I. INTRODUCTION

A. ELISHA OPENS THE EYES OF HIS SERVANT

1. Find me in Exodus 12... while you do that...
2. Tell the story of 2 Kings 6 - Elisha and his servant.
   a) Israel was at war with Syria; Elisha was the prophet helping Israel.
   b) Servant gets up to have his coffee and devotion time when he sees..
   c) Terrified - hurries - in a panic - runs back in to tell his boss
   d) Elisha - he's bald, older, with a white beard... kind of like Clay Miller. ;P
   e) "Those with us are far greater than those against us"... you're crazy
   f) Elisha prays, lord open his eyes... BAM! Spiritual Beings and chariots of fire.
3. Elisha's attendant couldn't see beyond what was right in front of him.
   a) Elisha just prayed for him to see what was already there.
   b) His gaze widened. Senses attuned to the supernatural.

B. MAIN IDEA

1. Church, sometimes we get so overwhelmed by fear of the challenges right infront of us that we miss the larger reality at work all around us.
2. **Larger reality = Our God Reigns!**
3. Let's pray

C. PRAYER

1. Heavenly Father, you reign. You reign on the mountain tops. You reign in the lowest valleys or in the deepest oceans. You reign in the galaxies beyond our telescope's reach. You reign in the space in between. You reign in every moment of life. You reign in the painful moments. You reign in the joyful ones. You reign in the sad ones. You reign in the hopeful ones and the despairing ones. You reign. You reign because you alone are God and there is no one else like you. Open our eyes to the truth that there is more than what we can see, taste, and touch. Help us see the world as you have revealed it to us and trust that you reign over all of it. We pray all these things in the name of your son, Jesus, who reigns on high, amen.

D. **SERMON SERIES** - Continuing... Mt. Sinai to Mt. Nebo. God shaped him...

E. ORIENTATION TO SERMON

1. Turn our attention now to the plagues of Egypt. Specifically 10th plague.
   a) world we live in is filtered through what we can observe, reason, independence, and inherent skepticism toward the spiritual or supernatural.
   b) Christianity, however, is a religion built on faith. More than what we observe or comprehend. The world we live in is designed to counter the core foundation of our faith.
2. Plagues show us there is more than meets the eye. Unseen war. Not just coercing Pharaoh to let the people go. The people are Formed by God's war

F. **TRANSITION:** Our God reigns, and so he redeems, he reveals, and he rescues.

II. GOD REDEEMS FROM GODS

A. TEXT - READ EXODUS 12:12A

B. INTERPRETATION

1. Were there really other gods? *[Let's move through this slowly]*
   a) We clearly believe there is only one God. Three in One. F. S. H.S..
      (1) It doesn't make sense, but Scripture seems clear.
      (2) Now the plain reading of the text indicates that God, capital G, is going to pass judgment on the gods, little g. And maybe you are scratching your head thinking, wait... what?
      (3) The answer to this question is both yes and no.... Let's explore.
   b) ELOHIM - none like you...
      (1) Surveying the OT use shows us that they used the word God a little differently than our modern... G. o. d. GOD = the God to us... Elohim, El.
      (2) Not like there are other gods like the God we worship. There are other spiritual beings.
      (3) God gave these Spiritual beings the responsibility of managing the nations
      (4) READ DEUTERONOMY 32:8-9.
      (5) Think of Cats. Lion, tiger, panther, all the way down to Joey... no one looks at Joey and thinks he's a lion.
      (6) Elohim does not mean they are all equal... it is a classification.
      (7) YHWH is Elohim. But not every Elohim is YHWH.
      (8) READ PSALM 86:8
   c) So... Yes and No...
      (1) Yes — there are real spiritual beings other than YHWH.
      (2) No — there are no other Gods like YHWH: uncreated, sovereign, worthy of worship, Creator of heaven and earth.

2. The Rest of Scripture allows us to see beyond the idolatry of other nations. There are real powers at work trying to take YHWH's glory.... Look to Paul...
   a) READ - 1 CORINTHIANS 10:19-21
   b) READ - EPHESIANS 6:12
   c) Back to Exodus

3. God's plagues brought judgment on other gods.
   a) Everything was a god to them. River, cattle, sun. Even Pharaoh himself. Theirs were the best... and why not? Super power.
   b) Here comes this exiled shepherd making bold claims about a god they never heard of.
   c) READ - EXODUS 5:2
   d) Then comes his 10 plagues to show them who he is.
   e) From Exodus 5 to Exodus 15, God is showing Egypt and the Hebrews that there is no place in Egypt where YHWH God is not sovereign.

C. APPLICATION

1. The question for us today is: where in your life are you living as though God isn't sovereign?
   - **a) Idolatry = trusting something created to give you what only the Creator can provide.**
   - b) We have idols still today...
     - (1) Things we put our trust, our hope, our future in other than God.
   - c) In Exodus, God is fighting for their hearts... yet we turn to created things.
     - (1) Money says, I can make you secure
     - (2) Success says, I can make you significant
     - (3) Politics says, I can save the world
     - (4) Sex says, I can satisfy you
     - (5) Approval says, I can tell you that you matter.
     - (6) Control says, I can keep you safe.
   - d) So what are you trusting to give you that only God can give you?
     - (1) God will expose it...
     - (2) when he does you have a choice...
     - (3) to see with the eyes of Elisha...
     - (4) or remain blind.

D. TAKEAWAY

1. Here's the point
2. **Stop giving power to defeated gods.**

E. **TRANSITION** -

1. So we see from Exodus 12:12 that God redeemed the people from idols. But now he is going to reveal spiritual truth about who he is.

III. GOD REVEALS SPIRITUAL TRUTH

A. TEXT - READ EXODUS 12:12B - PASSOVER

B. ILLUSTRATION

1. I love how he ends it... I am the Lord... reminds me of a scene from West Wing.
2. The first scene with Jett Bartlet.
   a) Spend almost the entire first episode hearing about President Bartlet...
   b) Then, near the end, his staffers and political lobbyists argue over the Ten Commandments.
   c) They say "Honor thy father and mother" is first... which it clearly is not...
   d) Puffed up... not the first commandment... then what is?
3. Door swings open and the vocie of the president...
   a) I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods before me.
   b) Everyone knows who this is.. no one has to guess.
   c) No introduction necessary.
   d) Doesn't have to explain his authority.
   e) But his presence changes the room's temperature.
4. This is like how God changes the temperature in the room by simply stating his name.

C. INTERPRETATION

1. Let's just do a real quick tour with the name of God...

2. EXODUS 3
   a) Moses says, if I go... who shall I say sent me? The great I AM. Yahweh...
   b) When God uses his name in Exodus 12, this isn't filler.
   c) Invoking everything he has revealed already...
   d) Making them feel deep in their bones...

3. EXODUS 6
   a) In Exodus 5, Moses goes to Pharaoh and says, let my people go.
   b) Pharaoh says... uh, no. Increases their labor to make bricks.
   c) Then in Ex. 6, God convenes with Moses and says...
      (1) I AM YAHWEH
         (a) Therefore
         (b) I will bring you out
         (c) I will rescue you
         (d) I will redeem you
         (e) I will take you as my people
         (f) I will be your God
         (g) I will bring you to the land
         (h) I will give it to you..
      (2) Then the mic drop, Bartlet-like scene... I AM YAHWEH. (Verse 8)
      (3) There is power in the name... signed, sealed, delivered... take it to the bank.

4. EXODUS 20
    a) Then when they get out of Egypt... spoiler alert... and at the mountain of God.
    b) READ EXODUS 20:2
    c) Then what comes next? God lays claim to every part of their lives...
        (1) Who they worship
        (2) How they worship
        (3) How they use his name
        (4) How they use their time
        (5) Treat their parents
        (6) How they treat others
        (7) How they handle sex
        (8) How they handle property
        (9) How they speak about their neighbors
        (10) What their hearts desire.
        (11) He doesn't just say the spiritual/religious part of your life belongs to me... he says your whole world is mine and so is your heart. It all is mine.

D. APPLICATION

1. There is no part of your life over which Jesus does not say, "That's mine."
    a) How we dress, speak to others, discipline children, look at online... words..
2. We tend to divide our lives into categories
    a) Church, prayer, bible, worship... all spiritual
    b) Work? That's just work.
    c) Money? That's finances
    d) Sex? That's private
    e) Politics? That's civic life
    f) Parenting? That's family
    g) Entertainment? That's not really hurting anybody...
3. Exodus and God's war tell us... nope. God reigns over it all.

E. TAKEAWAY

1. Here's the point we need to come to terms with
2. **Everything is Spiritual**
3. Every decision has spiritual implications. Every single one...

F. **TRANSITION** -

1. But God continues to work. Next we see he rescues us from judgment.

IV. GOD RESCUES FROM JUDGMENT

A. TEXT - READ EXODUS 12:13

B. INTERPREATION

1. Intro to Passover
   a) Defining and formative moments in Israel's history.
   b) God restructures their calendar around it. New Year
   c) God planned this moment in advance. Working toward it. Guiding Egypt and Israel toward it. Waiting for it.
   d) God does this because he promised he would...

2. This plague compared to the previous ones
   a) In the previous 9, God distinguishes between Egypt and Israel.
   b) Now Israel is also at risk, but God gives them instructions...
   c) Instructions:
      (1) Take the choice lamb... slaughter it, put its blood on the doorframe..
      (2) When the destroyer comes, God will protect the house and cause the destroyer to pass over.
   d) "Passover" is protection. Not just skipping over. God is guarding the home.
   e) READ EXODUS 12:23
   f) Israel doesn't fight the destroyer. They don't barricade the doors.
   g) They trust God's word and obey. God protected them.

3. The blood of the lamb
   a) Why the doorframe? The story doesn't tell us... its the boundary of the home.
   b) Rescue inside... judgment outside.
   c) Israel is helpless. God provides the means of rescue.
   d) And notice something important: the Israelites aren't rescued because Egypt sees the blood on their doors. They're rescued because God sees the blood.

C. JESUS IS THE LAMB OF GOD

1. "When I see the blood"
   a) Notice... it's not... when I see how good the people inside are...
      (1) It's not let me check to see how bad they've been.
      (2) Its not that they've earned their deliverance
   b) Their deliverance isn't relying on their ability.
   c) It's God's victory, not ours
2. Centuries later, the New Testament returns to this story...
   a) 1 Corinthians 5:7 - For Christ, our passover lamb, has been sacrificed.
   b) Jesus is the passover lamb
   c) The passover gives us the vocabulary the New Testament uses to explain the cross: Lamb, blood, sacrificed, redemption, deliverance.
3. God's war carried through the Old Testament all the way to Calvary.
   a) At a cross... Jesus defeated the gods of Egypt, of the whole world.

b) READ COLOSSIANS 2:13-14

c) The irony is rich... the powers thought they were winning. Rome thought they were winning. Jesus is stripped, beaten, mocked, nailed to a cross.

d) And Paul looks back at that moment and says: That's where God won the war.

e) That's where the rulers and authorities were disarmed.

f) God wins his war by allowing the powers to do their worst to Jesus - and then defeating them through the resurrection.

4. The Exodus points us to the cross

a) In Egypt, God judged the gods

(1) At Calvary, Jesus disarmed the powers

b) In Egypt, a lamb was slaughtered

(1) At Calvary, the Lamb of God was slaughtered

c) In Egypt, blood meant protection from death

(1) At Calvary, Christ's blood brings forgiveness and reconciliation

d) In Egypt, slaves walked free

(1) At Calvary, slaves to sin are set free.

5. THE VICTORY IS WON, CHURCH!

a) It's over! Victory belongs to our God.

b) Then why do we live as though we still have to earn salvation?

c) The Gospel is simple: Jesus Christ, the Son of David, King over the world, because he was raised from the dead.

d) Yes, we still sin; yes, we still have wandering hearts; yes, we still die.

e) But God died on our behalf; he defeated the desires of our hearts; he conquered the grave.

f) We can face life and death knowing death doesn't get the last word.

g) Church, the victory is won...

h) So live like it.

D. TAKEAWAY

1. Let's go home on this...

a) Fight from victory, not for victory.

b) When Elisha prayed for his Servant's eyes to be opened... he saw from a new perspective. He who is with us is greater than he who is in the world.

c) Nothing about the battle changed... what changed was that now he could see the spiritual reality behind it.

d) Maybe that's what we need today. For God to open our eyes.

e) Struggles are real; temptation is real. Suffering is real. Spiritual warfare is real.

f) But the victory is real. The tomb is empty, the battle is won. Be formed by God's victory.

g) JESUS IS LORD! - and the whole church said! AMEN!

E. PRAYER

1. Oh, mighty God in heaven who reigns over all, open our eyes to see that victory is yours. Victory belongs to you. I pray that your Spirit is active in this place, guiding all of us, leading us into righteousness, not so we can earn salvation, but so that from your victory we can live in victory. I pray for the boldness to proclaim your good news, King over the world, because you were raised from the dead. I pray your truth is shared in the chambers of Capitol Hill, in every classroom in this country, in nations abroad, and in the homes of all people. I pray the world comes to truly hear how you defeated the rulers and powers and principalities at work in this world so that we can be free from slavery to sin and death. Let it shape our hearts to love strangers, to feed the hungry, cloth the poor, and to raise up the weak. I pray it gives us the empathy to sit with the hurting, to cry with the crying, and to mourn with those who are mourning. Your victory changes everything. Let it change us into the people you've called us to be.
2. Amen.

Announcements

FamFest - TODAY, 5-7:30 pm. We will have inflatables for kids, face painting, youth games and a pig roast dinner beginning at 5:00, a cornhole tournament at 5:30 and BINGO at 6:30!

***Help is Needed Setting up Tables & Chairs Today**

Women's Ministry Fall Outing - Meet at Jones Farm in Milton at 6 pm on Thursday, Sept. 24 to pick a flower bouquet, and then we will go to Chicago's Pizza in Cambridge City. The total cost is $20. (see Jenny Clark with your payment) Please bring a mason jar or equivalent-size vase for your flowers. Please sign up TODAY.

Congregational Vote of Affirmation - There will be a vote on Sunday, October 4, to affirm the elder's selection of Tabitha Lumpkin as the new Student Ministry Director. NLCC members over the age of 18 may vote. Please see an elder with questions.

Training Meetings - Security Team TODAY after service. Lobby Hosts NEXT SUNDAY after service.

Operation Christmas Child Kick-Off - Boxes, labels and instructions will be available in both foyers on October 4th and need to be returned by November 8th. More details to come.