



EXODUS - WEEK 8
Plagues of a Bad Camping Trip:
Frogs, Gnats and Flies!

Opening prayer

Prayer for the persecuted church:

Prayer for a local church:

This morning we pray for our brother Ricardo Mercado who started a church in El Valle De Guadalupe.

Closing prayer

Introduction:

When my lovely wife and I were first married, we went camping one weekend in Michigan. It

was late when we arrived at the campsite, so in order to set-up our tent, we turned the car headlights on. Moments later, we were swarmed with mosquitos. And not just a few, but a swarm as thick as a cloud. That's all I remember from that weekend. I don't even remember if we put the tent up or if we even stayed or made a s'more. All I remember is the plague of mosquitos.

That's what chapter eight of Exodus is like —
The Plagues of a Bad Camping Trip: Frogs,
Gnats and Flies!

The frogs have been described as “one of God’s funniest miracles ever.” I mean, a river turned to blood, that’s like a horror movie plague. But frogs? That’s like a Brady Bunch plague. “Mom, Peter, Bobby, and the tall one put frogs in our bed!”

Well, it might seem a little humorous until we find out what false god is being judged. Let’s look at Exodus chapter 8 and find out.

Exodus 8:1-7

8 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. ² But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will plague all your country with frogs. ³ The Nile shall swarm with frogs that shall come up into your house and into your bedroom and on your bed and into the houses of your servants and your people, and into your ovens and your kneading bowls. ⁴ The frogs shall come up on you and on your people and on all your

**servants.””” 5 And the Lord said to Moses,
“Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with
your staff over the rivers, over the canals and
over the pools, and make frogs come up on
the land of Egypt!’” 6 So Aaron stretched out
his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the
frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.
7 But the magicians did the same by their
secret arts and made frogs come up on the
land of Egypt.**

1. Why Frogs?

James Boice tells us the Egyptian goddess Hekt “was embodied in the frog.” Because of this, the frog was sacred in Egypt. Heqet was the goddess who controlled the frog population of the Nile.

Because the frog was sacred, all they could do during this horrible plague was shoo the frogs away. They were overrun with their own false god to the point that they would become sickened of it. Frogs in their beds. And not

just the beds of the Egyptians, but frogs in Pharaoh's bed.

Heqet was also the goddess of fertility to the Egyptians. When women were giving birth they would call to her, because they believed she was also the spirit who breathed life into the body.

If you recall, in the beginning of Exodus, Pharaoh wanted to abort the living male Egyptian babies by having them thrown into the Nile.

This is something many members of the United States Senate have in common with Pharaoh — they wouldn't object to this. Well, I assume, since “failed to muster enough votes to protect the lives of children born *alive* after an attempted abortion.”

And do you remember who Pharaoh ordered to commit this infanticide? The midwives. This is God's judgment upon the Egyptians for looking to this false god for protection during childbirth.

Because of our modern medical care, we forget that throughout most of history giving birth to a child was always life threatening both to the mother and to the child. It's still very dangerous.

One of our friends in Redlands who became a doctor didn't want his wife to have children naturally, because of everything he studied about what could go wrong during pregnancy and the birthing process.

But here's the thing biblically. Children are not just the gift of God, they are a mandate from God.

One of the most thought provoking things I found studying this chapter was that it showed me how lightly we take God's Word, especially in the Old Testament. Have you ever considered God's mandate to Adam and Eve? I didn't until this last week and it saddens me that I didn't know this when I was younger.

Somehow we have left that far in the past, as if the mandate to “be fruitful and multiply” only applied to those two people. Somehow having more than 2.5 children was seen as a Catholic thing. And now it’s not even a Catholic thing.

We need to take a step back. If you’re a Christian who believes the Bible is God’s Word, then think of how you react to professing Christians who have accepted same-sex marriage. We scratch our heads and wonder how they could miss the clear

teaching of the Word of God. “How could they be so conformed to this world?” we ask ourselves.

Now, they have missed or denied or explained away the clear teaching of Scripture. But this last week, I realized in all the biblical teaching on relationships I’ve heard throughout all my years in the church, “be fruitful and multiply” wasn’t brought up once. It wasn’t brought up once as something for us to even consider, let alone take seriously as God’s will.

What's this tell us about the state of the church? The evangelical church as a whole has become conformed to the thinking of the world.

Instead of living as pilgrims in a strange land, we live as natives in the land with a Christian passport, in case we ever want to visit.

Some of you look concerned. "What exactly are you saying to us, Pastor?" I'm saying it's the Word of God and it's not to be taken lightly.

God judged the false fertility god of the Egyptians. But the same thing applies to our culture today. God will eventually judge a culture for its false gods. And two judgments come to mind in our time.

The first concerning the church and how we've set aside God's command to multiply our families. The second concerning the culture at large which has embraced a culture of death.

- “If we’re saying the former (“Abortion is killing”) without the latter (“We will serve you”), we aren’t truly understanding the gospel.” (Matt Chandler)

Untrue. Saying, “Abortion is murder” doesn’t have to be qualified with anything. I don’t have to adopt a child to be qualified to say, “Abortion is murder.” That’s a false dichotomy. I don’t have to offer to take a woman into my home to say to her, “Abortion is murder.” Her needing to live and be cared for is a separate issue from her killing a child. Now does this

woman need help? Absolutely. But do I have to open a homeless shelter before I can say, “Abortion is murder?” That’s just a false positioning of two true things. Let’s speak the truth in love and love as we speak the truth. But let’s speak the truth: New York City murders more black children than it keeps. That’s a fact.

Jesus offers forgiveness for women who have aborted a child. He offers it to men who have encouraged their girlfriend or wife to abort their child. He offers it to employees of

abortion clinics. And he offers it to those who are apathetic and doing nothing about this great evil in our society.

Exodus 8:8-10

8 Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, “Plead with the Lord to take away the frogs from me and from my people, and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the Lord.” 9 Moses said to Pharaoh, “Be pleased to command me when I am to plead for you and for your servants and for your

people, that the frogs be cut off from you and your houses and be left only in the Nile.”¹⁰ And he said, “Tomorrow.”

2. Why Tomorrow Instead of Today?

The miserable person can always take a little more. Your marriage is bad, but it's not bad enough that you seek God's help. Your addiction is bad, but it's not bad enough that you seek God's help.

Don't get me wrong. You might seek others way of getting help. You want to exhaust all your options today. Maybe tomorrow you'll seek God.

Exodus 8:10-15

Moses said, “Be it as you say, so that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God. ¹¹ The frogs shall go away from you and your houses and your servants and your people. They shall be left only in the

Nile.”¹² So Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the Lord about the frogs, as he had agreed with Pharaoh. ¹³ And the Lord did according to the word of Moses. The frogs died out in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields.¹⁴ And they gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. ¹⁵ But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart and would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

3. How do you react when a crisis is lifted?

A sign of false conversion is this: a person is open to God during a crisis, but once the crisis has passed, interest in God is lost.

Exodus 8:16-19

¹⁶ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Say to Aaron,

The Lord gives us authority to speak. His Word is our authority. When we speak according to His Word we speak with His authority.

‘Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, so that it may become gnats in all the land of Egypt.’”¹⁷ And they did so.

And when we obey His Word, He is the One who fulfills it. MLJ said this, if you understand you are a temple of the Holy Spirit “the answer will be given and the power will

come.” So, it’s not a matter of conjuring up any feelings, but of realizing who you are in Christ. They didn’t obey based upon who they were, but they obeyed based upon who God is.

Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats in all the land of Egypt.

What false god is being confronted here? The Egyptian earth-god Geb. By turning dust into bugs, God showed His authority over the very soil of Egypt. One commentator said that in the plagues God is de-creating Egypt.

In the creation account, God creates man from the dust of the ground and gives him dominion over creation. In this case, God creates bugs from the dust of the ground, but the animals have dominion over man. The order of creation is reversed. It's the same charge the Apostle Paul makes in Romans

chapter one, that people worship created things rather than the Creator.

This common adage, “The answer lies within,” is the perfect example. “Look to yourself.” It’s simply saying that you, the creature, have the answer you’re looking for, in which case the God of creation says when you believe that you’re believing the oldest lie known to man. But that’s what we do — we look to our intelligence, our beauty, our charm, our talents — we look to everything but God.

So, when God turns your life upside down it's so you might see things right-side up for the first time in your life, so you'll turn from idols to the Living God.

¹⁸ The magicians tried by their secret arts to produce gnats, but they could not. So there were gnats on man and beast. ¹⁹ Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.”

Some people will recognize a miracle when they see one. They may even attribute the

miracle to God, but that does not make them believers.

Surveys still indicate that most people believe in God, but many people (in fact most) believe in God without ever coming to Him for salvation. In that sense, most people are like these magicians of Egypt. They recognize the finger of God without ever knowing God.

The very best place to see the finger of God today is in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Christianity claims this is the only way

to actually know God, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Luke 11:20

20 But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

The kingdom of God has broken into this world in the Person of Jesus Christ. This is why so many people spend so much time trying to discredit the historical Jesus,

because if they can't then they have a real problem on their hands and they know it.

Romans 10:9-10

⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

And if you don't — there's the real problem on your hands.

Exodus 8:19-20

**But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.
20 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Let my people go, that they may serve me.**

Our deliverance is for God's sake. It's for His glory. I remember when I first became a Christian I presented the gospel to people in a way that emphasized their unhappiness in order to tell them that God wanted to make them happy. That was the reason I gave for the gospel. Happiness is a byproduct, but not the goal. The goal is the glory of God. People's low view of God needs to be elevated.

Lloyd-Jones wrote, "The supreme test of anything that claims to be the work of the

Holy Spirit is John 16:14 — ‘He shall glorify me’” (*The Sovereign Spirit*, 106).

Exodus 8:21-23

²¹ Or else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants and your people, and into your houses. And the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. ²² But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies

shall be there, that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth.

“He felt almost overwhelmed by the corruption of the world and the weakness of the church. And believed that the only hope was something stunning.” (John Piper on MLJ)

“The Christian church today is failing, and failing lamentably. It is not enough even to be orthodox. You must, of course, be orthodox, otherwise you have not got a message. . . We

need authority and we need authentication. . .
Is it not clear that we are living in an age when
we need some special authentication — in
other words, we need revival.” (*The Sovereign
Spirit*, 25 by MLJ)

**23 Thus I will put a division between my people
and your people.**

What is the special division today between the
people of God (born-again Christians) and the
secular world? God judges sin. We are sinners
just like everybody else, so what's the

division? The wrath of God does not abide on us, because Christ has taken it for us.

1 Thessalonians 1:9-10

⁹ For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

There is also the same thing that brought the clear division between Israel and Egypt — God. Moses and Aaron knew the Lord. We have the Holy Spirit. That's the difference. The same power that brought about these miracles resides with us today.

Exodus 8:23-26

Tomorrow this sign shall happen.””” 24 And the Lord did so. There came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and into his

servants' houses. Throughout all the land of Egypt the land was ruined by the swarms of flies. ²⁵ Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, “Go, sacrifice to your God within the land.” ²⁶ But Moses said, “It would not be right to do so, for the offerings we shall sacrifice to the Lord our God are an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice offerings abominable to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not stone us?

4. How do we worship?

When the culture and practices of God's people is in opposition to the surrounding culture, their reaction to us will be noticeable. Their reaction is noticeable, sometimes severe, because in this way we judge the false idols of the day.

Exodus 8:27-32

²⁷ We must go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God as he tells us."

We must worship as God tells us. We must present God as He has revealed Himself.

28 So Pharaoh said, “I will let you go to sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only you must not go very far away.

In other words, “Don’t be so different.”

Plead for me.” 29 Then Moses said, “Behold, I am going out from you and I will plead with

the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow. Only let not Pharaoh cheat again by not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord.”³⁰ So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord.³¹ And the Lord did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; not one remained.³² But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not let the people go.

The people were not Pharaoh's people to keep. They were God's. The Exodus is about God saving His people for His glory, that they might worship Him.

The story of Exodus is the story of redemption. It shows us the pattern of redemption in God's plan of salvation. We are in bondage to Satan and our own passions until the Spirit of the Lord comes and opens our eyes to the gospel. And in the gospel God says, "Let my people go!"

Colossians 1:13

¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,