

Dealing with Death

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[0 : 0 0] So, last week we overviewed, without really reading through the entirety, that was the first time I think I didn't read the entire passage, just wasn't feeling well enough and got through it by the grace of God.

But we overviewed the institution of the Passover, and we noticed that it was for a memorial. From verse number 14, this day shall be unto you for a memorial.

And there were certain things that God insisted that they be reminded of year by year. And the first thing we studied was the sacrifice that they were to be reminded of. They were to have this lamb, they were to eat this flesh in that night as a meal, to be reminded of the sacrifice, that blood was shed and placed upon the doorpost and the lentils.

And if that blood wasn't there, then somebody was dying that night. The innocent, therefore, had to die in the place of the firstborn. And so, remember that. Remember that an innocent lamb had to die in somebody's place.

And so, God instituted the Passover to remind them of that. Remind them of the bitterness. There was bitter herbs in verse number 8 that were part of that meal. Remind them that that's exactly the word used in Exodus early on of what their life was like in Egypt.

[1 : 2 2] It was bitter. It made them to serve with hard rigor. And it wasn't a pretty thing. They don't ever want to forget how bitter it was to live their life in Egypt. So, year by year, the Passover was a memorial.

The third thing was they were to remember the urgency. And so, God instituted that in this feast they were to have unleavened bread. And we saw in the passage, and we'll even see it again today, that there was an urgency with them taking off and getting out of the land.

And the bread was not able to rise. And they just had to bake it that way. And they ate that meal with their loins girded and the shoes on their feet, the staff in their hand.

In verse number 11, they had to eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. And there was an urgency to get out of there. They weren't saying goodbye to their Egyptian neighbors and the people that they met and worked for.

They weren't hugging and partying and giving their new address so that they write them. No, there was none of that happening that night. They're to remember that. Remember that they thrust you out.

[2 : 2 5] And you don't belong there. And you needed to get out. And remember finally the deliverance in verse 17, that it was the Lord that brought them out of the land of Egypt.

And so that Passover was a memorial. It was instituted by God. And it was something that he instilled permanently in their culture. And it's still observed today. Sadly, I reckon it's not observed very well or with the understanding of what it was about.

And yet, nevertheless, much of this picture is the Lord Jesus Christ, that sacrificial lamb. Now today we move on a little further into the chapter. And we're going to move into the actual execution of this final plague, the death of the firstborn.

We've been leading up to it. And now we're finally here. So verse number 29, I'm going to read through verse 36. Please follow along. And it came to pass that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of cattle.

And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants, and all the Egyptians. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

[3 : 44] And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel.

And go, serve the Lord as ye have said, and take your flocks and your herds as ye have said, and be gone, and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste.

For they said, We be all dead men. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading trowls being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses.

And they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold and raiment. And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required.

And they spoiled the Egyptians. Now, while this evening is the day of deliverance for the nation of Israel, it's the beginning of a new day for the Hebrews, it's a release from bondage, it's an exodus from Egypt, and from the affliction, from the oppression.

[4 : 53] It's a joyous time for that people. But I want to view this story and this evening now through the perspective of the people of Egypt. Pharaoh, his house, all of his servants, and in verse 30, all the Egyptians.

These are not the people of God. And I want to consider the position that they find themselves in this night. So before we do that, let's pray. Lord, as we bow, it's my request that you'll take control of this next few minutes, that you'll, Lord, just draw our attention into this passage, into this historical night, one that's very much remembered.

And Lord, make it applicable to us today. Help us to learn some truth from the Word of God this morning. And Lord, it's my prayer, as always, that every single person here would hear your voice, would get something from the truth, and would be growing, and would be convicted.

Lord, that you just speak to hearts. Please use me to speak your truth, to proclaim the Word of God. And may we make application where we can.

Please take control of this time by your Spirit. Lord, we need you in this time. They don't need to hear me talk for half an hour. They need you to minister. And so I ask you to do that.

[6 : 16] And I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. So we've been studying this for a while. God has been systematically just taking everything away from the Egyptians.

He's been destroying them and their land. This was once a great nation, a very powerful nation, but it's crippled. And back in chapter 10, the servants of Pharaoh said to him, Knowest thou not that Egypt is destroyed?

This once great nation has been brought to its knees. But this final judgment, this final judgment from God, just, just, I don't even want to say it added insult to injury.

It just took the life right out of them. It just laid them on their faces. Some people estimate that up to a million firstborn died.

There's no evidence of that, no way of real recording history there, or biblical evidence. It's just kind of the supposition based upon the population and the time and trying to just figure out how many there may have been.

[7 : 24] And that's just, that may be a high number. I'm unsure of the accuracy, but safe to say, death was felt from one end of Egypt to the other, from the highest to the lowest, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon.

Death was all over that land. And they died. They died left and right. There was dead carcasses, people wailing and crying. This was, this was more than a tragedy.

And what we get here now is, is a glimpse into the mind of the Egyptian, the ones that are on the receiving end of this judgment of God. We're going to see and get some insight into what it feels like when death shows up.

What it feels like to be on that side of it, the Egyptian side of the judgment of God. And I think this is going to picture very well for us somebody that's in this world today, a man or a woman that's without Jesus Christ.

You may see them when they're on top. You may see them cocky and proud and pompous and arrogant and have need of nothing in this life when things are going well, but when tragedy hits or when death is in the room and when they're no longer in control, then the real, the real condition kind of shows itself.

[8 : 50] It starts to be on display. When they can no longer mask everything with smiles and when they can't point to their success in life anymore as if that means anything, when death is in the room and when they're faced with some very painful tragedies, you get a glimpse now in this passage into the mind of the unbeliever, the one that's on the other end of it, the one that doesn't have God to go to, to lean on, to hold you up.

And so when their comfortable lifestyle or when their ease or maybe their independence is taken away from them, when they're brought low, we're going to get to see this morning what that experience is like without the Lord.

And if that's you this morning, I want to show you how you're going to feel when tragedy shows up in your life if you're not prepared. And so let's take a look here. Look at verse 31 and 2.

And the first thing I want to show you is that you're going to feel helpless or you're going to feel powerless. And it's Pharaoh that wakes up to the cry and to the realization that he's got a dead son.

And in verse 31, he calls for Moses and Aaron by night. And he basically just, in a summary, he says, get out of here. Just get out of my presence.

[10 : 04] Do, take everything and just go. And he says, take the flocks. This was all things that he was trying to hold on to. If you remember, he was trying to manipulate the situation by saying, okay, the men can go.

Okay, now you can take the children, but you, or you can't take your cattle. No, that has to stay. And little by little, he's kind of giving in and giving in. Finally, he's done. He has no bargaining chips anymore.

As a matter of fact, he doesn't want to deal with this anymore. He's just lost his child. It was like fresh. Hours ago, he just found out that he's still in shock.

And he calls for them to get out of here. This kind of tragedy awakened all of Egypt that night. And the king gets humbled.

He's a pathetic man in this moment because he's completely humiliated and decimated. It's been bad enough up to date, but this is it.

[11 : 03] This puts it over the top. Holding on to the children of Israel, holding on to their cattle. Now he just says, get out of here. Take it all. And to understand that his heir was dead and that God, the God of the Hebrews, killed him tonight.

I think those words Moses said earlier in the day come back to mind. In chapter 11, verse 4 and 5, Moses said, Thus saith the Lord, About midnight tonight, about midnight, will I go out into the midst of Egypt and all the firstborn of the land of Egypt shall die from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth on his throne.

Well, he ignored that a few hours ago. Those words didn't mean anything. He had a hard heart. But now he hears it again and realizes, I'm helpless.

I'm powerless. What can Pharaoh do about it? The answer is nothing. He could do nothing about it when his child's dead, laying there in the bed or laying in his arms or the rest of the family just crying and screaming and his wife and all the rest of them so confused and the cry isn't just coming from his home but it's from that house and that house and the entire block is they're all crying, they're all wailing, they're all frustrated and angry because this pain just is surrounding and he's immersed in it and he's helpless.

The bottom dropped out and the king is empty and he has no resource to defend against this God. He has no nation coming to his help.

[12 : 48] He's powerless. I think his arrogance is gone. He's stripped down to nothing but feeling pain and he's helpless. Remember, it wasn't that he went one week without water and it wasn't that there was frogs in his home and it wasn't flies and it wasn't the lice and it wasn't the darkness.

None of those things made any difference but he's in this extremely low place and ugly condition and things have gotten far worse and so he says this, he says in verse 32, pray for me pray for me Moses and Aaron when you go when you sacrifice to your God pray for me you know why he says that?

Because he's helpless. Because he's powerless. It's a plea of a helpless man that can't pray for himself. He has no confidence that God would ever hear his voice and he has no reason to believe that he could call out on God for mercy.

No reason to believe that this God would hear him. This God just killed his son. He can't call on God. He can't lift up his head to heaven and so he says Moses pray for me.

He's got nobody to turn to. He could turn to his magicians but they've got dead children. He could turn to the wise men. He could turn to his family and neighbors but there's death.

[14 : 25] Everybody's in the same boat with him. They're all helpless. They're all powerless. And back in chapter 5 when Moses first walked into his throne room and said let my people go and said that the Lord wants us to serve him he said I know not the Lord.

And even today in chapter 12 Pharaoh still doesn't know the Lord and he's helpless and death is in the room with him and he's faced to bear it and he's got to deal with it but he's helpless.

He's got nothing he can do. And so it is with sinners today in this world when tragedy arrives unannounced. They don't have a man they can turn to to fix it.

They're all in the same boat. They don't have any God to turn to in their life so they turn to abusing substances and just doing anything they can do to get their mind distracted and to take the pain away from them just to numb them because they're just alone.

They're alone surrounded by other sinners in the same boat and alone. And they need help. And they need somebody that can pray for them.

[15 : 43] And they say pray for me. Pray for me. They need somebody that can lift them up. Somebody that can introduce them to a very present help in time of trouble.

Do you know who that help is? Do you have that help when you're in trouble? When you feel the pain? When you feel the tragedies come in life?

Do you have that help? That safeguard? That shield? Well the Egyptians don't. They never have and they never will. Because you won't find that help in Egypt.

And so all you are is left to feel helpless and powerless. And there's something else in verse 33. It says the Egyptians were urgent upon the people that they might send them out of the land in haste.

And they made this comment to the Jews. They said we be all dead men. I want to say secondly that when death shows up or when tragedy strikes not only do you feel helpless or powerless to do anything about it you're also hopeless.

[16 : 50] We be all dead men. Why would they say that? Well I believe an understanding is finally setting in that it's almost over.

This thing we are dead meat before this God. Nobody's coming to our aid. We've offended and defied almighty God.

We've afflicted and oppressed his people and now he's coming to exact judgment upon us and he's been doing it. He's visiting us for our sins and there's nowhere to hide.

There's no defense. The only thing we can do is get these Hebrews out of here now. Just get away end this thing somehow. There's no nation that's coming to their defense or their ally.

There's no promise that there'll be a brighter tomorrow. The way things are going if you're an Egyptian the obvious conclusion is we're next.

[17 : 58] What else can this God do to take us out to lower us? He's just killed somebody in the home what else is not going to get better?

the obvious conclusion is we be all dead men. What action could he possibly take against us? And so there's no hope.

There's no hope to be rescued from this angry God. There's no feeling that things are ever, ever, ever going to get any better. It's only loss and despair and grief.

In Acts chapter 27, you may remember the apostle Paul was on a boat and he was in a real bad storm. And he says that the boat was exceedingly tossed with a tempest.

It's like plague after plague after plague. And they hadn't seen the sun or the stars or the moon for many days. Just darkness.

[19 : 03] darkness. And he said no small tempest lay on us and the conclusion is all hope that we should be saved was taken away.

What a horrible feeling that this is it. It's over. We're defeated. In that case in Acts, they were going down with the ship because we can't whip this thing.

We can't row by our strength to get out of it. We're powerless. And now we're hopeless. And it's a horrible place and a feeling to have.

I don't know if a child of God, I don't know if it's even possible to have that feeling of hopelessness. The Bible says in 2 Timothy 1 verse 1 that Christ is our hope.

And so long as you have Jesus Christ, whether you're living for him or not, you still have that hope in you. And there's different degrees of it.

[20 : 10] There's what we're looking for, that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior. And there's different degrees, but I remember living in the world and living in Egypt and running from God's calling and just being a devil.

And I can remember there was never a day where I didn't have hope inside of me. Even when things were kind of messed up or when I got myself into trouble or got arrested or just things were not good in my life, there was never a moment where I didn't have hope, where I didn't know that I could call on Jesus Christ.

I've always known that as a Christian, even when I've turned from the Lord. But these people, do you know what it's like to have no hope?

hope. You don't want to know what it's like to have no hope, but that's where they are. We're next and nothing's going to stop it.

We're defeated. When tragedy comes and when death comes for the firstborn, you're either prepared or you're not.

[21 : 18] You either have the blood applied or you don't. You either have Jesus Christ or you have nothing and you have no hope. What can replace Jesus Christ when dealing with tragedy or death?

Can your family replace Jesus Christ? No. Why? Because they're hurting too. Can your friends assuage your grief? No. They don't even know what you're dealing with.

They haven't felt that pain. You're alone. And without Christ, you've got no hope. Can substances help? No. They're just destructive.

They can just lay you out worse than you were before. Can religion help? No. Religion's never offered anybody hope ever. They'll just leave you confused and feeling like you're not good enough.

Can't do anything for you. You're hopeless without Jesus Christ. So when death comes for somebody that doesn't have Christ, you'll know what it's like to be afraid, to have nothing to offer, to have no means of appeasing this angry God, to have nothing that would cause him to reconcile this situation.

[22 : 40] When you don't have Christ, you have no hope at all. You're in condemnation and you're headed for damnation with no hope. I'm not trying to make you feel it.

It's by the grace of God, Christian, that you'll never feel it. But if you don't have Christ, that's all you'll feel. That's what it's like in Egypt. There's no hope.

Somebody says, but I was a good person. And God says, there's none good. And somebody says, well, I wasn't a real bad person.

And God says, but all your righteousnesses are as filthy rags. And man at his best states altogether, vanity. And somebody says, but I never killed anybody.

And God says, I won't judge you for the sins you didn't do. But all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

[23 : 39] And when that case comes and when death is in the room, you will have no hope. Because there is no hope in Egypt.

Egypt can offer no hope. You're on the wrong side. If the blood was applied, you wouldn't be feeling this way. There's something else in this passage you want to look at.

Later in verse 35 and 6, the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses, and they borrowed of the Egyptian jewels of silver and jewels of gold and raiment. The Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians so that they lent unto them such things as they required.

They spoiled the Egyptians. This is a very interesting conclusion to this night, is that they spoil the Egyptians before leaving. Would you ever consider giving a person that you despise your valuables, your precious things that you keep in a safe, the things that you keep hidden away in the drawer or in the closet or in the attic or only you know where they are?

Would you even ever consider giving to someone you don't like or despise, handing them the credit card and the keys and saying, just go, just take it, take it all? When would you ever say that to somebody?

[24 : 59] That's the kind of thing you'd say to an armed robber, when you're in a state of panic, when you're in a state of fearing for your life, when they have a gun or some knife, some means of a threat in front of you, that's the kind of thing you say when you're desperate or when you're panicking.

Take my watch, take my phone, take my money, just take it, just don't harm me, don't harm the kids, that's the way somebody acts in that situation. You give a criminal your money, you give an enemy what they request, maybe if you just, if it's the easiest way to get rid of them, to leave already, somebody just pestering you and you can't stand them, you may just grant their request just to get them out.

And that's the case here. Don't imagine when the Bible says that the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, don't imagine that that means they were hugging and crying on their shoulders and that they were happy to load them up with their belongings.

The Egyptians weren't pleased that night at all. There wasn't a shred of pleasure in their mind while they're giving away their items.

They weren't being generous. They were in shock just as well. It was their child that died hours ago. It was their neighbor that shows up saying, can I borrow your favorite dress?

[26 : 27] Can I borrow your vehicle? Can I have that? You know what you want to do? Just take it. Just get out of here. Just go. I want to deal with you right now.

I don't ever want to see you again. That's the attitude the Egyptians had toward the Jews that night. The Lord gave them favor. They didn't fight them and try to kill them.

They just said, take it. Just get lost and don't ever come back. The Egyptians weren't being generous. They were helpless and they were hopeless and they were desperate that night in a state of panic, in a state of pain and panic, willing to part with the things that were valuable to them, to their family, precious to them, the very things that once brought them pleasure, the very things they once wore to a celebration or to an invitation of the king.

They would wear that reserved for the finest moments and they're willing to part with it. They're willing to give away all of their substance, their valuables, their jewels, their silver, their gold, things that they once decked their body with that brought them much joy.

They're willing to just give it up. Why would that ever be? Because when a sinful man is faced with tragedy or losing his health or facing death or dealing with something he doesn't want to deal with, he too will give everything he has.

[27 : 59] He'll give, he'll give. Just take, I heard of a multi-millionaire who had an incurable disease and he tried to, he petitioned to any doctor that could cure him an insane amount of money he offered to give.

Just an insane amount of money because he had it but what was it going to profit him if he was in the grave? The Bible says riches profit not in the day of wrath and yet the lost man will offer his money or his assets to please the righteous judge.

In Psalm 49 it says they that trust in their wealth and boast themselves and the multitude of their riches none of them can by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him.

You can't appease God with that. God doesn't care about that. He's not looking for gifts or valuable things. He won't assuage your grief because you offer him monetary gifts or carnal things or write a check to the church.

That won't help you a bit. when tragedy visits Egypt the riches and the values the possessions don't mean a thing. And so is life without Jesus Christ.

[29 : 24] You're helpless. You're hopeless. And when you're in that condition everything you've earned, everything you've worked toward, all the things that brought you pleasure don't do it anymore.

When tragedy is there, when death's at the door, take it. Just take it all. It can't touch the hole that's inside of your soul where you want that help and you want that hope so desperately.

And these carnal pagan things, filthy lucre, mammon, just won't do a thing. But that's all that Egypt has.

That's all it can offer you is a little bit of pleasure with a few toys. A little bit of a paycheck that will get you distracted from what you're supposed to be doing, lifting up your eyes and looking on the fields.

And rescuing the perishing. And rescuing the perishing. So church, we can't, or they can't fix the problem or ease the pain or what they have in their possession can't produce joy or happiness.

[30 : 43] But before we leave this world, before we leave Egypt, by the deliverance of our blessed hope, let's tell them about the one that gave his own son for them, the helper that they need and don't have, the hope that they could have if they'll humble themselves and receive the one who died for them, the true riches that contain eternal joy that will not fade away.

In a few minutes, we're going to have an opportunity to sweat a little bit if you choose to and to go out and hang a few door hangers and put a few tracks on a few doors, a few neighborhoods around here.

You could ignore that opportunity and you could say, I'm busy doing something else. You could say, well, I need to do, I really ought to do this. I'm finishing up early this morning to try to take away that time element that you might have an excuse.

Tricky guy up here. I want you to say, to surrender and say, yes, let's be part of this. There's Egyptians all around us and they have no hope at all.

They've been praying some of them and their prayers aren't getting through. They don't have anybody that's helping them. They have a priest and he hasn't helped them once.

[32 : 13] He's put a burden on them. He said, pray these prayers. Give this money. Show up again and show up again and show up again. And it hasn't helped them yet. And they're still in their sins and they still don't have hope or Christ.

There's people out there that have some toys and they have some money and there's, I'm still shocked at how much money is in the area. And people have it. But boy, when death shows up, you might be surprised that when you just go to that door, you don't know what's behind that door.

You don't know what kind of loss they are facing. You don't know what kind of tragedy is in their life. What kind of news they got this week. You don't know any of it, but the Lord does.

And he wants to send one of his soldiers out there to put some hope into their life. He wants to reach them because he's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

He wants to apply the blood to their doorposts, to their lintels, and cover them. So, will you be part of it?

[33 : 21] Will you help? Before you're delivered, will you do something to try to reach one? Maybe you can't go today. Will you take some gospel tracks with you before you leave and say, God, I'll try to reach someone this week.

I'll try to reach one today. I'll try to reach one tomorrow. I'll try to reach one with the gospel of Jesus Christ because they are hopeless. And some of them don't know it because they haven't been brought this low.

But they'll get there. It's coming. They'll get there. But will you have reached out before that? So, as we're dismissed this morning, the invitation is to go deliver door hangers and deliver gospel tracks and do something for Jesus Christ.

Maybe you can't do it here today. I'm challenging you to do it. To take 15 to 30 minutes an hour tops and to go out with some other brothers and sisters and just try to reach one.

Try to get that message to somebody while we can and while they're still alive. Because then it'll be too late when death shows up. Father, as we are dismissed, please burden your people with a desire for souls.

[34 : 37] And I'm not trying to do it myself. Lord, I want it to come from you and to come from the inside where you can speak to hearts. And so, Lord, I pray that you will be able to do something for you for Jesus' sake who loved us and who died on that cross for the sins of the world.

I pray that this morning you'll use our efforts to reach one. Not to grow this church into some mega church, but to reach one and keep them out of hell.

Because that's what you care about. And Lord, help us to care. Please use us. Please give us safety as we go. Give us wisdom and discernment. And help us to reach somebody.

Lord, let that be our goal and our attitude. Let that be our desire truly from the inside. As we're dismissed, we ask your blessing upon what takes place.

And it's in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, you're dismissed. I meant it.