseparable. As Pastor Watley mentions, we should be able to trust the character of God, even when we don't understand the command of God. Therefore, when we receive a command, we can trust Him and obey. Even if they did not understand, the Israelites put the blood on the door, recognizing that they trusted the God that has continue to deliver them in times of trouble. This time would be no different. And as they soon found out, the Blood will always cover, keep, and deliver!

When this plague occurs, it personally affects everyone including Pharaoh. This immediately prompts him to urge the Israelites to leave Egypt as soon as possible. He recognizes the mistake he's continued to make – not heeding the warnings of the God of Israel. However, as many of us know, Pharaoh would later change his mind and chase after the Israelites. And yet, God does not send them without protection. Even though God led them to a place where it literally seemed like there was no escape, God sent them with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to ensure their safety. As these pillars provided the necessary protection, it is important to note that the pillars are miracles on the way to the miracle. Even on their way to freedom, God allowed them to walk through chaos and danger without being destroyed. That is a miracle! Many of us do not have to think too hard to remember a time when God allowed us to walk through our situation, our history, or even 2020 with pillars surrounding us as protection.

As the Israelites faced danger on every side, the pillars served to “**gird** their confidence, to **guide** them forward, and ultimately to **guard** their backs.” The pillars were able to **gird** their confidence because it was a reminder that God was with them. As they experienced the intermediary miracle on the way to the promised land, they were reassured that God was going to be with them every step of the way. Further, the pillars were able to **guide** them in the right direction. As they wandered towards freedom amidst dangerous terrain, the Israelites needed God to explicitly show them what direction to take. And even when it looked like they were going backwards, the pillar was guiding them to where they needed to be. Lastly, the pillars ultimately were able to **guard** their backs. At one point, the pillar of cloud went behind them to protect them. It was through this repositioning that the Israelites were able to watch their deliverance from Egypt as God used the weather to secure their escape route. Even though the Egyptians could've easily caught up to the Israelites and overtaken them, God's pillars ensured that what was in their *past* never made it to their *present*, or their *future*!



3. RESPOND

Introspective Questions

- Do you trust God?
- How have you seen God *gird*, *guide*, and *guard* you?

Discussion Questions

- How do you think the Egyptians felt after being hit by the 10th plague?
- How would you have responded to the command to put blood on your doorframe?