

When God Confronts What Enslaves Us

2/12/26

Exodus 7:14–11:10

Sunday AM

I read this week about a family who bought a house that from the outside looked perfect. Solid structure. Great neighborhood. No obvious problems. But w/in weeks of moving in – strange things started happening. Doors wouldn't close. Cracks appeared in the walls. The floors began to slope. Perplexed, they had a contractor investigate only to discover that the house had a termite infestation. There were no obvious warning signs, but underneath the surface, termites were eating them out of house and home from the inside out – the house was under attack.

This is a mistake we often make spiritually. We assume the struggles/battles in our lives are only about people, circumstances, or decisions – but in actuality – Scripture tells us there's a deeper war occurring behind the scenes and beneath the surface. It's a spiritual war over ¹ *who we trust*, ² *who we serve*, and ³ *who rules our hearts*. This is what's happening here in Exodus as God begins to dole out the plagues.

The plagues aren't just about Egypt's economy or Pharaoh's pride, they reveal a spiritual battle b/w the one true God and the false powers that enslave us. And ***we learn that before God delivered His people physically, He had to confront what enslaved them spiritually*** – which He also has to do in our lives.

BTW – DYK what's dangerous about termites? No one ever invites them. They slip in quietly, unnoticed, until damage begins to show up where we least expect it. This is how spiritual warfare/idolatry work. They don't announce their rebellion. They sneak in disguised as *responsibility, comfort, success, or control*. ***Which is why before God ever confronted Egypt's gods, He was confronting the human heart.***

The human heart is a perpetual factory of idols. Calvin

This is absolutely true. Egypt's idolatry wasn't ancient or foreign – **it was human** – just like our idolatry. The plagues might've confronted the Egyptian pantheon, but they also confront our modern substitutes for God – the lust for *power, possession, pride, pleasure, and platitudes*. Like I shared last week, the issue isn't whether people worship, but rather what they worship.

Truth – the plagues were more than a direct assault on the gods of Egypt, they were an attack on our idols too.

In turning the Nile to blood – God was attacking ***Hapi*** – the god who personified the Nile – Egypt's life source/security. When the Nile flowed Egypt thrived.

For us – thru money, possession, and people – we often make our security and control an idol that God has to deal w/ in our lives.

In sending frogs – God was addressing ***Heqet*** – the god depicted by a frog's head who symbolized fertility, birth, and sexuality.

For us – God is addressing man's propensity to make pleasure/sensuality a sacred idol to gratify our desires.

In sending gnats/lice – God was exposing ***Geb*** – the god who ruled the earth and was tied to agriculture and one's ability to provide for oneself.

For us – God is confronting pride and our sense of self-sufficiency – that we try live w/out Him.

In sending flies – God was unmasking ***Khepri*** – the god of self-creation/progress known by an insect head.

For us – God is attacking our constant pursuit of progress/innovation – going back to the Babel.

In killing the livestock – God was exposing *Apis* and *Hathor* who symbolized wealth and power.

For us – God is teaching us about the pitfalls of pursuing possessions, portfolios, and power.

Next came the boils addressing *Sekhmet* – the god who protected from disease thru medicine.

For us – today, people often make a god out of their health and physical condition.

Point – God isn't only opposed to evil, He's opposed to anyone/thing we trust in over Him. Meanwhile, Satan is doing any/everything he can to get us to trust in something other than God.

Anything you trust in more than God becomes your god. Martin Luther

As I share last week – anything we refuse to surrender to God will become a god in our lives.

SEE – Behind Pharaoh's throne, there was a deeper power seeking to enslave thru fear/deception – Satan. Pharaoh mirrors Satan's pattern – resisting God's word, counterfeiting God's power, and refusing to release what belongs to God to get God's people to trust in something other than God.

When men stop believing in God, they don't believe in nothing; they believe in anything. Chesterton

This explains *why* Egypt had so many gods and why spiritual deception always fills the vacuum when truth is rejected. It's b/c Satan doesn't care if He gets us too far right or too far left – he just wants us off the narrow road that leads to life.

This is why the plagues and God's actions make sense. He wasn't lashing out. He was diagnosing the idolatry of the heart. And like a surgeon who cuts precisely, God attacked their idolatry head on to expose its perils.

So, He started w/ what Egypt trusted most – the Nile – b/c the *Egyptians were in denial*. (couldn't resist)

As already inferred – the plagues were more than a direct assault on the gods of Egypt, they were an attack on the idols w/in our own hearts – to teach us about what and how God is moving and why.

I Let God **SEARCH** What Culture has Shaped

Before God ever freed Israel physically, He had to reveal to them who/what was actually enslaving them.

SEE – God wasn't just removing the Israelites from Egypt – He was removing Egypt from their hearts.

After 400 years, although a covenant people, they were still immersed in a foreign culture. And much like our lives today – it's quite difficult to be IN the world and not become LIKE the world. So, God was at work in the plagues to take the Egypt out of them just as much as He was working for them to be let go.

This is why God attacked the pantheon of Egyptian gods – He was delivering thru revelation. God brought all of their idols into the light before He broke their power. Just like termites hidden in a wall, idols thrive in darkness but they lose their grip once exposed.

Israel learned that deliverance doesn't come thru reforming our idols, but by God dismantling them.

II Allow God to TARGET What You Trust Most

As noted – God didn't start w/ Egypt's weakest god; He started w/ one of their strongest ones – the Nile. It was their source of life, security, and confidence.

God always goes after the things we believe we can't live w/out. Whatever we lean on first, trust in most, or run to for peace is often the first thing He confronts.

Why? B/c God wants us to trust in Him alone – never leaning on our own understanding, but trusting Him at His word and in every way – always and in all ways – so that He can direct our steps.

God is too good to be unkind, and He's too wise to be mistaken. And when we can't trace His hand, we must trust His heart. Spurgeon

III Refuse to let the GOOD Become Your God

Frogs were once sacred. Livestock was once wealth. Progress was once hopeful. But when good gifts replace God, He allows them to multiply until we see how powerless they really are.

Our idols aren't exposed by their presence – they're exposed by their excess. Whatever we refuse to surrender to (G)od will become or (g)od.

I think of the *Parable of the Rich Fool* in Luke 12.

A man puts his hope in his wealth/excess. So, he plans to build bigger barns to hold everything he's amassed, but then he dies and leaves everything behind.

What happened? The man believed the myth of – *more will be enough*. He suffered from the fatal disease of **affluenza** – which is making money a god.

An idol is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God. Keller

III Stop Negotiating with God and Start TRUSTING

As the plagues progress, God begins to separate Egypt from Israel. Judgment becomes selective, not random. God drew a line – not b/w perfect people and imperfect people – but b/w surrendered hearts and stubborn ones – to protect His people from this demonic onslaught.

Here's the sobering truth. The most perilous things in our lives are rarely the loud, obvious sins but the quiet loyalties and subtle replacements we allow to sneak in. Those termites we never invited in but have tolerated b/c everything still looks fine on the surface.

What we see in God issuing the plagues is that God loves His people too much to let them remain enslaved to false gods – whether those gods wear ancient names like Hapi and Heqet, or modern-day idols like money, pleasure, control, progress, or health.

Meaning – God confronts what enslaves us not to crush us, but to free us – not as wrath, but as mercy – b/c the same God who dismantled the gods of Egypt is the God who'd later dismantle sin itself on the cross.

In Jesus, God didn't just expose our idols – He carried their weight, broke their power, to delivered us from sin to Himself.

For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption thru His blood, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13-14

So – the question this AM isn't – *do I have idols?* The question is – *which idols has God been lovingly confronting b/c He wants and has something better?*

B/c deliverance doesn't begin w/ **trying harder** – it begins w/ **trusting deeper**. And freedom doesn't come from negotiating w/ our idols, but from surrendering them to the one/only God who can save.

God isn't lashing out. He's diagnosing. And if we'll listen – He's inviting us out of bondage into freedom – and out of prison into promise.