



Exodus

Freed to Worship

Exodus 10:1-29

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Sunday Evening Service

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Exodus: Freed to Worship

Exodus 10:1-29

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Exodus 10**
- We are continuing our study: **Freed to Worship**
- Last time, we reviewed the fifth, sixth, and seventh of ten plagues that God would inflict upon Pharaoh and the nation and people of Egypt
- So far we have had water turned to blood, we have had frog, lice, flies, pestilence upon the livestock, boils on all the Egyptians, men, women, and children, hail that destroyed the crops and anyone caught out in it, and still Pharaoh's heart was hard
- Even with all the suffering that his people are enduring, He will not humble himself before God and let God's people go as He has commanded Pharaoh to do
- The plagues are getting worse and worse
- Tonight, Lord-willing we are going to look at the next two
- Let's get into tonight's text

Teaching

- **Exodus: Freed to Worship**
- **Exodus 10:1**
- We start with the familiar pattern, the Lord tells Moses to go in to Pharaoh
- But there is something new here – 'I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants'
- Some people look at a statement like that and judge God as capable of evil because He hardened Pharaoh's heart
- First, God is incapable of evil **1 John 1:5**
This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
- In that context light = holiness, and darkness = evil or wickedness
- God is perfectly holy, there is not a bit of evil or wickedness in Him
- To think God could do evil would be like believing that the sun might stop shining

- There are times when the earth obscures the sun so that it appears dark, but the sun itself is shining just as brightly as ever
- Pharaoh's heart was already hard toward God – that's why God chose to use him at this time in history
- God waited forty years for this Pharaoh to come to power so He could do these signs for all to see
- God had always intended to do all ten plagues
- The plagues of Egypt served three specific purposes
- First – to punish Egypt for enslaving God's Chosen People
- God has a special love for the children of Israel **Deuteronomy 32:10**
He found him in a desert land and in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.
- 'apple of His eye' = something He treasures
- God doesn't take it lightly when His people are persecuted **Zechariah 2:8-9**

For thus says the LORD of hosts: "He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye. ⁹ For surely I will shake My hand against them, and they shall become spoil for their servants. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me.

- God is not going to let His people be destroyed **Jeremiah 1:19**
"They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you. for I *am* with you," says the LORD, "to deliver you."
- The second reason for the plagues – so that the world would know about God's power over the nations
- Speaking to Pharaoh the Lord said through Moses **Exodus 8:20-22**
And the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ²¹ Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of *flies* on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of *flies*, and also the ground on which they *stand*. ²² And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of *flies* shall be there, in order that you may know that I *am* the LORD in the midst of the land.
- The third reason is so that the people of God would have a testimony of God to tell their children
- That is here in this verse
- **Exodus 10:2**
- Turn to **Deuteronomy 6**

- God wanted the children of Israel to see these miraculous signs and then tell their children about them
 - God was giving the People of Israel a story to tell their kids about how powerful their God is
 - This was to be their testimony
 - **Deuteronomy 6:20-25**
 - Turn back to **Exodus 10**
 - We also have a testimony to share with our children
 - Of course we have all the accounts of God’s miraculous power in the Old Testament
 - And we have the radical testimony of the New Testament with the birth, life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus
 - We also have the testimony of our own Exodus story
 - When Jesus delivered us from the penalty and power of sin
 - In John 9 is the account of Jesus healing a blind man
 - The religious establishment finds out about this miracle and they question the man to hear his story
 - He tells them that a man made mud and put it on his eyes and after he washed it of he could see
 - The religious lose their minds
 - Here is a man that had been blind from birth and is now healed and they are upset because Jesus made mud on the Sabbath – proving their spiritual blindness
 - During the interview of this man they ask him for his side of the story
John 9:24-25
- So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, “Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner.”²⁵ He answered and said, “Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see.”
- You were once spiritually blind, but now you see
 - Make sure your children and their children hear about the God who is able to do that
 - There are several things that are different about this plague
 - Here in verse three, what the Lord tells Moses to Pharaoh changes
 - **Exodus 10:3**
 - ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?’

- Notice that God is accusing Pharaoh of hardening his heart and refusing to humble himself
 - While God did assist Pharaoh in hardening his heart, it never stopped being Pharaoh's responsibility
 - God didn't do what Pharaoh wasn't already doing to himself
 - Pharaoh had a choice – for God or against Him – he chose against
 - God might very well ask everyone of this same question
 - Maybe not for something as serious as this, but maybe there is something you know God wants you to do but you keep hesitating
 - It ought to be a daily part of our faith to humble ourselves before Him
- 1 Peter 5:6-7**

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

- And the Lord lets Pharaoh know what is coming if he refuses
- **Exodus 10:4-6**
- Plagues of locusts are not unheard of
- It was always considered an act of divine judgment when they came, because they were so destructive
- There was no warning when these plagues came
- A dark cloud would appear on the horizon and it would sweep over the land and the locust would consume all plant matter in their path – they were unstoppable
- Typically, they would travel in a somewhat straight path and leave a swath of destruction in their wake, much like a tornado
- This one was going to be different, was going to cover the entire nation of Egypt – had never happened before, would never happen again like that
- Pharaoh's people are concerned
- **Exodus 10:7**
- The nation had already suffered tremendous setbacks, and it would take a generation to begin to recover from the devastation of these plagues
- Maybe it would best to the 'men' go to worship their God
- **Exodus 10:8-11**
- Moses has not told Pharaoh that once they leave are not coming back, but Pharaoh is suspicious

- The men can go, but everyone else must remain behind
- Pharaoh knows if he holds the families of the men hostage that the men will come back to be his slaves again
- Pharaoh stands his ground
- God had been telling Pharaoh from the very beginning, ‘Let My people go.’
- And that meant all of them, not just the men
- Moses stands his ground, which is exactly what we as Christians ought to do when the world is trying to get us to compromise
- Moses knows that he is standing on God’s side of the issue
- And when you are on God’s side, you are on the right side
- Every other side is the wrong side – stand your ground – stand on the truth **1 Corinthians 16:13-14**

Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. ¹⁴ Let all *that you do* be done with love.

- And when you are standing on God’s side you can be bold about like Moses is here
- The only response that God was going to accept from Pharaoh was absolute, humble compliance
- And so God did what He said He was going to do
- **Exodus 10:12-15**
- One of the things we have been looking at are the many deities of the Egyptians that these plagues proved were false gods
- This plague was an assault on Min the Patron of crops
- Isis – goddess of life
- Nepri – god of grain
- Anubis – guardian of the fields
- And Senehem – the protector against pests – like locusts
- The result of this plague would be a famine that could last several years
- Under the pressure of suffering, Pharaoh wants to talk
- **Exodus 10:16-17**
- When life gets hard, some people will turn to God
- They may even say as Pharaoh says ‘I have sinned’
- And it might be very hard to figure out if they are sincere

- Frequently, what they want is for the pain to go away, but they don't have any intention of changing
- God never falls for that **Jeremiah 17:9-10**
The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? ¹⁰I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.
- You might fool your friends and family, you might fool me, but you will never fool God
- And God is not falling for Pharaoh's false contrition
- But then the Lord does something that is a tremendous act of His grace – He gives Pharaoh what he is asking for
- **Exodus 10:18-20**
- Verse 20 is proof that Pharaoh hadn't really repented in verses 16 and 17
- Eight plagues down, two to go
- The ninth plague is similar to the third and sixth plagues in that the Lord does not tell Moses to go in to Pharaoh – He just bring the next plague
- This one will attack the very heart of Egyptian theology
- **Exodus 10:21-22**
- The Egyptians had no warning – first it was light – than it was dark
- This was not a natural darkness
- **Exodus 10:23**
- This darkness was an absolute blackness – there was no light at all
- They didn't have fires, or candles, or lamps – God undid what He did on the first day of creation – God unmade the light
- Try to imagine – sudden blackness without warning
- Can't see where you are or where you are going
- There is no way to tell what time it is
- There is no way to tell how much time had passed
- After a while, there may have been people wondering if it would ever be light again
- Imagine the terror and hopelessness
- That was a three day picture of hell
- This attacked the greatest of Egypt's gods
- Ra or Amon-Re was the sun god

- There was also Horus – god of the sunrise
- Aten – the god of the round noonday sun
- Atum – god of the sunset
- Pharaoh was considered the incarnation of Amon-Re – the son of the sun god
- The people of Egypt worshipped Pharaoh and even prayed to him
- For three days, absolute darkness would prove that the God of the people of Israel was stronger than the strongest of Egypt’s gods
- Darkness is the fate of all who reject the light of Jesus Christ
- Jesus told us one of the reasons why people will reject Him **John 3:18-21**

“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹ But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

- Because people love the darkness, their fate will be to be cast into darkness eternally
- One of the verses I taught on today – speaking of false teachers **2 Peter 2:17**

These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

- One of the several terrible characteristics about hell is that it is a place of ‘blackness of darkness forever’
- But just as He had done before, God made a distinction between the Egyptians and the people of Israel
- There was darkness in Goshen, but the Israelites had light within their homes – fires, candles, and lamps
- As we walk through this world God would call us to be lights in the darkness around us **Matthew 5:16**

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

- And to do that, we must walk in the light ourselves **Ephesians 5:8-10**
- For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), ¹⁰ finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

- God in His mercy ends the darkness in Egypt after three days

- **Exodus 10:24**

- Pharaoh is still trying to maintain control
- Pharaoh knows exactly what the Lord expects of him, but he is unwilling to completely yield to Him

- **Exodus 10:25-29**

- Pharaoh resolutely refuses to yield to the God who just enveloped his whole nation in a darkness that was so dark that they could feel it
- And so God will inflict upon him and his nation one last plague
- This plague of darkness happened a second time and it will happen again a third time
- The second happened about 1,400 years later
- As Jesus hung on the cross, the gospel of Mark records **Mark 15:33**
Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

- In one of the most severe of the judgments, the fifth bowl judgment darkness is used

Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. ¹¹ They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

- The Lord sends increasingly severe judgments upon the wicked in the hopes that they will repent
- That is not his first choice – He first offers them His love as manifested in His Son Jesus **Romans 2:4**

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

- Those who reject the riches of God's goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering are storing up for themselves the wrath of God
- And they will have no excuse – God revealed Himself to them, just as He has done with Pharaoh in our text
- Rejection of God's love, grace, and mercy found in Christ Jesus through repentance leaves God with no other choice but to pour out His wrath
- Next time we will see the announcement of the terrible tenth plague and probably start to look at the institution of the Passover
- That is for later – we will stop here for the night – God bless you
- **Amen?!**