

# **Sermon: Redemption Through the Passover and the Cost of God's Son**

Bible Verses Mentioned: Exodus 3-6, Romans 9:17-18, John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we are so grateful for the gift of Your Son, Jesus, who promises us that whenever just two or three people are gathered together in His name, that you are in the midst of them. And so here we are, a larger gathering of your people, and we know that you walk among the lampstand of your church. And so we praise You and thank You for being here with us, and we ask that You would be illuminating our minds and our hearts with the knowledge and love of Your Word, and it's in Your Son Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. We're thinking about the Book of Exodus, and last week we talked about Moses' calling and how Moses is called to be an instrument of God to go and address the most powerful man of that world, the ancient world at that time, the Pharaoh of Egypt, and challenged Pharaoh to let the Israelites go.

Pharaoh was at one time a blessing to the Israelites. There was a famine in the land, and out of desperation, the Israelites sold themselves into indentured servitude to the Egyptians in order to just simply survive. The United States actually has a history of that. This is just a little Charlie Holt trivia, but the first Holt ancestor came over as an indentured servant back in the early 1600s.

He was a young boy, probably an orphan, who was taken over on ship. And the way it worked back then is the captain would pay the cost of your passage to the New World across the Atlantic, which was an expensive endeavor. And so that would be quantified, and a person would have a number assigned to him of the value of that passage.

And of course, the captain was going to make a little profit on the deal. And so they would be available to settlers in the New World, the colonists, to purchase these indentured servants, and they had to work for five, seven years to work off their debt for the passage over to the New World. And at the end of your indenture, you would get your freedom rights, which, in the case of my ancestor, was a barrel of corn and a new suit of clothes from head to toe.

And that's the way, in many cases, slavery, not quite slavery, but indentur happened. And it was a very common practice all throughout the centuries. And this is what originally happened with the Israelites. They had a debt. They needed food. You know the signs that you see on the side of the road. Will work for food. Well, that's a person offering to make a deal with you, right?

You give me a contract for work and I'll work for you and you give me food. That's not a bad deal. That's pretty much what we all do if we have a job, right? But what happened with the Israelites is an indentured servitude became a perpetual slavery. And when that happens, people become property.

And this is the other ugly side of the history of the United States is that we actually had human beings as not just indentured servants with a contract and rights, but people with no rights who became perpetual slaves, where we were passing on people from one generation to another as if they were property and chattel. This is what had happened to the Israelites. They became the chattel of the Pharaoh.

They became perpetual slaves. And so, the one thing about God's people is God's people don't belong to any other human being. They belong to God. And so when God hears the cries of His people from the bitter and hard labor, He raises up Moses to go and deliver his people out of slavery and bondage.

And he does so with a demonstration not only of His redemption of them, in other words, His purchase of them from slavery, but with an execution of judgment on Pharaoh for his sin of considering the Israelites as property and the tyranny in which he affected on their lives.

The way Moses was challenged is he says, and this is in Exodus chapter four, the Lord says to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power, but I'm going to harden his heart so that he will not let the people go. Then you'll say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, 'Israel is my firstborn son, and I shall say to you, 'Let my son go, that he may serve me.' If you refuse to let him go, I will kill your firstborn son, a son for the cost of my son.

Fascinating. The way that the Lord, Yahweh, looked at the people of Israel as his firstborn son. And the value of the people of Israel to a Father is the value that He places on their heads. But Pharaoh saw them as chattel.

So, Moses goes to Pharaoh, I'm going to give you the Cliff Notes version of this. Moses goes to Pharaoh and he challenges him with, "Let my people go, just to go out into the wilderness, worship for a few days, and we'll come back and we'll be your servants again." It says, "Well, Pharaoh didn't like the idea of the Israelites worshipping this God, Yahweh." And so he said, "No." And not only did he say no, he made their burdens and their tasks harder.

And so, a series of plagues happen. You can go back and read through the first chapters of Exodus, but, you know, turning the Nile into blood, there's a plague of flies, a plague of frogs, a plague of gnats, a plague of livestock. There's actually nine of them leading up to the final and ultimate plague, the Passover Plague. And that's our reading for today, the Passover.

And every time it says that as the plague happened, Pharaoh would cry uncle, "Okay, okay, okay, I'll let him go." But then the plague would let up, and Pharaoh would change his mind. So, another plague would happen, a little more severe than the last one. Paul would reflect on this whole scene in his letter to the Romans. In Romans chapter 9, he would say, "There was a reason for that.

God was allowing Pharaoh's heart to be hardened so that the fullness of Pharaoh's sin would be seen, and ultimately so that the fullness of God's judgment and execution of judgment against Pharaoh's sin would be in its fullness. So he ultimately got to where he kept standing Pharaoh back up in order for him to take the ultimate and final lick of the death of the firstborn in exchange for his firstborn son.

So, a little later on in Exodus chapter 6, Moses is sent to the people of Israel, "Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment, and take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from the burdens of the Egyptians.

I will bring you into the land that I swore to give Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as a possession. I am Yahweh, the Lord. Now, one big concept today, and that is the concept of redemption. And I hinted at it earlier when I talked about putting a value on a person. When we talk about redemption, this is a slave metaphor. It comes to us from this whole slave trade and indentured servitude trade.

It's the value of a human being. So, what is the value of a human being? That's a really interesting question. What is the value of your life? And how would you pay for your life? Well, the way that Moses was encouraging the people is to see their value in blood.

And I know it might sound a little icky to our modern day ears to think about blood, but blood is our life force. It's really what makes us alive, and we like to keep it inside of our bodies, right? We don't want to see it, because when we see blood, it's shocking to us. "Oh no, my life is escaping from me." And it's scary to see blood because it represents to us life.

Now, if you're going to purchase somebody, then the coinage that the Bible talks about is it requires blood. And so, the Israelites were told that they would have a substitutionary atonement for their lives in the form of the blood of a lamb. So each household was called a household for a lamb.

You would go and find a lamb that was one-year-old without spot or blemish. It must be a firstborn lamb to represent a firstborn of the children of Israel. "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male, a year old. You may take it from sheep or from goats, and you shall keep it until the 14th day of the month. And you shall take some of the blood and put it on two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat.

And so a household would take the blood of the lamb and they would, with a branch of hyssop, spread the blood on the door post of the door of the house and on the lintel on the top of the house. And what the Passover instructions describe is that this is a sign to the Lord who is going to, in the final plague, exercise judgment on the nation of Egypt.

And He will strike down as the angel of death, and there's where we get the word Passover. He will strike down every firstborn son of Egypt, every firstborn of the livestock, and he will pass over. But whatever house the Lord and the angel of death sees the blood, he will pass over that house. Pretty severe when you really think about it.

It was an awesome judgment. And what the text says is that when the angel of death passed over the nation of Egypt, there was a great wailing that came up from the entire nation. Because other than the Israelite houses, not one house was spared, including Pharaoh himself, who lost his firstborn son.

Well, that was all that Pharaoh needed to say, "I'm humbled." And he released the Israelites. And as we say, sometimes in our liturgy, particularly at the time of the East Divigil Service, to redeem a slave He gave His Son.

The New Testament would argue that Jesus is the ultimate Passover lamb, that the blood of an animal actually can't take away sins. That what we desperately need more than anything else for our redemption and for the redemption of all sinners in the world is a son, a son for a son, a life for a life, bloodshed for your blood.

And so the Lord who loves this world gave His only begotten Son to the end that all who believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

One of the things that we will say in just a few minutes here, actually, Father Chris will say it, he will take the communion bread and he'll break it and he will say, "Christ, our Passover is sacrificed for us." Every single week we actually remember our redemption, that we are a people who fundamentally do not belong to ourselves, that we have been purchased with an awesome price.

The price of the Son of God, a lamb without spot or blemish given for us. And when the execution of the judgment of God comes over the land of humanity, the people of this world, it will be those who have spread the blood of that lamb, the Lamb of Jesus Christ, on the doorpost and lintel, not of their homes, but of their hearts, which is the doorpost into your life, who will have not just not judgment, but mercy in their life, forgiveness of sins and the grace of God.

Again, what we are doing here every single Sunday is an awesome and holy remembrance of an incredible mighty act of the living God to redeem His people and execute judgment upon sin.

And so, you know, the question that I'm left ringing with, and I hope you are too, is number one, have I taken that blood and spread it over the doorpost of my heart? Is that where my faith is and my reliance is upon what Jesus has done with the coinage of His life for my life?

And then the secondary question of that is to recognize that we are not our own. As Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians, we have been purchased with a precious and costly price, the price of the gift of Jesus Christ. And that's extremely humbling for the way that we carry ourselves through this life.