

The Firstborn Belongs to The Lord

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[0 : 0 0] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. We're going to learn a tremendous truth tonight to help you get inside the heart of God, help you understand what God's doing.

If you go with me to Exodus chapter 13, it's a very exciting chapter. I enjoyed so very much getting ready to preach this. If you take notes, if you do that sort of thing, I call this the firstborn belong to the Lord.

It's just straight out of the text. The firstborn belong to the Lord. I'm going to work our way through chapter 13. We'll look at all 22 verses, Lord willing. Time permitting, we'll look at all 22 verses.

This is a real deep insight into what God's going to do about offerings. We hear about tithes, and we hear about offerings, and we hear about our giving. And this is going to really put things into perspective.

In chapter 13, he makes this big announcement. I now own all the firstborn. That's what he says. I now own all the firstborn.

[1 : 0 2] And you're going to read that with me. And then if you get that, if you understand that, it's going to be like, don't forget what I did. Don't forget what I did. I own the firstborn. Because I did great things.

Teach your children. I own the firstborn. And that's what he's going to work through in this chapter. If you remember what happened in the book of Exodus. If you remember what happened in the book of Exodus, in Exodus chapter 12.

And before that, if you remember what's happened, there's this plague that's come across. And all the firstborn have died. Everybody's kid has died. All the firstborn animals have died. Firstborn to your dog.

Firstborn to your cat. Firstborn to your sheep. Firstborn to your goat. Firstborn to your... Everybody's firstborn died except one group of people. Israel. And when Israel, when he got there, the death angel comes across.

And when he sees that blood on the doorpost, he passes over. And he lets him keep all their firstborn. That night, everybody's crying all over Egypt. But when he gets to our place, the Israel's place, God's people's place, he doesn't take any lives.

[2 : 0 1] But in chapter 13, he says, now I take the lives. Watch this. Read with me, if you would, Exodus chapter 13. First thing I want you to write down. The firstborn are his. Exodus 13.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Sanctify unto me all the firstborn. Whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast. Underline this.

It is mine. What a statement. What a statement. By sacrificing the Lamb of God, his son, and saving their sons, he now claims all the firstborn are his.

The God of heaven says, I did something miraculous. I saved your children. I gave mine, saved yours. Now yours belong to me.

He says in chapter 13, verse 2, Sanctify unto me. Put a circle around it. Make them holy. Set them apart. They belong to me. They were to give all their children, all their animals to God.

[3 : 04] The firstborn belongs to God. That's a strong statement. It's going to really get strong. It'll help you understand about giving and tithing. But if you understand what happened that night, every firstborn died.

Every firstborn died. You've got this beautiful mare and staggering out there, and their firstborn foal had died. You've got these beautiful animals out there, and they died.

Everybody's died. Dying is taking place everywhere. And in their homes, they died. Look at chapter 13, verse 11. And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it to you, that thou shalt set apart unto the Lord all that opens the matrix.

Every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast, the males shall be the Lord's. Look at that. When you get over into promised land, don't you forget, every firstborn male belongs to me.

If you've got your Bible open, chapter 13, verse 12, circle every firstling. They could keep their firstborn donkey, if only they would sacrifice a lamb in its place. Look at chapter 13, verse 13.

[4 : 10] And every firstling of an ass, thou shalt redeem with a lamb. And if you will not redeem it, you will break its neck. Either way, it'll be worthless to you.

Man, this is strong. I mean, this is like shocking. God says, I saved your kids, now they belong to me. I saved your kids, now they belong. That's about what it sounds like something he said in the New Testament.

I saved you, now you belong to me. Amen. He said, I saved you, now you belong to me. Look at him, he says, and every firstling of an ass shalt thou redeem with a lamb. And if thou wilt not redeem it, then shalt thou break his neck.

All the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem. Your firstborn child, you're going to redeem it. You want to keep your kid, you're going to bring a special offering. You're going to bring a special offering.

They would make a special offering for their firstborn children. Now, let me just stop here a second before I go on. I'm going to show you what happens in the chapter. Are you looking this way, listen? Check this out. God said, with the sacrifice I've made, I own your firstborn.

[5 : 08] I'm the firstborn. That means the night he came over, the night he came over Israel in Egypt, had they not put the blood on the door, and I was still in my daddy's house, I would have died.

If it wouldn't have been me, and I'm married now, and I've got my own kids, Chris would have died. But instead of dying, I would have put the blood there. I have put the blood there in my life. I have said I believe in Jesus, and the blood's been applied to my life.

And so he saved my kid because he let a lamb die in his place, which is a symbol of Jesus dying in our place. And he said, but from now on, Austin, everything you have, the first thing that's born from it belongs to me.

That's wild. Here's a new family, and their new baby's coming. And when their new baby's born, that baby doesn't belong to them. That baby belongs to God.

By the way, Hannah did that, you recall? She wanted a baby so bad in 1 Samuel, she said, God, I'd like to have a baby. And she said, I will give you my firstborn. And she gave Samuel. Hannah gave Samuel to the Lord.

[6 : 14] Now look, if you would, at Numbers chapter 3 and verse 44. Numbers 3 and 44. The Bible says, And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel.

And the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle, and the Levites shall be mine. I am the Lord. And those that are redeemed of the 273 of the firstborn of the children of Israel, which are among the Levites.

I'll read just a tad more to you. I did give you the right verse. Betty always says I don't give the right. Did I give the right verse? Did I give the right verse, Betty? Thank you, ma'am. Because I don't want to hear about it on the way home.

Check what he did. So the first thing he does, he establishes clearly, I own the firstborn. Then later on he says, I'll tell you what I'll do. You give me the Levites, and I'll let you keep your kid.

You give me the Levites, I'll let you keep your kid. And you give me the Levites' animals, and I'll let you keep your animals. But I am the owner, and I get to make decisions. Because you would be dead, and your kid would be dead, and your animals would be dead if it hadn't been for what I did.

[7 : 18] Then later on he's going to say to them, I'll let you keep the Levites. That's where they got stuck with having to take care of a whole tribe. A whole tribe. From now on, they're going to have to take care of the tribe of Levi.

The tribe of Levi doesn't have their own fields. They don't have their own farms. They are dedicated to the ministry of the work. And they're going to be taken care of. They're going to live off the offerings.

They're going to live off all this stuff. And by the way, don't be complaining, he says. Because remember, I'll let you have the Levites. I was good to you. I was going to take your kid. I was going to take your kid, but I'll just put a preacher in his place.

Y'all take care of him. I'll put a song leader in his place. Y'all take care of him. That's what they did. So they had a whole tribe. So there will be 12 tribes of Israel supporting one tribe of Israel. And that one tribe of Israel, their only job will be ministry related.

When they had a firstborn child, they were to make a special offering. Look at Numbers chapter 3 and verse 47. Thou shalt even take five shekels apiece by the pole.

[8 : 15] At the shekel of the sanctuary shalt thou take them. And the shekel is 20 geras. And thou shalt give the money wherewith the odd number of them is redeemed unto Aaron and unto his sons. So they took an offering.

When their sons were born, they were reminded, you get to keep your son. Let's take an offering. You get to keep your son. We'll take an offering. And take care of the preacher.

Take care of the Levites. Take care of them. Because you owe God the life of your firstborn child. You owe God the life of your firstborn animals. It might help you to consider that giving is not really a big deal.

Now this is a thought I'd like to somehow help you. You know, I think sometimes we balk at giving. I think there are probably people in this room, and I don't know. You know, I don't know anything about what you give.

I do get a giving report on what Betty gives. And I do get a giving report on what Austin gives. That's the only giving reports I get here. I don't know if the deacons tithe. I don't know if the World Evangelism Committee tithes.

[9 : 10] I don't know if the Sunday school teachers tithe. I don't know anything about it. But I will tell you this, we balk at that. A lot of us are like, I don't really want to give. I feel like the church asks for too much money. I feel like God wants too much money.

I feel like this idea that God ought to ask for money. I think that's going past it. I just don't like that. But that's because you don't understand the Bible. And here's what the Bible said. I saved your firstborn.

And so you owe me your firstborn. Your firstborn dog. Your firstborn cat. Your firstborn sheep. Your firstborn horse. Your firstborn camel belongs to me. You understand? Everything.

I can remember on the farm, you'd have to be an animal keeper to get it. But man, birthing time is a big deal. And boy, when that little calf was going to be born, especially that first calf, maybe that little heifer wasn't able to have a fullborn.

I helped him be born all the time. It was a wild time. But that calf, that belongs to Jesus. That goes to God. You don't get to keep it. That was the story. Then he said, here's the thing. I just want you to realize, I saved your kid.

[10 : 12] You owe me your kid. Is that wild enough? Y'all ready to go home yet? I mean, this is like crazy. I mean, it's like, praise God he didn't kill my son.

Now it's all over. He walks out and says, I didn't. But now I own him. And here's what we're thinking right now. Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. I don't really want God to put my kid in ministry. I don't really want God to take my kid's life.

I really have other plans for my family. Here's what God says. I saved him. Now if I could real quick, I won't do it. But I could take you to the New Testament. You know what he said? You are not your own.

You were bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body. It's his, not yours. That's what the New Testament says. Jesus said, seek me first. Put me first. The firstborn belong to him.

The firstborn belong to Jesus. By the way, it's not that big a deal for me to give an offering. It's not that big a deal for me to give money. When I consider all that God has saved me from. When I consider that I was on my way to hell and I had no hope of eternity, I was going to spend my eternity in hell and Jesus saved me.

[11 : 18] And then he looks at me and says, Austin, give. I ought to be able to say, well, thank Jesus. I'll be glad to give. I would be dead and I would be in hell. I will be glad to give. He gave his son for us.

He has the rights to our sons. He owns all of it. But giving or being stingy with what we have should be totally foreign to us. Totally foreign to us.

So I'll stop and remind you and then I'll get back to the passage. Let me just show you what happened. That night, Pharaoh's son died. And the poorest guy in this country, his son died.

And all their animals were dying. It wasn't just the firstborn kids. All the animals were dying. I'm telling you, there are death everywhere. Stench everywhere. Carcasses everywhere. Dead bodies everywhere that have got to be taken care of.

But God saved Israel's firstborn. All of them. They were saved. If they put the blood on the door, they were saved. And so God now says in chapter 13, all right.

[12 : 21] You saw what I did for you. Now give me your kids. Can I just stop and say somewhere in there, you and I need to back up and say, you know, I've been a little resistant toward God because I never considered that he did anything so big for me.

But he did do something big for you. Where would you be today? You'd be in hell. What would be your future? It'd be hell. What would be the way we could fix things with God?

We couldn't. God did a great work. The firstborn belonged to him. That's the first lesson tonight. It ought to change the way you look at giving. You owe him everything.

You owe him your life. I'm not trying to take an offering tonight. That's just where the passage is. You owe him everything. So how could we be stingy? Second thing I want you to look at. Chapter 13, verse 2. Remember. Write that word down.

Remember. And I know we saw it last week. Remember. Chapter 12, verse 3. God never. Chapter 13. Excuse me. Chapter 13, verse 3.

[13 : 20] And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day. Underline that. Remember this day in which you came out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. For by the strength of the hand of the Lord brought you out from this place, and there shall no unleavened bread be eaten.

Underline this. Remember. Remember. And the second thing I want you to underline in that verse is, by the strength of the hand of the Lord. He said, Don't you dare forget what God has done.

And then always remember, it was God who did it. It was his strength. It doesn't take, it's not that far a stretch. Maybe you don't see this. Maybe you don't understand it. But there's something that happens between the time we humble ourselves and get saved, and all of a sudden we see our lives change, and we're no longer the guy we used to be.

We've got a new life. We've overcome our vices. We've overcome our sin. We've overcome the way we used to be. We're a new creature. And something inside of us all of a sudden starts lifting up in praise, and we're like, I'm a pretty good guy.

I'm not like I used to be. I turned my life around. I turned my life around. I turned over a new leaf. I'm a new person. It's easy to think that. If you want to remember me, it would be very easy for Israel in just a few years to be thinking, man, Moses was slick when he went in there and talked to them.

[14 : 31] Moses really pulled the wool over on Pharaoh. Moses was really sharp, and we were good, man. They were scared of us, and they gave us all that money, and they let us leave. Here's what God said. No, no, no, no, no.

You remember it right. It was me that did it all. It was me that did it all. Why do I have the privilege of standing here tonight with so many blessings in my life, having been married to the same woman for 40 years, and having all the blessings and all the privileges I have?

It's not because I had such a good dad. It's not because I'm such a smart guy. It's not because I'm so full of character. It's not because of all that. It's because God's been good to me. I need to remember it's the strength of the hand of the Lord that did all that work in my life.

As they remembered, they would remember it was by the strength of the hand of the Lord. It's easy once you've gotten the victory and some time has gone by to slowly start to think that you did it. You did it.

How many good Christian families will say, that's not how we do things. That's not how we are. Truth is, that is how we are. We're as dirty and wicked as anybody else. And if it hadn't been for God intervening in our lives, we would be there too.

[15 : 35] Amen. But it's so easy for you to think, well, my family, we don't do that stuff like those nasty people do. You will begin to think that you deserved it. You were smart enough, sly enough, hardworking enough.

You will think that not everyone is like you. They couldn't get the victory, but you could. But you will remember what God did, that God is going to do great things again. So he says to them, he says, you're to remember, you're to remember what God did.

But as I remember what God did, I can see what God's going to do. As I remember what God did, I can see what God is going to do in my life. Look if you would in chapter 13 and verse 5.

In chapter 13 and verse 5, they're not there yet, but he says to them in chapter 13 and verse 5, it shall be when the Lord shall bring you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which he swear unto thy fathers to give thee a land flowing with milk and honey, that you will keep this service in this month.

That's a wild verse. You've got to mention where they are. Listen, they've just come out of Egypt. They are scared, slapped to death. They're really, you know, we're going to see a lot of interesting things happen.

[16 : 45] They're going to be scared at all the problems they got in front of them. They're going to be scared at the water in the wilderness. They're going to have problems believing God. And he said, listen, remember what I did. And when he said, remember what I did, he said, and remember this, you're going to take this same feast when you get to where I told you you're going.

I've promised you some land. It's going to be over 40 years before they get there. But he said, I promised it and it will happen. Thou shalt keep this service in this month. There will be a day sooner or later that you'll be laying on a bed and you'll be sick or your family will and you'll be hurting and you'll be desperate and you'll be wondering, where is God?

But if you know what God did in the past, you'll be able to say, he brought me through it the last time. He saved me. He changed my life. He did a work in me. And though I am nervous and I am uneasy about this and I'm a little bit scared about this, I do know this much.

The God who saved me, the God who's done all this will be the same God who gets me all the way through. I remember. Notice the story isn't simply remember what I did, but it is, it shall be. It shall be.

God's going to take me all the way through. Just know, we are remembering the past and what he did for us, but we're also remembering, as we remember the past, we know what he'll do again in the future. One day soon, you will be even more victorious.

[17 : 58] Just don't forget to keep remembering me. I mean, they're just now getting out of Egypt. They really don't have much going for them yet. I mean, things aren't flying. They're not in the promised land.

This isn't the book of Joshua. We still got Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. We got 40 years to go by before we ever get to the promised land, but he said, hey, you got victory already. I did it in the past. I'm going to do it in the future. It's coming.

God's going to do it. He said, so you set up a special time because you're going to have a tendency to forget. It's going to be your tendency to forget, so I want you to set up a time to remember, to stop and be quiet.

Our country does that. We build memorials and the alimony. We build memorials at the 9-11 to remember what happened there. We have memorials about the World War II.

We have them about Vietnam. And he said, I want you to have some special remembering time. Chapter 13, verse 6. Seven days you will eat unleavened bread and the seventh day shall be a feast to the Lord.

[18 : 55] Unleavened bread will be eaten seven days and there will be no unleavened bread anywhere. I just want you to set up some time to say, shh, stop. We need to remember what God did. Tonight's a good time to do that in your life.

Can you think back with me to when you got saved? Can you think back where your life was before God saved you? And I'm sure the majority of you in this room were probably brought up in good homes and you didn't really have a really bad past.

But you know, my dad, my dad was a very wicked man. This is his own testimony. He was a very wicked man. He had done everything possible wrong and dirty. He said, verse of sin, you can name it, I did it.

And at the age of about 25, he was married to my mother and he was standing in a church with her because she wanted to go to church. He was almost drunk, he says. And that day, the Lord nailed him and he got saved.

He was a completely changed man from there on. Never went back to his sin. Never, never went back to the liquor. Never went back to the drugs. Never went back to the promiscuity. Never went back to that lifestyle.

[19 : 55] God changed him. Stop a minute. Has God done a work in your life? When's the last time you just stopped and thought, man, I remember. I remember. I remember what God did in me.

He said, I want you to do something and remember. So he put all kind of memory things in there. He's got all kind of memory joggers in their country. Chapter 13, verse 9. Every time a new couple had a baby, there was going to be a remembering time.

Chapter 13, verse 9. It shall be for a sign upon thy hand and for a memorial between thine eyes that the Lord's law may be in the mouth. For with a strong man, the strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt.

So what happened was verse 9 says, this is the way you'll remember. Look what he said to him in verse 8 so you get what he taught him to do. In verse 8 he says, and thou shalt show thy son in the day saying, this is done because of what the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt.

We're doing all this to remember what God did. What God did. They're to remember. They were going to use everything as a teaching opportunity. They would show their son. They would say, this is because of what the Lord did when he brought us out of Egypt.

[21 : 03] what they were going to do is actually give an offering when their kids are born. Read chapter 13 and they're going to give an offering. They got a newborn baby and they're going to look and say, man, I don't deserve my baby. I want to go talk to God and say, thank you.

Here's a gift. I want to honor you because you gave me my baby. Chapter 13 and verse 10. Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year and it shall be a token unto you because it was the strength of the Lord.

They sacrificing a lamb would always remind him every time they sacrifice a lamb they remember. They remember. They remember. They were never to forget it was the Lord that did the work that got them out of Egypt.

How do you remember Calvary and what he did for you? By the way, every time we're led in a song here and we talk about the blood, we need to remember. It's not a good song and it's not an emotional time. It's to remember, boy, I should go to hell but Jesus died for me.

We take the Lord's supper, it's the time to remember, boy, I should go to hell but Jesus died for me. His body was broken, his blood was shed so I could be saved. Every time we have prayer time, everything we're doing we ought to constantly be reminded, boy, Jesus has been good to me.

[22 : 08] He has been good to me. Third thing I wish you'd write down, first thing was, he owned our children. The second thing, we're to remember, the third thing, we're to teach our children. Everything God does in our life, everything in our worship is an opportunity for us to teach our children about God, his works, and his grace.

Every time a newborn baby is born, they were going to sacrifice a lamb for the firstborn. And somebody's going to say, Dad, why are we killing a lamb because the baby was born? Dad, why does the family do that?

Why wouldn't my brother's children were born? Why would we do that? The question came up. They were to tell them it was because of what the Lord did in Egypt. In chapter 13, verse 8, show your son. Show your son and say that we do this because of what the Lord did unto me when I came out of Egypt.

Chapter 13, verse 14, And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, say, What is this? Your son says, Why are you doing this, Daddy? Why do we do this? Why does it happen like this?

You say to him, Because it was by the strength of the hand of the Lord that brought us out of Egypt and out of slavery. Everything I'm going to explain to you. Your son's going to see all the sacrifice.

[23 : 18] Your son's going to see you sacrificing for the donkey you have. You've got a brand new donkey and a lamb has to die. The son's going to see that when your babies are born, we're going to see that. Chapter 13, verse 15, And it came to pass when Pharaoh would hardly let us go that the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beasts.

Therefore, I sacrifice the Lord all that opens the matrix, being males, but all the firstborn of my children I redeem. I ought to remember. We sacrifice when a firstborn baby comes.

We sacrifice when a firstborn donkey. We sacrifice for the firstborn of the children. And I'd like to ask you, how are you teaching your children? Let me just say to you, let me stop. You know, we've raised our children to maturity, but can I tell you, you need to take real serious this thing of being a mom and a daddy.

And what really bothers me, this will make you mad at me, but that's okay. We're really good about getting them good food and good clothes and good fun and posting every picture of everything they do on Facebook.

And I'm fine with all that. I'll tell you what I worry about. Do you tell them about Jesus? Do you show them that they are sinners? Do you show them that they have, they are going to go to hell if they don't trust God?

[24 : 31] Do you teach them? When you bring them to church, man, this ought to be, they ought to grow up here. They ought to grow up and they ought to watch the baptism this morning and when they're going home and they say, Daddy, why does it happen like that?

Why did they put that guy in the water today? You'll say, man, I'm so glad you asked. Let's talk about that. Let me explain it. And you should preach a better message than I could ever preach because one-on-one you can talk to your child and you can explain to your child how good our God is and what He's done.

You get them into everything the church offers to help you? You are the parents. He has loaned you those children. They don't belong to us. And though you may think they belong to you, the day will come and they walk away and you'll figure out they don't.

All of our children belong to Jesus, belong to God and I want to take the opportunity and take advantage of their questions and I want to teach them so they'll grow in the Lord. So let me stop here because these next two points don't really go in but chapter 13 throws them in.

So let me just go over this. What happens to begin the story? The beginning of the story is this. I saved your children, now they belong to me. I saved your children, now they belong to me.

[25 : 39] You know your firstborn child, there's something special about the firstborn. There's something special when a young couple get married and they have that first baby. I'm not saying every baby is special.

If my son David was here he'd be like, Daddy, don't you, he's the last one and he is a brat and he would be saying, I want some special attention and I want some special, there's something special about that first child. That's your first child, you're so excited, you're so proud.

Back in the day before Facebook and digital cameras, most families, most families, like us older people in this room, we had a whole lot of pictures of our first child and a whole lot less of our second child and none of our third and fourth.

I mean, so they say, Mom, did you take any pictures of me? Yeah, we took this one. Look, that's the one we took of you. I hope you like it. And of course, nowadays it doesn't work that way because y'all take a picture of everything. You take a picture of the meal you're eating and send us all a picture to check out the food I'm eating.

I really don't care to, thank you. But those firstborns, they belong to God. They belong to God. God owns. I remember when I was a kid and I was reading these passages and I thought, you must want me to serve you.

[26 : 46] I mean, it hit me hard. I was like 14 or 15 and it hit me hard. It said, the firstborn belong to God. And I said, I am the firstborn. I guess I'm supposed to be in the ministry because I'm the firstborn and he wants all the firstborn for him.

Get a hold of something. Giving is not such a burden when you realize what he gave you. When you realize he gave you life, when you realize he gave you eternal life, firstborn, it's a big teaching here.

He is going to start asking them for offerings. He's going to start asking them to give. He's going to ask them to take care of the men of God. He's going to change those firstborns for the Levites. But here's a big lesson. I'm not asking much.

I saved your firstborn. I'm not asking much. I saved all your animals. I'm not asking much. I saved you. And really, I mean, what could you give in exchange for the life of your oldest son?

I'm not asking you much. That's a big lesson. That's a big lesson. That's a lesson that's hard for us to learn. It comes time to give. Man, our hand gets tight. We don't mind giving to our wife.

[27 : 47] We don't mind giving to our children. But we're not that sure we love God that much. Can we just be honest about that? We're not sure we love God that much. And so it's hard sometimes to tithe. It's hard sometimes to give an offering.

It's hard sometimes to be a faithful giver because it's like, well, the church don't need the money. They just want money. It's hard to do that. But let me explain something to you as a Christian. You don't give to the church.

You give to the Lord. You give to the Lord. And the way he said to give to the Lord is you give through a church, but you give to the Lord. And you've got to get in your heart and in your mind. Man, this is nothing.

What I give to God is nothing. I'm always embarrassed when I read about these preachers who go into restaurants and say, I only give God 10%. You can mark it down I'm not tithing.

I'm not giving you more than a 10% tip. I'm like, man, you make me sick. But it's almost the attitude we have in our church, isn't it? I grew up hearing this. I tithe on the gross, not the net.

[28 : 44] And I even get, sometimes when my tithe turns out to be \$13.81, I'll just go ahead and bump it up to \$13.90. I've been known to go all the way to \$14, thank the Lord. Like, boy, I've got to be nitpicking with it.

This ain't the IRS we're dealing with. This ain't somebody coming to get what, this ain't somebody coming to get what's mine. This is somebody coming to get his after he saved me.

It's me recognizing he is God and he is first. It's me getting out of the big chair and letting him have the big chair. You ought to let giving become a real party. Really? Really? The most important thing in our lives is money.

We say it's not. But the way you tell money that it's not the most important thing is you say, I'll just tell you where to go. First you go to God. But we live for money. We live for our retirement.

We live for the things money can buy. And somewhere along the way you need to say, no, the firstborn belonged to God. Second lesson, remember. Man, remember what God has done. I can tell you this.

[29 : 46] When we see God do a miracle in our lives, we're like, God, it doesn't matter. In fact, if you ever prayed one of those prayers, God, if you'll get me through this, there's nothing I won't do for you.

As soon as he gets through it, we go, forgot that prayer and you forget it too, God. Didn't mean it. Remember. Remember what Jesus did on the cross at Calvary. Remember. Remember. And then the third thing is teach your children.

Teach your children. It ought to be so real to your kids because from the time they were small, you taught it with joy, you taught it with expectancy, you taught it excited that God is great and God is good and we honor him.

Now go with me, if you would, to chapter 13 and verse 17. They're about to go into battle, but he's going to take them across the desert in a backwards way because they weren't ready for battle.

Look, if you would, at chapter 13 and verse 17. God knows when we're ready to deal with things. God led them in a way that would avoid conflict because they weren't ready. Chapter 13, verse 17.

[30 : 46] It came to pass when Pharaoh had let the people go that God led them out, not through the way of the Philistines, the land of the Philistines, although that was the nearest way, the short way, that was the fastest way to get there, but God said, nope, we're not going through the land of the Philistines.

And underline this in your Bible. Let's for adventure the people repent, get scared, change their mind, turn back when they see war and they return to Egypt. Just like, as I end this, God knows exactly where you are tonight.

And you may think you're going through a major trial and a major problem right now, but I can tell you this, you're not. God doesn't let you, He will not let you be tempted above what you're able to take, and with the temptation He will provide a way of escape.

1 Corinthians 10, 31, I think. Just remember this, God brought them out of Egypt. He just destroyed the nation of Egypt. He brought them to their knees.

He kills their army. And He's taken them out, but He says, I'm going to take you and we're going to avoid the Philistines because you're not ready. He knows what you can do. He knows what you're ready for.

[31 : 49] He knows how much you're ready to trust Him. They have seen God do big things. They have seen God show great power, but they're not ready. They went out dressed for battle.

They looked like they were ready. Had we have seen them, we'd have said, boy, they have really got their outfits on. They're all dressed like soldiers. They're all carrying swords. Look at chapter 13, verse 18.

God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea, and the children went out up harnessed. That's an old word for saying this. They went out armored up. They are armored up.

They are ready for battle. You'd have looked over and you'd have seen them. They got their shield. They got their swords. They got their spears. They got their helmets on. They got their marching boots on. They're ready for battle.

But they're not ready for battle. They look it. And you and I look it. And can I just say, here's a big lesson for us in this chapter. God's sending you through little testings and little trials because He's got bigger ones coming.

[32 : 50] God's working in your life at the speed you can deal with. And right now you're having a hard time trusting God and what the situation you find yourself in. And right now you're saying to yourself, I'm not sure that I can trust God.

I'm not sure what I'm going to do with this issue because honestly you are facing some big, it's big for you right now but it won't be big for you because you're going to get victory over this little fight. So wherever you are, know this, it's not too big a battle for you.

He took you around the right way to make sure you could win the battle because God trains winners. God trains winners. We are winners. We are more than victors through Christ.

We are more than conquerors through Christ that strengthens us. And God always builds winners and so you're going through some hard times and you're running into some faith issues and like, can I trust God in this? You know what?

He's going to take them around the Philistines. Eventually, He's going to take them into the promised land. They're going to go by Jericho. They're going to fight Jericho. They're going to go to Ai. They're going to go through all those battles in there but God knew when they were ready and they weren't ready.

[33 : 49] It seems to me to say this to you. It's an interesting verse thrown in this chapter. Hey, I own your firstborn. Don't you forget it. Don't you forget it and teach your children what I'm doing and as much as I've already done, you guys aren't ready.

As much as you've grown, as much as you've learned and as much as you know, you are still not ready. I have another plan for you. I'm going to keep working. Maybe it seems to you like God is dragging His feet.

Maybe it seems to you like God isn't working in your life. Maybe it seems to you like God isn't answering your prayer. But maybe He's waiting on you to get ready for the answer. I know that I am an extremely impatient person.

And I really try to live, right? I think we're all in this. I'm speaking for you right now too. And I think God ought to do some things in my life. I think God ought to move quicker than He moves. I think God ought to meet my financial needs more than He does.

I think God ought to provide me with a job I need. I think that God ought to provide me with a place or a church. I want an office. I got all these things I want God to do. See, that's where we are. We live there. But God's saying, all of a sudden, you're not ready for that battle yet.

[34 : 56] That's why we're skirting the Philistines. Because you got all dressed up and you look the part, but you ain't the part. That's where we are in here. What are you dealing with right now? What are you dealing with right now?

What issue are you fighting? Maybe it's a problem in your home. Maybe it's a marriage problem. Maybe it's your children. Maybe it's a phantanical. What are you dealing with? Did you know God's building you? Because we're getting to Jericho. We're going to go into more battles, but God's building you.

The last one, he tells them that, if you would, in chapter 13 and verse 19, God keeps His word. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had straightly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you.

You underline it. God will visit you. God will come get you out of Egypt. And you carry my bones up. This is really wild. 400 and something years before, Joseph is there, and he dies.

And when he dies, he said, guys, don't worry about this. God will get us out of Egypt. I don't know when he's coming, but you get my bones ready, preserve me, turn me into a mummy, and when the day comes, you take me out of here.

[35 : 55] I'm leaving this place. Because God's going to work a miracle. And the last part of this chapter is God's saying, yep, get his bones and bring him. I said I was going to do it, and I'm doing it. Mark this down.

God's going to do a great work in your life. God is doing a great work in your life. You have not lost. You're not a forgotten cause. You're not put on the sideline. You're not ignored. You're not of no consequence.

You're important to him, and he's at work in your life. Joseph knew it over 400 years. God will surely visit, and you will carry my bones out of here. And they go forward because God goes before them.

Look if you would at chapter 13, verse 21. There's a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire that goes before them and takes care of them. And he took not that pillar away from before the people.

He took care of them. He directed them. He comforted them. He never left them. And I'll just say this to you as we go. Maybe it seemed a little harsh for me to say to you.

[36 : 51] Maybe it seemed a little harsh for me to say to you that he got your children. He owns them. Sanctify to me the firstborn. Maybe that was harsh to you. And maybe you said to yourself, I don't like that. That's too much. By the end of this chapter, here's what he's saying.

I've been taking care of you guys all along. I took care of you in Egypt. I took care of you and all the different things that have been going on. I'm doing a work in your life. I am powerful. I am God. I'm doing a work.

So remember that. Remember how I took care of you in Egypt. Remember how I'm going to take care of you in the future. Remember that. Teach your children that. Know this. I'll build you up so you can deal with anything that comes in your life.

You will be victor in this. You will have victory. If you're a born-again believer and you keep your hands on the plow and keep serving Jesus, you will get through this. You will come out on the other side and you will be a victor on the other side.

That's what you've got to remember. Not because you're anything special, but you serve a great God. There will be a day we'll all be sitting somewhere and you'll say, there will be a day we'll all be sitting somewhere and you'll say, you will not believe what I went through in 14.

[37 : 56] And I'll say, it looks like God brought you out okay. We were looking tonight or this afternoon, Betty showed me a video of a man who came to visit me in Peru. It was a good friend to me or is a good friend to me.

I don't see him anymore. It's in a church up in the northeast and his daughter got pregnant out of wedlock. He's a pastor and his heart was broken. He sat in the van down in Peru and cried like a baby about what was going on in his life.

But today, they were showing a picture of his little daughter, granddaughter actually. His daughter got pregnant and his granddaughter was singing and trying out for a part in something they're doing at the church.

And I said to Betty, looks like he won. Looks like God gave him victory. And though those days were horrible and dark and everything was going wrong, God knew exactly where he had my friend.

And he knows where he has you. And he has not abandoned you. Remember. Remember. He does own you. But remember. He will not leave you. Remember.

[38 : 58] What he did. Father in heaven, I love you. And I praise you for the opportunity to teach your word. And I pray God that tonight something out of Exodus 13 might have made a difference, might have helped somebody. And I pray God you'd bless some that are going through some real problems tonight.

God, I pray you'd help me to be more patient, to trust you and to wait on you and to know that you're going to do work. I pray God that you'd help me to always remember that everything I have comes from you. So giving is not an issue. God, I give you praise for all you do.

Help me to teach my grandchildren and my children about you. Help this to be real in my heart. And I'll give you great praise and great honor and great glory. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.

Thanks.