

Joshua 5:2-12

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- [0 : 0 0] There we go. Phil, there was an interesting new melody on that last song. Threw me for a second. But I mean, the way you and I grew up singing, you had a different melody, right? You know both melodies, yeah, yeah. Were you thrown for it? I was like, I wanted to go, Redeemed, redeemed, his child and forever I am.
- Different song. Anyway, praise the Lord. I love the new melodies. I know the new songs. And that one you played at the beginning, what a marvelous song. Out of Elevation Church, right? Wonderful.
- Good to see everybody here. Really nice to see Pat's sister, Trudy's daughters with us. Welcome from Texas, right? Glad to have you all here.
- And all the other visitors, guests, friends, everybody, glad to have you with us today. And it's amazing that we've got, this vacation time has begun.
- [1 : 0 2] I know of at least three families away on vacations, including Pastor John and his lovely wife, Teresa. Y'all be sure to tell Teresa I said she was lovely.
- Okay. Okay. So, anyway. Well, good morning, church. Good morning, Pastor. You know it's exciting to be here today.
- It's exciting because we don't come here as spectators. We come here because we are a part of the greatest story ever told.
- We are a part of God's unfolding story throughout all of history. And you and I have a part to play until Jesus Christ returns.
- And then on through all of eternity. It's an exciting thing that we have come to church today. It's exciting to be with God's people and to know that he's at work in your life, in my life, in our church, in our country.
- [1 : 5 9] And so we've come here today for the next half hour or so. We are going to immerse ourselves in the living word of God. The very words of God.
- Preserved for us to be able to read and to study. How blessed we are as a people. And so we're going to ask God that today his message through this word would touch our lives.
- And make us more like Jesus. Jesus preparing us for eternity. Preparing us for our promised land. We're going to look at how the Jews were entering their promised land.
- But God is at work right now. Also preparing us for the final and great promised land of God. Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Lord, here we are.
- We're here in the name of Jesus. We're trusting you to meet with us and speak to us and touch our hearts. That we would be changed, transformed, renewed by the Holy Spirit working through the word of God.
- [3 : 0 6] Change us, Lord, forever. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. So today, as has been pointed out in our songs today and the scriptures and all that Phil has already shared with us, we are looking at that point where the Hebrew children, the Israelites, the Jews, they've just crossed the Jordan River.

They've just set their feet in the promised land. And there's a few things that have to happen before they can proceed. Now, I'll have to confess this, and this is a great aggravation to me.

See, I had a lovely PowerPoint for you this morning, which right now is sitting on my dresser in a little USB drive. It's just a lovely thing.

But I had it right there, especially for the scriptures, because I'm going to pick and choose a little bit. But anyway, if you'll go with me then, and you're going to do it the old-fashioned way.

You know, I don't know how the church existed. How was it possible for 2,000 years they had church without all kinds of technology? How could they do it? Well, that's what we're going to do.

[4 : 14] We're going to go to Joshua chapter 5. Joshua chapter 5. And we're actually starting in about verse 2.

At that time, the Lord said to Joshua, make some knives and circumcise the Israelites.

Oh, my goodness. And so now let's skip on down to verse 6. You see, the Israelites had been moving about in the wilderness for 40 years.

Until all the men who were of military age when they had left Egypt had died. Since they had not obeyed the Lord.

For the Lord had sworn to them that they would not see the land he had solemnly promised their ancestors to give us. A land flowing with milk and honey.

[5 : 14] Instead, he raised up their sons in their place. And these were the ones that Joshua circumcised. And skipping just a few words there. Because they had not been circumcised along the way in the wilderness.

And then skipping on down to verse 9. And the Lord said to Joshua, Today I have rolled away the shame of Egypt from you. So the place has been called Gilgal to this day.

All right, let's stop right there. We're going to talk about that in a little bit. We'll come back and read some more in a minute. It's interesting. If you go back and look at the 10 plagues that came on Egypt.

And if you study through that, how long did that take? It's estimated it took about a year for Moses to go into Egypt. And the 10 plagues. It took God about a year to get all of his people out of Egypt.

But then it took him 40 years to get Egypt out of his people. Now does that ring a bell for you this morning? The fact is that you got saved.

[6 : 27] You became a forgiven follower of Jesus Christ. You became a child of God in a moment. The moment that you believed what the Bible said.

The moment you believed that the Bible had correctly convicted you of being a sinner. And the Bible convinced you that there was a judgment coming.

And the Holy Spirit worked through the word of God. And convinced you that there was an escape through Jesus Christ. That God himself had come as Jesus. And had taken your place.

And his blood had been spilled for you. And then when you believed it. And said, Lord forgive me. I am a lost and hopeless sinner. Accept me. Receive me. Then you were in that moment forgiven of all your sins.

For now and forever. Past, present and future. You were forgiven. And that happened to me 40 some years ago. But here I am like the Israelites 40 some years later.

[7 : 31] And there are still a lot of worldly desires and distractions that I'm still dealing with. Temptations that I'm still trying to put behind me.

And so I can relate to the story of the Jews coming out of Egypt. Wandering in the wilderness. Looking forward to their promised land.

And we also have a promised land that we're looking forward to. Now, it's interesting. During that time they were in the wilderness. I had never really realized.

You know you always learn something new when you study the Bible. I don't think I had really thought about or realized until this week. That apparently the whole 40 years they never celebrated the Passover a single time.

And nobody got circumcised. In 40 years. And so why not? What was going on? Well, apparently because they had rejected God.

[8 : 32] Their whole covenant with him was kind of put on hold. They lost the blessing. And now as they cross the Jordan River.

The covenant is being renewed. And we're seeing a new beginning then. And so that's what's happening in this. What somebody. One of my Bible scholars. This is actually an easy Sunday school question.

The kids can answer this one. But what had the Israelites done so that God did not let them go into the promised land that he had promised forever?

Where's my son's Google? When Moses sent some deep spots into the land to search it out. All the two of them came back and said, no man, they're giants.

We can't go over there. Okay. Yeah. And that angered God. Okay. So they would not trust that God was going to give them the promised land. They got scared.

[9 : 30] They refused to go in. And so God said, you bunch of unbeliever, stiff-necked, hard-headed, rebellious generation. I'm not going to let you go into my promised land.

And he just kind of paused the covenant promises for 40 years. So now we come to their entering in.

And as Phil has pointed out, they have to begin with a tremendous radical act of obedience. Circumcision. And I thought to myself, Lord, how did it happen in distributing these scriptures that I had to get the one that's all about circumcision?

Circumcision. Well, I remember when I learned what this word meant. I was about 10 or 11. And a preacher had preached a lot using this word.

And I went home and asked my parents to explain it. So I'm going to explain it to you as politely and nicely as I can. Just in case there's someone here who actually is not sure what this word circumcision means.

[10 : 36] And Lord, help us with this. Okay. So strange as this seems. And God does some strange things. Okay. How strange was it that he made somebody like you and somebody like me?

But strange as it may seem, God commanded, starting with Abraham, that to show the commitment and the covenant that every man and every baby boy, every male among the Jews would have some excess skin on his private part cut away.

It's a surgical procedure. It was an outward mark that the Jews carried with them that was a constant reminder that they had made a covenant with God.

Now, it's a strange thing. I can't imagine why God did it that way. But he did. And it was this outward physical thing. But what the Bible makes very clear, what was more important was that it was symbolic of what should have been an inner heart change.

And the Bible often speaks of a heart circumcision. In fact, let me read to you some scriptures, and I won't get you to go look them up, but some scriptures about this inward heart change.

[12 : 04] Several times in the Old Testament, I'll just pick one of them, Jeremiah 4.4. God says, circumcise your hearts unto the Lord.

You see, God really was disappointed that they were willing just to have an outward appearance of being his people. They were satisfied just to have circumcision in their flesh, but not really a change in their heart of true commitment.

And then in the New Testament, Paul begins to bring that home to us. He says in Romans 2, starting in 28, A person is not a Jew who is only one outwardly.

Nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and the circumcision of the heart has occurred by the Holy Spirit.

So you are a Jew today. If you have let God circumcise your heart. And we're going to talk about how does God do that? What does it mean? And I like in Philippians 3.3 where Paul wrote, It is we who are the circumcision.

[13 : 13] He's talking to Gentiles in Philippians. He's writing to Philippi, a Gentile city. And he says, we are the circumcision because we serve God in the spirit and we rejoice in Christ Jesus.

And we don't put any confidence in our flesh. So true circumcision is no longer this outward sign of a cutting away of some skin.

No. True circumcision is what God has done in your heart. I thought about this a lot. In fact, I actually spent about two hours on that lovely PowerPoint.

And I was going to be real proud of this next slide. I thought about how so many religions, including Christians, we like outward signs of our religion. And so I have this beautiful slide.

I'm going to describe it to you. It had pictures of people that we saw on our trip to England and others that we didn't see. But, for example, for the outward sign today of devout Orthodox Jews, you can see them in airports in big cities.

[14 : 18] The men wear these weird little black hats. They almost look like a top hat. And they have long curls of hair hanging down on the sides of their head. And we saw a bunch of them going through the airport.

I was going to show you a picture of one. Also, you'll see Hindus walking around with a dot on their head right there. You've seen that probably in a convenience store or a hotel.

The guy behind the counter waiting on you. He's got a dot right there. He's a Hindu. Maybe you've seen these guys with the big beards and the big turbans in the big cities. They are Sikhs.

Their religion is called Sikhism. And they wear the turban. It's an outward sign. Maybe you've been in some big city somewhere and you've seen a Buddhist monk.

They usually have these orange or yellow robes that are real elaborate, flow to the ground. And they're usually shaved head, long orange robes trailing behind them.

[15 : 15] They're an outward sign that they're a Buddhist monk. Surely you've seen the Mormon guys with their white shirts and their little black ties riding their bicycles down the street, going door to door.

They have an outward sign that they are Mormons. We could go on and on with this. Look at the Amish. The ladies wearing the little white hat on the back of their head.

And the men not shaving and wearing a very traditional type of jacket and pants and all. So many religions have an outward sign of their faith.

Even we Christians, I was real proud of this slide. It was full of Christian tattoos. How many people do you know now that they've got Jesus tattooed on them or a cross or a favorite scripture verse?

Nothing wrong with that. But what God really wants is a circumcision in your heart. More than the outward sign that you're a Christian. He wants it to be in your heart.

[16 : 21] That you've had a real change of heart. And you're a true, committed follower of God. And the mark on your life is spiritual, not just physical. And so they had to be circumcised.

They had just crossed the river. And before they could go, they had to renew this commitment. They had to say, God, you said be circumcised. We are going to do it. It's going to hurt.

But we're going to do it. And what's he saying, guys? He's saying, circumcise your heart. Put away your pride, your self-reliance. Say, God, cut me free from my idols.

We've all got idols. It's easy to get carried away with things that you are so obsessed with. And it can become your idol. God, cut those things away from us.

And declare and know, as the Jews did, that he is the king. He is the provider. He is the one we trust. His plans are better than my plans. I've got my own plans.

[17 : 22] I wake up every day. And I've got a list of what I want to do. And every day, God throws a monkey wrench in the middle of it. And I have to say, Lord, your plan is better than mine.

Circumcise my heart. Cut away my desire to control everything in my world. Because I can't control it anyway. It's in God's hands. And that is the circumcision of our hearts.

That we surrender them to the great work of Jesus Christ. So that's the first thing we see in this scripture. Their first act of obedience.

Now, as Phil pointed out, look at verse 10. If you've still got your Bible open, we're in Joshua 5. Look at verse 10. On the evening of the 14th day of the month.

So they've given some time for the men to get healed. While they were camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover.

[18 : 20] They haven't done it in 40 years. Why did they need to do it now? They needed to remember where they came from and how they got there. They had to remember it was blood on the door.

The blood of a lamb had covered their sins so that they had escaped from the death angel. And it was the blood of a lamb over the door that had brought them out of slavery.

And today, friends, you see right here in front of me, we're going to have our Passover that Jesus set up. Jesus said, here's what the Passover is really about. I am the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.

And it's the blood of this lamb, Jesus Christ, who takes away your sin. So the death angel passes over you and who frees you from slavery.

Slavery to sin. Slavery to all these problems and distractions and greed and whatever. Slavery to these things. The blood of Jesus Christ sets us free.

[19 : 26] So we also have our own Passover as a remembrance for us. Now this word Gilgal has very interesting roots.

It sounds like the Hebrew word for rolled away. And that's why in that verse, which verse was it here, verse 9, the Lord said to Joshua, Today I have rolled away the shame of Egypt from you.

And so they called the place Gilgal to this day. What was rolled away? The shame of their sinfulness. The shame of their rebellion.

The shame of their slavery to Egypt rolled away. And so when we celebrate the Passover, our sinful shame is also rolled away.

Now a terrible thing about guilt and sin and shame. There's no doubt some of you, I don't know how long you've been saved, but you're still ashamed of some things you did before you became a believer, before you became a follower of Jesus.

[20 : 37] The gospel says it's rolled away. The good news of Jesus, that shame is rolled away. And then there's some of you, and I'm sometimes in this category, that is kind of ashamed of ways that I have failed the Lord since I became a follower of Jesus.

Maybe even something this week, you're kind of ashamed the time you lost your temper or whatever you did this week. And you're kind of ashamed of it. And so the good news is that all of this shame is rolled away.

You don't need to condemn yourself. What does Romans 8, 1 say? There is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

Everybody in here, if you're a believer, would you please say, I am not condemned. There's no condemnation. It's rolled away.

Gilgal, it's rolled away. My voice isn't what it used to be, but I used to love this song. I don't know where it came from, but it went something like this.

[21 : 47] Rolled away. He rolled my sins away. Jesus rolled my sins away. It's a beautiful song. And it comes straight out of this scripture.

Gilgal. He rolled our sins away. It's something to sing about. There's no condemnation in your life. I don't care what you did yesterday. If you follow Jesus Christ, that's put away.

Rolled away. Christ, the blood of the Lamb, has covered your sins. You can't cover them yourself. But by faith, your sins are covered and washed away.

And you stand forgiven in the eyes of God. And that's why in 1 John 1, 9, one of my favorite verses, I need it so often. If we are, if we confess our sins, he is faithful to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

I need that verse so often. So often it will hit me on my land. Did I really say that? Was I really that mean to my sweet wife? Did I really lose my patience that badly?

[23 : 00] Lord, I come to you because I admit my sin. And you have promised that you are faithful. And that you will cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Unrighteousness.

If you've placed your faith in Jesus Christ, your sins are rolled away. Now, there is actually one final part to this sermon. But since we're talking about the Passover, and we're going to have the Lord's Supper or communion together, this is the right time to pause right now, I think, and do this.

Okay? So, I'm going to ask if Mike and Roger would come down and help us to serving our communion. Now, while they're coming, I want to remind you that at our church, we have an open communion, which means, if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, and you know He's forgiven your sins, you are welcome to participate in this communion.

If you have any doubt about that, they just passed the plague by. So, come on down, brothers. And I'm going to let you guys have a seat just a minute, because we're going to have to take a moment to pray.

So, we all just have a seat. Thank you. Thank you for having us. I'm going to say, actually, we went to a church. I forget which one it was now. But they said, they made some announcement.

[24 : 29] It was one we didn't go to. It was one of the cathedrals in London, and we were thinking about going there. Instead, we went to All Souls Church, which is another great church in London.

But I looked at their website, and they said, if you participate in communion in your church, we will accept you to participate in communion here. And I guess that's another way to say, if you're really a follower of Jesus Christ, you're welcome to participate.

But Paul said before you receive communion, it'd be good to take time and examine your own heart. So, we're going to take about a minute for silent prayer.

Ask the Lord to bring to your mind anything that you need to settle with God. Anything that you need to bring back and say, Lord, forgive me again. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Father, we just thank you for Gilgal. We thank you that our sins have been rolled off of us, rolled on to you, Jesus, and that you have covered our sins and taken them away by faith in you.

[26 : 06] Lord, we pray now that you will bless this bread and this juice and help us to again be committed and renewed in our faith.

In Jesus' name, amen. So, the night that they gathered, it was a Passover dinner, Jesus' last night with them, and He said, this bread is my body broken for you and do this, eat this, in remembrance of me.

So, we're going to eat this together now in remembrance of Him. Brothers. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[28 : 11] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

[31 : 45] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. your sins have been rolled away again heal you out brothers I'll let y'all go back and sit with your family and there's one little Brenda you might have a seat there because I've only got about four minutes left about four minutes left but don't set your timer preachers don't know how to tell time I just wanted to put in this one last little part Joshua 5 verse 11 and 12 the day after the Passover so remember they got circumcised a week later they observed the Passover the day after the Passover that very day they ate some of the produce of the land in other words there were crops growing they ate some of that crop and in verse 12 the manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land there was no longer any manna for the Israelites oh my goodness the manna has stopped for 40 years

I'm sure they got sick and tired of it every day they were eating this same bread that God provided like dew on the ground and they would eat it day after day 40 years they were in the wilderness there were no crops out there it kept them alive it must have been a marvelous food with all kinds of nutrients to keep them alive and whatever but they must have been sick of it and now when it stopped they probably panicked what are we going to do?

there's no manna on the ground God knew it was time now for something better it was time for milk and honey milk and honey the promised land maybe you're facing a challenge in your life and the way things have always been for you and you've gotten used to it and a routine and it's been good and you're at a point where some things are changing it might be changes in your family in your work your finances your health you might be facing some changes if you're a follower of God then believe that he's on your side and he's getting you ready for something better he's getting you ready for milk and honey you're his people and the promise of God is yours don't expect the worst when things happen in life expect that God is on your side trust him for it reach out and believe the Israelites could have gone oh my goodness there's no more manna let's get back across the river but they pressed on in and they continued to obey God and they continued to trust him and they inherited a land of milk and honey it was a free gift

[35 : 48] God fought all the battles he provided all the way but they had to obey step by step and trust him so all I'm saying is we've got a better deal than they had we have Jesus Christ and the scriptures and the Holy Spirit living with us daily surely we can trust him to be with us as well trust him church trust him if things aren't going right now the way you wanted them then maybe it's because God has planned it's time for milk and honey three takeaways from today circumcision make sure your heart is committed to God the Passover remember your salvation is in the blood of Jesus Christ and what he did and then a land of milk and honey trust God that he will provide for you let's pray and I'm going to ask brother Phil to come on up here and be prepared for our worship

Lord we thank you that you have surely been with us today and now help us to trust you as we leave this place help us to trust you to provide the milk and the honey and the promised land and to be obedient day by day in Jesus name we pray Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen