

The Lord will fight for you

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. We're going to be reading from chapter 12 to start, and then we'll jump to later in 12, and then a bit in 14.

So from the start of chapter 12, 1 to 14. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, This month shall be for you the beginning of months.

It shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month, every man shall take a lamb according to their father's houses, a lamb for a household.

And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbour shall take according to the number of persons, according to what each can eat, you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male, a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

[1 : 04] Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire.

With unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts.

And you shall let none of it remain until the morning. Anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it, with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand.

And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast.

And on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments. I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

[2 : 13] This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. As a statute forever you shall keep it as a feast.

Then we'll jump to chapter 12, verses 29 to 32. At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne, to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock.

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

Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel, and go, serve the Lord as you have said. Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also.

Then we'll flick forward to chapter 14, verse 9. We'll read through to 15, verse 3. So from chapter 14, verse 9.

[3 : 26] The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them and camped at the sea, by Pai-ha-hiroth in front of Baal-Zephon.

When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord.

They said to Moses, Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is not this what we said to you in Egypt?

Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians, for it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness. And Moses said to the people, Fear not, stand firm, and see

the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today.

For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. And the Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent. The Lord said to Moses, Why do you cry out to me?

[4 : 34] Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his hosts, his chariots and all his horsemen.

And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen. Then the angel of the Lord, who was going before the host of Israel, moved and went behind them.

And the pillar of cloud moved before them and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness, and it lit up the night without one coming near, the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen.

[5 : 57] And in the morning watch, the Lord in the pillar of the fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily.

And the Egyptians said, let us flee from before Israel, for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians. Then the Lord said to Moses, stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and upon their horsemen.

So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the Lord threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea.

The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that had followed him into the sea. Not one of them remained. But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their left, and on their, to the, being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians. Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord, saying, I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously.

[7 : 30] The horse and his rider has thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. This is my God, and I will praise him. My Father's God, and I will exalt him.

The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is his name. Well, my name's David. If you're visiting this morning, a warm welcome to you.

Will you pray with me as we come to God's word? Let's pray. Our Father, I pray for an outpouring of your spirit this morning through your word, through me as I speak, and through all of us as we listen to your voice and your word.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Well, Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, he was once a medical doctor, then he's a well-known pastor. You might have heard of him in London around the World War times. He's famous for preaching through Romans, a whole sermon on a single verse sometimes. We're trying to do the opposite this morning. We're trying to preach the whole Bible in one sermon.

[8 : 40] But he used to ask his people a diagnostic question in private conversations. Are you a Christian?

Are you saved? I was expecting a more profound kind of question than that. I imagine you might have been as well.

How would you answer that question? Some, he said, would reply, of course I am. Of course I am. A bit offended that he would even have to ask. And then they'd go on to say, I used to belong to this church, and now I'm belonging to this church. I was baptised on this day.

Others would reply with less assurance and go, I'm trying. I'm trying to be. He used it as a bit of a diagnostic question of, does this person, they might have been in church their entire lives, does this person understand what makes a person a Christian or not?

[9 : 53] If you could travel back in time and meet an Israelite family after the Passover, after the Red Sea, they're part of this huge caravan of people following a pillar of cloud.

If you could just stop one of the family and just ask them, are you saved? Are you one of God's people? What do you think they might say?

The Exodus lays down the biblical paradigm, the blueprint for us to understand salvation. And my prayer this morning is that each one of us will more deeply understand the greater Exodus that Jesus Christ achieved and be able to answer that simple but all-important question.

Well, we evangelicals, we can often talk about being a Christian as a relationship with God. We can talk about conversion, some kind of experience, some conversion.

Sometimes we can use the term decision to follow Jesus. The scripture has a word that we dare not lose.

[11 : 21] You lose a word and you lose the idea that the word pictures. Redemption. Now, redeem, I don't know, in our day and age, like we've got a gift voucher for a restaurant that's shut down now, 50 bucks, we can't redeem it anymore.

That's a bit annoying. So, something to do with payment. I think of Steve Smith, the cricketer, when he got caught in the ball tampering scandal, he was banned from international cricket and then when he could finally return and he hits a century for Australia and the commentators are talking about that's his redemption.

He redeems himself. He restores his reputation. So, it's something to do with payment. It's even, we can understand it's about acceptance, our reputation as well.

But, biblically, it's not something you can do. Ancient times, redemption is the costly payment to purchase back a slave or a prisoner of war.

We have the Passover at Egypt to help us picture what our spiritual redemption is. the Lord is coming to redeem his firstborn.

[12 : 48] All the people of Israel are called his firstborn, the whole community. And a price will be paid to restore his people to their rightful owner.

Freedom. The Israelites were powerless to free themselves from serving Pharaoh. Spiritually, the Bible teaches us, on our own, we are powerless.

Powerless to free ourselves from serving the power of sin. Well, last week, we saw the nine supernatural plagues. They were through Moses and his staff.

This tenth plague, not through Moses. Redemption is all Yahweh's doing. Yahweh himself comes to Egypt as judge and there is a hefty price.

The death of the firstborn in every family. Now, we're a bit individualistic, aren't we? Ancient cultures, your identity, in some cultures today still, your identity is in family.

[14 : 01] That's who you are. You are blessed together or you're cursed together. Your identity is in the family. your hopes are in the family. The firstborn represents the family.

This is a judgment on all. This is a horrible night, is it not? I'll just think of my family.

My dad would be dead, my eldest brother Steve and my son Sam. Now, multiply that by the families in this room.

Multiply that by the nation. There was not a house without someone dead. It's sickening, isn't it? Yahweh's divine patience with Pharaoh comes to an end. Pharaoh won't even fear this final warning.

[15 : 10] I think what we're meant to see here is that this night in Egypt is this localised temporary judgement day. We don't like it.

I don't like it. Why don't we like it? Even for stubborn Pharaoh we don't like it. Why don't we like it? It's brutal. It's bloody.

Like, the cries must have been awful. In 1961, Adolf Eichmann, who was a first lieutenant German Nazi SS officer, he was the colonel and he was the master behind the death camps, the Jewish genocide.

He was put on trial and a man named Yuhil Denor, he was a death camp survivor, he was brought in to testify against Eichmann.

But when he walked in, he saw Eichmann and he collapsed. He was sobbing and he fainted.

[16 : 26] Now, 22 years later, Yuhil Denor is interviewed on 60 Minutes and the interviewer shows the clip of him falling apart and asks, what was going through your mind?

Pharaoh changes his mind, seems as he always does, and he comes after them, 600 chariots. They are the most technical weapon of war. 600 chariots. He's put them under a death sentence. Serve me or die. And they feared greatly. [24 : 15] What can they do? They're trapped between the sea and the army and Moses tells them, the Lord will fight for you. You have only to be silent.

The Lord will fight for you. And then we see Yahweh in the pillar of the cloud coming between his people and the army all night long. He drives the sea back. They walk through on dry ground and some of them might be going, I knew the Lord would do it. Others might have been walking through going, looking at those walls of water, I'm going to die, I'm going to die, I'm going to die. Their confidence doesn't make the difference again. It's the Lord fighting for them that makes the difference.

Pharaoh comes in after them and their wheels are getting clogged and they realise the Lord is fighting for them, but it's too late. The waters come crashing down and Pharaoh and all his army wash up on the seashore.

Not one of them survives. And the Israelites are looking at the dead bodies and they see a decisive victory. Their enemies are gone.

[25 : 30] No more threat. Not one. It is finished. Today I don't think we're looking at dead bodies.

We're looking at a living body who walked out of the tomb three days later and we know our enemies are gone. Look at his living body.

All our enemies are gone. Jesus says in John 5 after saying that the father has entrusted all judgment to the son, he says in John 5, truly, truly I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

He does not come under judgment but has passed from death to life. It's done. The sin that speaks to us, serve me.

That's our old master. We owe nothing to that master anymore. We were bought at a price. We're not that demand has no rights over us.

[26 : 56] Satan and his accusations are empty. They're empty words. He is utterly defeated.

There's a hymn that says, well may the accuser roar of sins that I have done.

I know them all and thousands more. Jehovah knoweth none. None. It's done. Those accusations, it's, he's defeated.

Death. Where is your sting? Where is your victory? Thanks be to God. Through Jesus Christ. He gives us the victory.

When we look at his alive body, all our enemies are decisively destroyed. Redemption, victory, it's all of the Lord. You did nothing. You can do nothing to add to that.

The Lord fights for you. Every other religion, you get converted, you better use the resources of religion to get better and hopefully you'll make it.

[28 : 08] Or if you're not religious, you better use the resources at your disposal, just try and win people's reputation, try and bless yourself as much as you can. The Christian faith, oh, we can relax.

It's all the Lord's doing. It's totally free and it's done. It's already done. It's a decisive victory. So travel back in time.

You ask that Israelite family, are you saved? They would not answer, of course I am. How dare you ask that? I'm a descendant of Abraham. I'm the tribe of Benjamin.

They wouldn't say, oh, I'm trying to be, I'm really trying. I think they would say something like, I was powerless. Powerless to free myself from a tyrannical master.

I was under the sentence of death. And Yahweh came in judgment. I deserved what the Egyptians got, but he gave me shelter under the blood of the lamb. I saw Yahweh's decisive victory.

[29 : 18] All my enemies are gone. Yes, I'm saved. I did nothing. It's finished.

I'm free to serve my creator, my redeemer. I'm in the wilderness. It may not look like abundant life, but he is present and he's guiding me to the promised land to make sure I'm going to make it.

That's the kind of words of a Christian. Are you saved? Are you a Christian? Have you come under the blood of the lamb?

Trusting his promise. I see my firstborn son's blood. I will pass over you. I have passed over you. See his alive body and know that your enemies are gone.

Well, if it's done, maybe I should just sit down. What do you do? What does a saved person do? It's done.

[30 : 39] I think we see three things in this passage of what a saved person does. They stand firm, they remember, and they rejoice.

aren't you a bit amazed at the Israelites before the Red Sea? How forgetful they are?

Like, you've just seen the ten plagues. Why are you so afraid? They're just irrational. They're looking at the present going, is it just because there's no space for our dead bodies in Egypt? Do you want to kill us out here? They think of their past. We were fine as slaves. It is, what are they talking about? Fear is so irrational but I do that all the time.

Fears plague me constantly. Fear not. Stand firm. Just be silent.

[31 : 47] Stand firm. Most of the Christian life is talking to your fears, just talking to your feelings, just preaching to yourself the victory of the cross. I just want to read a few New Testament passages.

When facing temptation, we're told to put on the armour of God. Remember our salvation. Take up the whole armour of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand firm.

Remember your salvation facing temptation. When your mortality looms large and this idea of the resurrection hope just feels like wishful thinking.

1 Corinthians 15, thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. My beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, just stand firm.

When disunity in the church discourages Philippians 1.27, only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, standing firm in one spirit with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.

[33 : 08] when the world and what they live for is so attractive, we're meant to remember that our citizenship is in heaven, glory is coming.

Yes, you don't belong here, but Philippians 4.1, therefore my brothers and sisters whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm. Most of the Christian life is just stand firm.

That's what a saved person does. look to the victory of the cross. In our lounge room, we've got a printed canvas of our wedding photo, of a wedding photo, and I've got the vows printed on it.

On our anniversary, whatever that word was, on our anniversary, anniversary, we watched the montage of our wedding day that Pete McMurray put together.

On my hand, I have this ring. Why? Why all these things? Am I trying to get married repeatedly?

[34 : 27] leave? Is my ring some mystical superpower? Like, like, like, Captain Planet?

Sorry, that's totally distracting. It's not to get married over and over again. It's not some mystical power. It's not trying to boast.

you know why we do all these things. It's to remember. It's to remember those life-changing promises.

That decisive day that changed who we are. Now, way more decisive is our salvation, our redemption. But just because we are saved doesn't mean we automatically think that way.

We are forgetful. we need to remember. If you notice in the Bible reading, the Lord gives so many reminders. The calendar changes.

[35 : 33] This is the new beginning of your life. It's the new beginning of every year and you start it with the feast of Passover. Yes, they sacrifice the lamb again.

Yes, they eat the bitter herbs and the unleavened bread. Yes, they get dressed again but only once, only once did that actually redeem them.

Every other time from then on it was to remember. That's the word used in the passage, remember. We didn't read chapter 13 but all the firstborn of their animals they had to redeem.

The firstborn of their children they had to redeem. Their everyday livelihood it was just everywhere in their family. as a corporate people the feast it's just we need to remember saved people are to remember that they were in slavery but the Lord redeemed them with a mighty hand who we belong to now.

That's why we the Lord's supper might it feels ordinary sometimes let's be honest it feels ordinary but let's not despise that we need that at the Passover meal the father presiding would say this is the bread of our affliction then a man came along and said this bread is my body do this in remembrance of me we need it we need to get together Hebrews 10 we need to gather there's I've

noticed I'm not sure people don't come to church every week I don't I don't want to make a rule about this but we need to get together to remember who we are that we are the redeemed whose we are what life is about to save people we stand firm and we remember we help each other remember and finally we rejoice singing is a bit weird as well some people love singing it's a bit weird when we have the songs we're not just stretching our legs in between the important parts in the service the tuning of our vocal chords might need redeeming when

[38 : 09] Jesus comes back but singing is just so appropriate if salvation is done it involves our whole body our mind our emotion our affections it just captures us in a way that other things can't it involves the whole community we're singing with one voice it expresses who we are it expresses worship it it's just what you do you can't add to your salvation we just see in chapter 15 that all the men all the women are just caught up in the excitement of being saved it's what saved people do a musical friend once told me he had to adjust his playlist of Christian songs he was listening to because it is appropriate to have songs that express my commitment to God and my feelings are important but the emphasis must be on the

Lord and what he has done he found it not good for his soul because it put the focus back on him in the song in chapter 15 all the focus is on the Lord and what he has done now praising God it's not because God is a words of affirmation love language God who just needs his love tank topped up he doesn't need it C.S.

Lewis talks about we all praise what we love and when we praise we complete our joy praise completes our joy this song the big downside of the last sections we're covering is we don't go into the detail the second person singular you is repeated 16 times you Lord you Lord you Lord you Lord you Lord salvation is all the Lord he kept his promises covenant promises and that fills them with confidence they will make it to the promised land he'll keep his promises to the end to be at home with God are you saved are you redeemed we might slip but we are covered by the blood of the lamb the victory is won all our enemies are gone and so together as his treasured blood bought possession what do we do we just stand firm we remember and we rejoice we sing the Lord is my strength and my song he has become my salvation this is my God and I will praise him sing to the Lord for he has triumphed gloriously will you pray with me let's pray father help us to preach the victory of the blood of the lamb to ourselves and to one another and help us to be a people that stand firm and that your salvation defines us and we remember that and make us a people full of praise in Jesus name Amen Amen