

# Exodus 11

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[ 0 : 00 ] We just shared how God has been blessing our church body this week in some really great and wonderful ways.

! And we want to praise Him for all those good things in our lives. But I wonder if there's anyone here today who hears about someone else's joy and says, you know, I don't have a lot of that myself.

And so I want to ask you, what is your biggest problem today? What is your big struggle right now? Maybe it's a relationship. Maybe it's something with your health, something in your work or in your school. Maybe it's a memory of something that you have done or something that's been done to you.

If you asked the people of Israel as we walk through the book of Exodus here what their biggest problem was, what do you think they would say?

[ 1 : 13 ] I think they would say that their biggest problem is that they were slaves in the land of Egypt. And today we're going to see that actually that wasn't their biggest problem.

But the Lord solved their biggest problem and He solved their slavery. And we'll see that that is His great purpose for our lives as well.

So if you will turn with me in your Bibles to Exodus chapter 11. If you don't have a Bible, we'd love to give you one. They're actually out today because we're in here.

They're out on the table. They're already bookmarked to today's passage. And as we turn there, I'd just like to bring us back up to speed of where we are in the book of Exodus.

What we're doing right now is we're doing a survey through the book of Exodus to see the big ideas, what's going on. Abraham's family has been brought to Egypt through the very interesting story of Joseph, which we looked at a few weeks ago.

[ 2 : 25 ] They have grown very prominent in the land and that has caused the Egyptians to be a little bit scared of them. And so they enslave the Hebrew people.

The Lord's people are under tremendous burdens and they cry out to God. He hears their cry. He says, I have heard their cry.

I know their sufferings. And so He comes to save them. He sends Moses and through Moses, He works, as we saw last week, nine signs. These nine signs are warnings to Egypt.

They're accompanied each time with, let my people go. And Pharaoh hardens his heart over and over again. And so today we will see in Exodus chapters 11 and 12, the last sign.

I know what we saw last week were that these original signs, the first nine, cast the land of Egypt into chaos. But it didn't destroy the land of Egypt.

[ 3 : 30 ] Today we will see judgment on their sin in a new and unique way. So join me in Exodus chapter 11. The Lord said to Moses, Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt.

Afterward, he will let you go from there. When he lets you go, he will drive you away completely.

Speak now in the hearing of the people that they ask every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor for silver and gold jewelry.

And the Lord gave favor to the people in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.

So Moses said, Thus says the Lord, About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die.

From the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the hand mill. And all the firstborn of the cattle, there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been before, nor ever will be again.

[ 4 : 42 ] But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, Get out, you and all the people who follow you.

And after that, I will go out. And then he went from Pharaoh in hot anger. Then the Lord said to Moses, Pharaoh will not listen to you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh. And the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land. Let's pray. Father, in these next moments, Lord, bless my words.

Help me to proclaim your word faithfully. Father, Father, will you do great work in our hearts. We pray that in the name of Christ. Amen. We see here in Exodus chapter 11, that this last sign is something different.

[ 6 : 27 ] It's a destructive act, and very different from all the other acts. Flies are annoying. Frogs are annoying. They disrupt things. They are chaotic.

Darkness disrupts things. But death, death is final. And so the Lord says, I am turning now to judge the people of Egypt.

And see, this plague, this final plague, the death of the firstborn in every family, that would be devastating to us, would it not? Those of you who are parents, how would you feel? What would that do to you? But this would be even more crippling to the Egyptians. That's because the firstborn and family units were a little bit different then.

Here one theologian said, the monarchy was hereditary. The eldest son was known as the crown prince. The hope of the whole nation was on Pharaoh's son.

[ 7 : 37 ] Estates descended to the eldest son, and in many cases also high dignities. So there was no more severe a blow that could have been sent on the nation if it were not to be completely annihilated than the loss in each house of the hope of the family.

In our society, we have hopes for our children, but they are not the hope of our family. That's not how rugged American individualism works, right?

And so this would have been an even more severe blow than it would be to us today. See, the Lord wasn't simply judging the nation. He was extinguishing their hope.

And that's why there's no bigger blow that he could have given to the nation of Egypt without actually destroying them. And destroying them was not his goal.

Remember last week, as we looked at the seventh plague, the Lord said, for by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth.

[ 8 : 49 ] But for this purpose, I have raised you up to show you my power so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.

And since dead men tell no tales, he wasn't interested in cutting them off from the earth because he wanted his glory to be known throughout the earth.

Pharaoh is not God. The Lord is God. And so as we saw last week that he is revealing himself, he's revealing himself.

Last week we saw so clearly he is the sovereign Lord. The sovereign Lord who fights for his people. And this week we see that he is the just God.

And this plague is different in other ways too, right? And we look at verse four. Moses says, thus says the Lord, about midnight, I will go out in the midst of Egypt.

[ 9 : 46 ] This time the Lord is doing the sign entirely on his own. He will do this. There's no proxy. Moses is not having Aaron touch the Nile with his staff. Vengeance, friends, belongs to the Lord.

That has something to say for each of us, probably in our relationships. It's different because it's a real judgment, right? It's different because it's God's personal touch.

It's different because it applies to everyone. Let's continue into chapter 12. 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 10th 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 neighbor 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.

[ 11 : 00 ] You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the 14th day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

Then they shall take some blood and put it on the 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 roast it, 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.

Let's move ahead to verse 21. Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans and kill the Passover lamb.

Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning.

[ 12 : 05 ] For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians and when he sees the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you.

You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. And when you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service.

And when your children say to you, What do you mean by this service? You shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel and Egypt when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.

And the people bowed their heads and worshipped. Then the people of Israel went and did so. As the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

We can see why the Lord is judging Pharaoh for enslaving a whole nation of people.

[ 13 : 09 ] We can even sense God's judgment in judging the whole nation of Israel for allowing this to happen. They stood by and reaped the benefits of that slavery.

But see, the interesting thing is that Israel is subject to the same judgment unless, unless they are covered by the blood of the Lamb.

See, the Hebrews had been spared from many of the other signs, the nine previous signs, without lifting a finger. We think of the cattle, the plague on the cattle.

The Lord simply didn't strike their cattle. We think of the darkness, the last plague, the darkness that could be felt for three days that cast the nation of Egypt into turmoil.

The Lord simply kept shining light on the nation of Israel and Goshen. But, this one, if they didn't lift a finger, if they didn't, by faith, put the blood of the Lamb on the door, they would have been subject to the exact same judgment.

[ 14 : 23 ] You see, this time, when it comes to God's actual judgment, not just the chaos of the previous signs, but the judgment on sin, Israel also needed protection.

Why? A few weeks ago, we were in our survey through the book of Genesis. We were looking at the narrative of Noah. And Jordan preached that week, and the whole sermon was basically about this one idea, that the Lord is a just judge, and the entire world is justly under his judgment.

That's not something that we like to hear very often, but it is something that is absolutely true. In the book of Romans, chapter 3, Paul asks, but Paul has, up to that point, said in chapters 1 and 2, that the Gentiles, those who are not of the nation of Israel, have abandoned the Lord, have been an affront to him, tried to be gods themselves, and that's the story of every human being.

We cast off God's rule. We go after our own way. And then he asks, are we Jews any better off than the rest of the world? No, not at all, for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin.

As it is written, none is righteous. No, not one. No one understands. No one seeks God. All have turned aside. Together, they have become worthless.

[ 15 : 59 ] No one does good, not even one. Their throat is an open grave. They use their tongues to deceive. The venom of asps is under their lips. Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.

Their feet are swift to shed blood. In the paths, in their paths are ruin and misery. And the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

And friends, that is the state of every single person in the world. Until they are covered with the blood of the Lamb.

And so God is a just judge to judge the entire world. God is a just judge of God. But this is not a passage that revels in God's judgment.

It doesn't celebrate it. Sometimes people say, oh, the God of the Old Testament is vengeful and angry. We don't like him very much. But if you look, there is only one verse in the entire chapter that actually discusses the judgment.

[17:13] Verse 29. Here it is. 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.

That's it. this passage does not celebrate God's judgment. The Lord does not glory in the destruction of sinners.

He is just. But that is not his focus. This passage is all about instituting a ceremony, a Passover ceremony that will be their guide for ages to come.

It is a celebration of his redemption. that is the focus here. This is not an angry God. This is a God of love and mercy. And it's a celebration for us as well.

This Exodus event, the Exodus is when Pharaoh says go. Exodus just means going out. It will become for the nation of Israel the centerpiece of their religion.

[18:27] They will always be looking back to it. Future redemptions are cast in the same language as this. When the nation of Israel is in captivity in Babylon going, when they are redeemed and brought back, they call it another Exodus.

They call Ezra another Moses. And so this is the centerpiece of their whole worldview. But what's even more interesting is that it points forward to something else.

Something greater. Something bigger. Excuse me. Something bigger. Where the Lord does another Exodus. He brings a further salvation.

And I'm going to look briefly at the book of Luke chapter 9. It's probably a familiar story to many of us. It's the transfiguration of Christ. You don't need to turn there. I'll read it for us.

Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered and his clothing became dazzling white.

[19:33] And so we are seeing a bit. Jesus is peeling back the world to let us see a little bit of heaven, to see a little bit of his glory. And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah.

Moses, the very Moses, from this passage today. Two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. Many of you, if you look there, Luke 9, 31, they spoke of his departure. You might have a note there in your Bible. It might say, literally, Exodus.

And that's exactly what the text says. They were talking about Exodus, his Exodus, that he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

And they are thinking of the cross and the empty two. You see, in the end of the day, the Lord did not take the firstborn son.

[20:41] He gave his own for you and for me. and then Jesus, even more, took the Passover meal, the meal that's instated here in Exodus 11 and 12. He took that meal and turned it into the Lord's Supper and said, this is my body, this is my blood for you.

So that when Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 5 reflects on Jesus and what he has done for us, he realizes and says for us, Christ, our Passover lamb has been sacrificed.

The last plague, the plague of judgment, the plague that brought judgment on Egypt and liberation and life and eventually the promised land for the people of Israel points forward, points forward to the blood of the lamb of God.

And so if you are in Christ, you have been covered just like the people of Israel with the blood of the innocent of the perfect lamb of God.

The Lord has passed over your sin because the just judgment, death, has already been satisfied on the cross of Christ.

[22:06] Christ. What do we do with that? What do we do with that? Well, the passage tells us what to do with it. I love it when the passage tells me what to do with it because then it's real easy to tell you what to do with it.

The first thing it tells us to do is get covered in the blood of Christ. And so if you do not know Christ today, if you have not run to him and said, I do not want Egypt, Lord, save me.

Cover me in the blood of your son. You need to do that or else the judgment that fell on Egypt which prefigured a greater judgment remains on you.

But God freely gives to all the blood of his precious son to redeem them from sin and death. So that's the very first thing covered in the blood of Christ.

Second, this passage requires us to reorient our life around the salvation that the Lord brings to us.

[ 23 : 12 ] Look at chapter 12 verse 2. This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.

This redemption recalibrated everything in their lives. it's as if to say this is the new beginning. This is the centerpiece.

This marks your perception of reality. Time changes now because you are bought by the blood of the Lamb.

They begin their year now with this liberation. They plan their calendar based on this. It's the beginning of their whole lives.

And so their lives are marked by it. And I want to ask, are we marked by our salvation? Are the rhythms of our lives marked by our salvation?

[ 24 : 12 ] Do we arrange our calendar in ways that reflect the nature of our redemption? Are our memories marked by this?

How we recall our lives, when you tell yourself your story, when you think about what your story is, is it centered on the cross of Christ?

On our Passover Lamb? You can tell a lot about people based on how they tell their story. I'm convinced of that.

I met my, several years back, living in another place, I met the girlfriend in front of my neighbor. I asked her, hey, tell me your story. And I was greeted with just a blank stare.

Our conversation went just about how you would expect. She didn't have a story. She hadn't thought, she wasn't thinking about life in any meaningful sense.

[ 25 : 21 ] She was just kind of going through the motions. And she didn't have a story to tell and she didn't have a conversation to have. If you meet an American and you are introducing yourself to them, how are they going to introduce themselves back?

Most people will say, I am an engineer at electric boat. I'm a teacher. I'm a parent. I'm a cadet. I am my occupation. We tell our story based on our vocation.

If you go to other places in the world, actually, in fact, most other places in the world, and you introduce yourself to somebody, they are going to introduce themselves to you based on where they come from.

So you're going to hear about their geography, their community. You're going to hear about their family. That's how they introduce themselves. I am one of six brothers. I am from this region, and this is what we are known for.

It's not on the basis of our vocation. Many of you who have traveled internationally know what that's like to have an introduction that's very different than one you'd hear here in Connecticut.

[ 26 : 37 ] You can tell a lot about a couple when you ask to hear their story, the story of their relationship. You can tell, is this a partnership?

Is this just a fling? People are just having fun together. Is this something that's going somewhere? You can tell very quickly. You can tell if God's a part of it.

And I want to ask you, what is your story? I asked you at the beginning, what's your biggest problem?

Right? Is that the thing that rules your story? Or is your vocation, your job, your school, what you do, is that the thing that rules your story?

are your aspirations your story? Are your things your story, the things that you have, the things that you want?

[ 27 : 47 ] Is a relationship your story? This passage demands that your story, that my story, be about, centrally, be about Jesus standing in my place at the cross.

Time is being reoriented. This will be the first month of your year. This will be the beginning of days for you. Time itself is being rerouted and saying this is the line in the sand.

This is your story. That's why we sing hymns like, there is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains.

Ever since by faith I saw the stream thy flowing wounds supply, redeeming love has been my theme, and will be till I die.

Is redeeming love your theme? does it calibrate your whole life? Why does that matter? Why am I so concerned about this being your story, the centerpiece of your life?

[ 29 : 07 ] Why does that matter? Well, every decision we make in our lives, we make it based on the story we're telling ourselves. We evaluate every decision based on what's important to the story, what advances the story, what gets us the thing we want.

And every story has people who want things. That's how conflict happens, that's how adventures happen, that's how life happens. So what you do with your time, what you do with your energy, your money, your relationships, what you do with everything, you make that decision based on your story.

If your story is about achieving the American dream, you're going to prioritize one set of values, one set of things, one set of achievements, and your life will look a certain way.

If your story is about your career, you're going to prioritize a different set of values, and your life will look a little bit different.

It'll look like work, probably. If your story is about looking good in front of other people at church, you'll prioritize things that make you look holy in public, work.

[ 30 : 21 ] And your life will look like a performance. If, however, your story is about a cross and an empty tomb, if your story is about that, you're going to prioritize humbly walking with Jesus Christ day by day.

And your life will look like his. on the last day, he will say to you, well done, good and faithful servant. That's why I care what your story is about.

See, ours is a different story. We don't just float along with what the story that our culture tells us. American culture, corporate culture, military culture, whatever culture we're in.

2 Corinthians 10, we read, we take every thought captive to obey Christ. Friends, I hope your story is about Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb.

So, what do we do with this passage? We make sure that we have run to Christ, to be covered in the blood of the Lamb. We reorient our whole story around him.

[ 31 : 43 ] Next, we teach that's part of this passage. If you look again at chapter 12, verses 24 and following, you shall observe this right as a statute for you and for your sons forever.

And when you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. And when your children say to you, what do you mean by this service? you shall say it is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt when he struck the Egyptians, but spared our houses when the people bowed their heads and worshipped.

So first, this is an instruction to parents. Parents, it is our role, it is our responsibility. This is our second most important role in our lives, right behind following Christ ourselves, is showing Christ to our children.

Now, things like Children's Church, which we just prayed for, are great helps, but they are not the sum total of teaching our children. To walk with Christ day by day, right?

And if you need help passing your faith to your child, please reach out to one of the elders. Please reach out to someone in your community group, another parent at Shoreline who you see doing a good job, ask them to help you.

[ 33 : 11 ] This is a salvation for a people. Sometimes as Americans we think so much in terms of individuals, which is absolutely true, every individual needs to be covered in the blood of Christ, but we are saved into Christ's body.

And we walk together as a family. So if you need help with that, don't be afraid to walk out and look for it.

But it's not just to parents, because the Lord wasn't only concerned with teaching Israel when he brought these signs Jesus to Egypt.

He was again concerned with the whole world. Exodus 7, the Egyptians shall know that I am God. Exodus 8, I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that the Egyptians and the world may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the

earth.

See, over and over, again in this passage, we are seeing that this is not just about Egypt and Israel. This is about the entire world. And so this event is meant to be proclaimed to all the earth.

[ 34 : 23 ] And so when we say that we are to teach with this, it also means that we are to proclaim this to the world around us. And so friends, this is not just for parents, it is for every one of us.

Now, let me give you an idea, just a little help, on how to make that a reality in your life, a very easy way. Let's combine reorienting our calendar, which we just talked about, reorienting our story and our whole lives around it, with this idea of teaching the world about Jesus Christ.

We just talked about introducing ourselves and what that looks like in our context, right? People will say, I do this, that's who I am, that's what I do, that's what I'm about, that's my story. When somebody asks you, what do you do, you can say, I'm a teacher, or an engineer, or a parent, or a cadet, or whatever, that's what they're expecting, and, say, and, I serve children in children's ministry at my church, or I'm part of a small group Bible study, or I sing with a praise team at my church, or, whatever it is that you are actively doing in your church body, that is a simple way to say, hey, my story is about more than just work, and it's an entry point for a conversation about the Lord and the redemption that he has brought to our lives.

It is that simple. Someone might take the bait and say, what do you mean by that? What's that? You can go down that conversation. It's a very simple way to tie how our story has been reoriented around the cross, around the blood of the Lamb of God, to just a simple conversation.

And maybe somebody's not ready for it, but then that's sitting in the back of their head, huh, that person sits at mod. I'm going to ruminate on that. It might put a stone in their shoe, so to speak. And last, we've said so far, what do we do with this?

[ 36 : 22 ] We put ourselves underneath the blood of the Lamb. we reorient our story around that redemption. We teach both in the church, in our families, and to the whole world.

And last, we remember. Let's look again at verses 21 through 28. Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans and kill the Passover lamb.

Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning.

For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses.

You shall observe this right as a statute for you and for your sons forever. and when you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service.

[ 37 : 31 ] And when your children say to you, what do you mean by this service? You shall say it is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover. For he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses and the people bowed their heads and worshipped.

Then the people of Israel went and did so, as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron. So they did. This passage asks us to call our salvation to mind, to remember, to take it with us as we go, to teach it to our children, to plan a regular celebration of it, and I love that.

And the people bowed their heads and worshipped. That's where we end, friends, is worship of our king, our great redeemer. So, when you look at your life and consider the story that you tell yourself about who you are, remember that your story is about this greater exodus, the greater lamb.

And it has a way of reframing everything else in your life. So that when you remember that biggest problem that Israel thought they had, that slavery is a big problem, isn't it?

Our problems in this world are not small, they are big. But when we call our problems to mind, we remember also that a greater salvation has been wrought for us in Jesus Christ.

[ 39 : 14 ] And that he promises on the last day, to break for every chain of slavery and suffering and sin because there is a cross and there is an empty tomb.

That tomb is as empty today as the list of your sorrows will be on that last day when he brings salvation to its end and we see him face to face.

Friends, let's pray. Oh, Lord, our God, how great a salvation you have made for us.

Lord, will you help us to spend our whole lives remembering, teaching, reorienting our story around this great story, the story of your redemption.

resurrection. Father, we thank you that you have sent Christ, our Passover lamb, to rescue us from the just judgment against our sin.

[ 40 : 38 ] Help us, Father, to remember. Help us, Father, to see you in our story every day. And, Father, may it find its end in our worship.

Lord, we praise the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.