

Big Idea: Freedom comes through obedience.

Introduction: Over the last two weeks, we have witnessed God chip away at Pharaoh's disobedient, hardened heart through nine miraculous plagues. While there seemed to be compromises along the way from Pharaoh, we can see in Exodus 10:28 that Pharaoh has decided to buckle down in his disobedience.

"Pharaoh said to Moses, "Get out of my sight! Make sure you do not appear before me again! The day you see my face you will die." – Exodus 10:28

This disobedience sets the stage for the climax of all the plagues, the 10th plague: death of the firstborn. This morning, we read about the Passover event instead of looking at this text from a 21st century viewpoint. I want us to step into the shoes of Moses, Pharaoh, and the Israelites as we witness how the role of obedience is essential to the Passover. Let us pick up this narrative at Exodus 10:28.

Read Exodus 10:28- 11:10

Underline the word "had" in v.1 so that you can see the chronology of this verse. We need to understand that all of chapter 11 happens within seconds, right after Pharaoh's frustration with Moses in v.28 of chapter 10. Pharaoh tells Moses to get out of his sight. Moses agrees and begins walking away. As he walks away, he remembers what God told him back at the burning bush in Exodus 4:22,

22 Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son, 23 and I told you, "Let my son go, so that he may worship me." But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son.'" – Exodus 4:22

Therefore in v.4, we see Moses' first act of obedience in this 10th plague, "So Moses said...."

Godly obedience begins with saying yes to God and results in increased confidence. (Ex. 11:4)

"Moses said..." -- that is obedience. Hearing what God says, respecting His call, responding in obedience, and leaving the results with God. Obedience is not complicated. When God says, "Jump," the only question we should ask is, "How high?" But if you remember back to the burning bush, it took some persuading for Moses to get this point of willful, confident obedience. Remember how the voice of fear was trying to drown out God's voice. "Who am I, Lord... I am not eloquent in speech. I can't do what you are calling me to do." Yet through the next several chapters, Moses begins to walk in obedience through each of the plagues. God uses Moses' obedience through the plagues to not only chipped away at Pharaoh's heart,

but also he used the plagues to fuel confidence within Moses. It was a type of divine therapy for Moses. One commentator stated:

"God's primary purpose is clear regarding the plagues. He was convincing Israel, the Egyptians, and the whole world that he was the one true God. But... God was also carrying out a secondary purpose within this divine process. He was rebuilding Moses' self-image!"

Throughout the ten plagues, though "Aaron began the process, Moses quickly emerged as the primary spokesman as well as the one God used to work miracles."

Plague #1: *"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Tell Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt.'"* - Ex 7:19

Plague #2: *"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Tell Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand.'" So Aaron stretched out his hand.* - Ex 8:5,6

Plague #3: *"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Tell Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff.'" Aaron stretched out his hand with the staff.* - Ex 8:16,17

Plague #4: *"Then the Lord said to Moses..." "But Moses said..." "Moses answered..." - Ex 8:20-29*

Plague #5: *"Then the Lord said to Moses..." - Ex 9:1*

Plague #6: *"Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 'Take handfuls of soot from a furnace and have Moses toss it into the air in the presence of Pharaoh.' ... Moses tossed it into the air." - Ex. 9:8,10*

Plague #7: *"Then the Lord said to Moses..." "So Moses stretched out His staff."- Ex 9:22,23*

Plague #8: *"Then the Lord said to Moses..." "So Moses and Aaron... said..." "And the Lord said to Moses..." "So Moses stretched out his staff over Egypt." - Ex 10:1,3,12,13*

Plague #9: *"Then the Lord said to Moses..." "So Moses stretch out his hand toward the sky." - Ex 10:21,22*

Plague #10: *"Now the Lord had said to Moses..." "So Moses said, 'This is what the Lord says.'" - Ex 11:1, 4*

"In the process of bringing these plagues on Egypt, God brought His servant Moses to the place where he was carrying out the task God had originally called him to do -- and almost totally without Aaron's assistance." Obedience begins with saying yes to God, and it results in built confidence. Do you struggle with confidence? Maybe even your confidence in God? Ever ask the question, why hasn't God called me to do great things? I am convinced that our greatest struggle as followers of Christ is not in the

realm of discerning or understanding God's call in our life but in the obeying of God's will. Chuck Swindoll put it this way,

"When you and I look back at our lives, we do not find ourselves puzzled and mystified about God's will nearly as much as we find ourselves stubborn and resistant to the one directing our steps. Our problem isn't that we don't know; our problem is that we do know but aren't winning to follow through."

Moses knew, and he obeyed. He struggled, yes, but he obeyed. His obedience had a snowball effect as it began to grow. Being obedient in the big things begins with practicing obedience in the small.

Transition: Moses' obedience not only developed confidence within himself, but it developed Egypt's confidence within him as a leader.

Godly obedience maximizes our leadership. (Ex. 11:2-3)

Before we start diving into the actual plague, I want to jump back to v.2

"Tell the people that men and women alike are to ask their neighbors for articles of silver and gold." (The Lord made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and Moses himself was highly regarded in Egypt by Pharaoh's officials and by the people.)" – Ex 11:2-3

God's instruction about silver and gold is what we all do before going on vacation or leaving town. Hit the ATM grab some cash because you are about to head out. And what's crazy is that the Egyptian households handed over these precious metals to Hebrew slaves because they had great respect for the Israelites and Moses. What a change in tone compared to a couple of chapters ago, am I right? "The ex-shepherd Moses was under the gun, snarled at by the king and thoroughly hated by the Hebrew leadership. But now we read that Moses was "greatly esteemed" in Egypt by the Egyptians. From the court of Pharaoh on down to the man on the street, people were saying, "Now there's a great man." Through Moses' obedience, God was able to build clout within Moses' leadership. Moses' built-up respect was necessary for the nation of Israel to want to follow him out of captivity. Leaders take note: You want to increase your influence as a leader? Increase your obedience. Men take note: You want your wife to respect you? Obey God. Parents, you want your kids to obey God? You set the pace. Godly obedience maximizes your leadership.

Transition: With great respect, Moses continues in his obedience and informs Pharaoh of the 10th plague. In so doing, Moses reveals the character of God.

Godly obedience reflects the character of God. (Ex. 11:4-10)

Read Ex. 11:4-10

In this 10th plague, we see God use Moses' obedience to reflect His character. More specifically, a character trait of justice and love. The skeptic, when reading this, can

often question the love of God. After all, how can a loving God kill in this manner? We must remember the context of this 10th plague. Look back at the beginning of exodus.

22 Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live." – Exodus 1:22

Pharaoh, scared of losing his power to the multiplying Israelites, does his best to play God and control the situation by issuing the death of all the Hebrew firstborn males. These killings were a grave injustice not only in the eyes of the Israelites but in the eyes of God. Further, Israel is the firstborn of God. Pharaoh was not just issuing the killing of the Israelites' firstborn but God's. Look at Exodus 4:22.

22 Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son, 23 and I told you, "Let my son go, so he may worship me." But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son.'" – Exodus 4:22

While God is love, we must not forget that God is also just, and God's love shines through his justice. The 10th plague is God delivering justice. Justice to Pharaoh and the Egyptians, yet through this justice, we will later see God's provision and love for His children because God's justice was the very instrument that set his children free.

I have interacted with Atheists and Muslims as they have often questioned, If God is so great and loving, why can't he just forgive without any cost of death or sacrifice? Why does his son need to die in order to be saved? You ever wonder about that? If you sinned against me, and I wanted to forgive you, I wouldn't make you kill your dog before I forgave you. Why would God require some kind of sacrifice to forgive?

When we choose to forgive someone, that means we agree to absorb the cost of the injustice of what they've done. Imagine you stole my Lamborghini, and you totaled it. You have no insurance, no money. You are incapable of paying for it. What are my choices? I could make you pay. Or I could forgive you. In doing so, choosing to absorb the cost of your wrong, I'll have to pay the price of having the car fixed. This is how forgiveness works. It comes at the expense of justice. Either I pay the cost of the injustice, or you do. And when there is justice, there is forgiveness, and where there is forgiveness, there is freedom because the Lamborghini is fixed and we are free to drive around.

Transition: In this 10th plague, we see Moses' obedience and God's love for the Israelites as he issues his justice. Notably, in chapter 12, God's love for his children becomes even more evident as he provides protection through Passover. You see, through obedience, we can experience God's love.

Godly obedience allows us to experience God's love. (Ex. 12:1-11)

Read 12:1-11

Part of the problem of reading this passage is that we can become too familiar with it. I want us to seriously put ourselves in the sandals of those hearing Moses' instructions face to face.

"Ok, You're to take a lamb, one per family. After cutting the throat of that lamb and draining the blood out of it, you're to keep some of that blood. And with a branch of hyssop, you're to dip it in that pan of blood, and you're to smear it on the doorposts, on each side. What's the doorpost? Well, if you stand in the center of your doorway and put your hands out to each side, you'll be touching the doorposts. Got it? Okay. And you're also to smear some of that blood on the lintel—the horizontal beam just above the doorway."

As Chuck Swindoll put it, "Stop and think about those instructions for a moment. What logical reason was there for doing those things with the lamb's blood? 'Well, God told them to do it.' Exactly. He never asked you to think it through. He never asked you to dialogue about it. He never asked them to consider the idea and decide if they agreed." God simply told them what to do and when to do it. And he told them what would happen if they didn't.

Read 12:12-13

He will strike down the firstborn. We must remember Pharaoh is considered the son of the Egyptian sun god "Re." This plague is an attack on Pharaoh himself. It's an attack on his power. Yahweh demonstrates through the killing of the firstborn Egyptians that He is the true God, the one who truly has control over death and life.

The only way to experience this Passover and the love of God is for those who are obedient. They listen, and then they do. Oswald Chambers once said. "Never try to explain God until you have obeyed Him. The only bit of God we understand is the bit we have obeyed."

Transition: The Hebrews understood God's love and protection as they were walking out of Egypt, listening to the wails of the Egyptian parents. That is quite the experience for the Hebrews exiting, an experience due only to their obedience, which leads me to my next point.

Godly obedience leads to life and freedom. (Ex. 12:28-38)

Read. 12:28- 38

The Hebrews listened to God and, as a result, got to experience life and freedom. Friends, there is liberty in obedience. James put it this way,

"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says... Whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do." – James 1:22-25

The Hebrews listened and obeyed God and, as a result, experienced the blessing of having their firstborn still be alive and the blessing of freedom as they are released from captivity in Egypt. Through our obedience to God, we get to experience his love and protection, and freedom. The world tells us that freedom means doing what you want to do and not doing what you don't want to do. Imagine if we applied that to traffic laws. There is no freedom apart from obedience. Imagine the lack of freedom we would have if no one obeyed the traffic laws. You cannot travel at any speed, any lane, any direction on a freeway. You must abide by certain laws, and those are what give us the freedom to travel, which brings me to my next point.

Godly disobedience leads to death.

Those who disobeyed God, their firstborns died. That's the thing about disobedience. It not only impacts you, but it impacts those you love and lead. Pharaoh's continual disobedience led to the death of all the firstborns in Egypt -- Egyptian officials and the servants. Notice it wasn't the parents who died that did not obey but their firstborn. Our disobedience and sin in our life not only impacts us but it impacts those around us. The opposite is just as true. The blessings we experience through our obedience to God trickle down to others as well. Notice that it was because of Moses' obedience to give the Hebrews the instructions of the Passover that they were able to protect their households from death. Our obedience impacts those we love and lead as well.

Altar Call:

God has laid out in his word a very clear direction on how we should live life. And when we choose to disobey it, we will experience some harsh consequences. Further, when we decide to reject the gospel call, we will experience eternal death. Paul put it this way as he was trying to encourage the Christians undergoing persecution in Thessalonica,

6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might. - 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9

Paul put it this way in Romans:

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.- Romans 6:23

John put it very simply this way:

12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. - 1 John 5:12

The reality is that this obedience of the Hebrews centuries ago not only saved them and freed them, but our obedience to God today can free you and save you. There is

quite a connection between the Passover centuries ago and Jesus' impact on us today. While there are many correlations, I want just to show you four:

Sacrificial Lamb	
"Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, 'Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families and kill the Passover lamb.'" - Exodus 12:21	"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.'" – John 1:29
Innocent	
"Your lamb shall be without blemish"- Exodus 12:5	We are redeemed with "The precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." – 1 Peter 1:19
No Broken Bones	
"In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones." – Exodus 12:46	"For these things were done that Scripture should be fulfilled, 'Not one of his bones shall be broken.'" - John 19:36
Redemption Through Blood	
"Now, the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt." - Exodus 12:13	<p>"In him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." - Ephesians 1:7</p> <p>"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." - 1 John 1:7</p> <p>"To Him Christ who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." - Revelation 1:5</p>

These parallels are significant because they place us directly in the shoes of the Hebrews the night of the Passover. We can choose to be disobedient like Pharaoh, questioning God's power, worshiping ourselves, living our own lives, rejecting God's instruction. Or we can choose to be obedient like Moses and the Hebrews. Choose to accept the Lamb of God's sacrifice and take his blood and put it on the doorposts of our heart through confession and belief. Through obedience, you will experience life, and freedom like you have never experienced before. It's your choice: you be the sacrifice, or Christ is the sacrifice... *"For there can be no remission of sin without the shedding of Blood."* – Hebrews 9:22

Today, if you want to choose to walk in obedience to God's call and will for your life, if you are ready to experience freedom as the Hebrews did that night, I want to encourage you to fill out one of those cards in the chair pocket in front of you. Even if you have questions and want to dialogue about it, mark that box. I will get in touch with you this week. Maybe you can't wait for me to call you and you want to make that decision right now. Come on up to me after the service, I want to introduce you to Jesus.

Communion:

I want to call up the worship team as we prepare for Communion this morning. Further, if you do not have the elements be sure to raise your hands, and we will make sure someone gets them in your hands. As we prepare for Communion, I want to draw our attention back to a verse in Chapter 12 that we skipped this morning, verse 14:

"This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast." - Exodus 12:14

The Passover was celebrated even during the time of Christ. It was at this same meal that Jesus introduces the disciples to communion and instructs them to do it regularly. Just as the Passover is a sign of God's deliverance for the Israelites, Communion is a sign of remembering the deliverance Christ provides for us.

God gave this instruction to the Israelites first so that they would never forget and second that it would serve as a platform for us to teach the following generations. Communion is a lot more than just about the gift we received from Jesus but about teaching our children what Christ has done on our behalf. If you haven't taken Communion with your children, I want to encourage you to do that whether you have them with you this morning or next month. Be intentional about showing them that you remember what Christ has done for you. Therefore, out of obedience to Christ, let's partake in Communion as one family this morning.

Bibliography

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