

# How to Leave Egypt

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We're going to Exodus 12 this morning. Lord willing we'll return to our exposition of the book of Luke next Sunday but for this morning, Exodus 12, a sermon entitled "How to Leave Egypt." I just want to give a comment or two that I think is very interesting after we did our study on the antichrist and particularly to me the startling reality that there is going to be a great worldwide professing church that will call itself Christianity, it will call itself followers of Christ, they'll use the Bible some but it will be a false church, it will be an imitator, it will be a harlot church the Bible says. But for me, it was always difficult to have any semblance of Christian morality or Christian religion and see this great bureaucracy church come in unison with this antichrist but isn't it interesting, even the Pope comes out this week and says we're going to have to back off on the moral issues. Now, you know I abhor Catholic theology. I've got some good Catholic friends that I believe know and love Christ, I'm not attacking them but I abhor the doctrines of Catholicism, they're false doctrines. But we could always bank on the Roman Catholic Church standing on moral principles that the Scriptures teach but now the Pope, it's not a church edict but nevertheless he does speak for God, I understand, we've got to go soft on things like gay marriage, we've got to back off on things like abortion. To me, the one thing necessary for a secularist world power to unite with any religion is for the religion to back off moral principles and just say we're all just here to help everybody do better, to help the downcast, to help the poor, etc. etc. That's a good cause, by the way, and the church is involved in that cause but never at the cost of truth and never at the expense of the gospel but that's what we see. I just thought that was very interesting how quickly things can change on the world scene.

We're in Exodus 12 this morning, verse 51, how to leave Egypt, and let's read that as a foundation stone and we'll look at verses from chapter 12 through chapter 14 before we get through. Exodus 12:51,

“51 And on that same day the LORD brought the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.”

The Lord brought them out of the land of Egypt. There's a powerful and important parallel for us. In Acts 2:47, as the Spirit of God fell on the day of Pentecost and God is saving people, the Bible says, “And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.” The Lord is doing. The Lord is behind this.

In 1 Corinthians 10, keep your Bible ribbon in Exodus 13 or so right there and go to 1 Corinthians 10 with me if you would. 1 Corinthians 10, beginning in verse 1, and Paul points out that we have a lot to learn by looking at the experiences of God redeeming and overall dealing with the nation of Israel.

“1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 and all ate the same spiritual food; 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.”

Here he says Christ himself was manifested in the leadership and the deliverance of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament.

“5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. 6 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. 7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play.' 8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. 9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. 10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”

In verse 6, he tells the church there at Corinth the things that happened to Israel are a good example for us to learn by. In verse 11, again he says, this is written as an example. It's instruction for us, he says, and then he even says Christ himself was manifested with them, the spiritual rock that followed them. Christ was there in his spiritual presence, was alive and active in their deliverance and in the establishing of their nation.

So, let's go to Exodus again and let's look at this deliverance from Egypt and let's see some instructions for ourselves. First of all, of course, Egypt represents the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of Satan and the nation of Israel being enslaved in Egyptian bondage pictures the lost sinner entrapped and enslaved in sin and in the dominion of Satan. Then the deliverance by God through Moses out of Egyptian bondage is the picture of the Christian's conversion. There are great and powerful parallels here that, as Paul said to the Corinthians, are good for us and give us instruction.

First of all, let me say to you when you leave Egypt, that is when you're leaving the dominion of Satan, when you have become converted, you've become a follower of Jesus Christ, first of all, leave Egypt bringing the treasures with you which speak of appropriation. Leave Egypt bringing the treasures with you which speak of appropriation. We see this so very clearly in Exodus 12:35-36,

“35 Now the sons of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, for they had requested from the Egyptians articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; 36 and the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have their request. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.”

We know Colossians 1:13 says when we're lost, we're in the kingdom of darkness, but God through his Son Jesus Christ has transferred us out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of his beloved Son. At one time, everything we had was under the dominion, the kingdom of darkness, it was a part of the kingdom of darkness and it contributed to the kingdom of darkness. Again folks, there is no neutral ground in biblical truth: you're either of – remember last week – the antichrist spirit, or you're of the true Christ Spirit; you're either in Satan's domain and kingdom or you're in God's domain or God's kingdom. That doesn't mean that everyone in Satan's kingdom is doing everything they possibly can to be evil but what it does mean is that where their fear is and in the foundation stone of their heart and intent, they cannot be about the true purposes and glories of God. All lost people no matter how many good works, no matter how moral or how ethical their conduct, at the end of the day, their heart motive is self-purposing; their heart motive is for self. I've used this illustration before: if you take Mother Theresa bathing the lepers in India, if she embraced Catholic teaching, at the end of the day, Mother Theresa's motive was so that she might have a better reward in heaven one day. Who is that for? That's for self. The only way you can ever really serve for God's glory is to know that you are completely, totally and absolutely taken care of through the work of Christ, that redemption and salvation is already fully and absolutely yours and functioning from that foundation and by his presence and strength within us, we can actually walk in a lifestyle, never perfect, but we can begin to walk in a lifestyle of truly striving to be glory-of-God focused and Christ-honoring but you can't until you are converted.

So here we were lost, pictured by the Israelites in Egyptian slavery and bondage, and then God transferred us out. As God was about to transfer the Israelites out of Egypt, God told them to ask the Egyptians for treasures, silver and gold and clothing, and take it with them and God gave them favor and thus they plundered the Egyptians. And that's exactly what you do when you're converted, you plunder Satan's domain, you take everything you had that's worthwhile for God and for the glory of God and you take it with you over to the new kingdom. It becomes sanctified and cleansed, of course, but you take it with you. At one time, your home was in the kingdom of darkness but now your home is for the glory of God. That's a treasure, you take that with you. Your possessions, your automobiles, your boats, your car, whatever it is, your clothing, everything at one time was dedicated to the kingdom of darkness. When you're saved, a new perspective comes and now it's taken over to the kingdom of God, you bring your treasures with you.

Think about the talents the Lord has given you. Isn't it amazing that God indeed gives beauty for ashes? A man can spend 30-40-50 years building a trade, developing a talent, honing his skills and his whole heart be about self and profits and greed and power and control, just laboring in the kingdom of darkness and God, through the gospel, move on

that man's heart and immediately he looks at all of it and says, "Hey, this doesn't matter anymore. Now I want to use all that I've gained and all the experience and all my abilities for the kingdom of God." You bring the treasures with you. You bring it over and use it for the glory of God. Your education. Remember, God speaks to Moses through a burning bush and said, "It's time for me to deliver my people and, Moses, you're going to be my leader, you're going to be my spokesman." Moses said, "I can't speak well. I, I, I stumble around. I don't know how to articulate." It probably meant he stuttered and God said, "Look, don't question my choice." Have I ever told you before that God doesn't have Plan B? Because his Plan A is always perfect. So Moses evidently, based on the chronology of the thing, learned to speak quite well and communicate quite clearly and so what he did was he learned something about speech in his workings in pagan Egypt but he brought that capacity to bear in leading the children of Israel and establishing the new nation. What did he do? He brought the treasures with him.

Let me challenge you this morning, child of God: when is the last time genuinely, looking at your possessions, at your talents, at your training, the totality of all that God has done in your life, when is the last time you said, "Lord, they're for you." Real honestly, when is the last time you said, "Lord, it's for you. My treasure, my talent, my wealth," whatever it is, "Lord, it's yours." I don't know about you but I try and I genuinely do try to regularly lift up the things that the bank and I own – you think you don't own much, you've got a note – nevertheless you and the bank own it and say, "Lord, it's yours. Lord, I enjoy this but it can't be my joy. You're my joy. This is a treasure but it's not my main treasure. You're my treasure, Lord, it's yours." That's what it means and what a great way to serve and labor and toil knowing that I want this to count for the glory of God. Look, I am not and nobody in this church is going to judge you on all the particulars of how you do it but the main thing is the heart. Bring the treasures into the kingdom of God and for the glory of God.

Think about another area of treasure, think about lessons learned. Boy, did not God give us beauty for ashes in some of the lessons we learned out there in Egypt? Alcoholism, drug addiction, vile, corrupt, immoral habits and patterns and God saved us out of all those things. He redeemed us from those things. He forgave us and cleansed us, put us on a new track and now we can bring those treasures: what we learned about the wages of sin, what we learned about the cost of unbiblical and immoral living. We can dig some wells, we can leave some testimonies, we can share with our children and our grandchildren, "Son, don't be proud like Granddaddy was. Look, honor the Lord while you're young." Take those lessons with you. Teach those truths to your children. Bring them into the kingdom of God, sanctified of course and with the right understanding. Dig some wells and leave them for others to drink out of.

You know, a treasure you bring with you can be anything that you've surrendered to God that he chooses to use. Did you hear all of that? It's very important you hear all of that: anything you bring into the kingdom of God that he chooses to use. There have been so many struggles and difficulties through the years of people bringing things into the kingdom of God that they demand to use. We don't have these problems anymore but I mean for years early on in the existence of this church, we had almost church fights over

whose little darling got to sing the solo in the children's musical. Let me tell you whose little darlings are going to sing the solo in the children's musical: whoever the children's Music Director says is going to sing the solo in the children's musical. Amen? We could bring it to a church vote but we're not going to do that. Again, I'm serious, we don't have those problems here. I hope we've matured beyond that but there is a sense in which if I have a talent, if I've got an ability then I demand to have a role in the church. No, only if God chooses to use that. You keep it yielded, you keep it consecrated to the Lord and when God wants it used, he'll prompt the leadership of the church to call on you to use it. It's a very simple thing. Do you know what we need in the church today? We need a spirit of humility and joy in the Lord. And if your God isn't big enough to move in the hearts of church leaders to get you to where you need to be, then your God is not big enough to serve. We could have all out anarchy or we could learn to be humble and honor the leadership that God's given us and function in harmony the way the Scripture describes we are to function.

Another good example here of bringing the treasure over and using it for the glory of God is the Apostle Paul. Remember the Apostle Paul? "A Hebrew among Hebrews" he called himself. He said, "You want to know somebody special, I was special. I mean, you look at the Jewish nation and I was the rising star theologian and leader of Israel. I'm thoroughly trained in Jewish law." And what did Paul do? He said, "I consider every bit of that as dung, manure, rubbish, that I might know Christ." However, even though he considered it as nothing, he brought it over because we have the book of Romans and Ephesians and Galatians, rich with doctrinal truth that Paul learned while he was lost "in his Egypt," in his training as an Israelite. So he brought the treasure over and as God inspired him, called him to the office of apostleship, used him to write sacred Scripture, he used that treasure he brought over from his past life. Listen, when you get saved you didn't just add Jesus on, when you got saved you got completely transferred over to a whole new kingdom to honor and serve the Lord. Are you appropriating for God's glory and in God's kingdom all the treasures, material and otherwise, that he has given you?

2. Not only do you want to leave Egypt bringing the treasures with you, it speaks of appropriation, you want to also leave Egypt bringing your unleavened bread with you which is appreciation. Bringing your unleavened bread with you. This is very interesting. God could have done this a number of different ways but notice in Exodus 12:39, as they talk about leaving, it says,

"39 They baked the dough which they had brought out of Egypt into cakes of unleavened bread. For it had not become leavened, since they were driven out of Egypt and could not delay, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves."

God says, "I made the Israelites leave in such haste that the ladies were not even able to properly put yeast in their dough so the bread would be better." They had to leave with just plain, I assume, flour and water and maybe a little salt sprinkled in. Just a flat, unleavened bread cake. What God was saying was this: leaven in the Bible almost always is a metaphor for evil; it's a metaphor for the power of man or the arm of the flesh. It's not

a picture of the power of God, it's a picture of the power of man. So what God was saying to the Israelites is, "I've brought you out, I was your salvation, I am your sustenance and you ought to be deeply appreciative of all that I have performed. And every time you have unleavened bread, every time you hear of unleavened bread, every time you eat unleavened bread, you remember no arm of the flesh brought you through, I saved you. I performed it all." That speaks of appreciation.

It was God who brought the plagues to deliver that nation of Israel from Egyptian bondage. God brought these series of plagues against Egypt to judge them. First he turned the water to blood; then their country was overrun with frogs; then their country was overrun with lice; then they were overrun with flies; and then murrain; and then the people were covered with boils; and then hail came down from the heavens; and then grasshoppers or locusts saturated the land; and then he cursed them with darkness; and then, of course, the last one, God brought the Death Angel in one night and killed the firstborn of all Egyptians. Then God said, "I want you to do something after I bring you out." Look at Exodus 12:47, if you will,

"47 All the congregation of Israel are to celebrate this."

Now go to chapter 13, verse 6, "For seven days," this is the celebration, how they're to do it,

"6 For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. 7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten throughout the seven days; and nothing leavened shall be seen among you, nor shall any leaven be seen among you in all your borders. 8 You shall tell your son on that day, saying, 'It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.' 9 And it shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt. 10 Therefore, you shall keep this ordinance at its appointed time from year to year."

This was to be a perpetual statute of remembrance, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. So why do those Jews have to take every year a special season of seven days and they're not to have anything with yeast in it anywhere in the land? What's the point? God wants to drive it home thoroughly and deeply and repetitively, "I saved you. You did not save yourself." What is that to do? That's to bring gratitude. That's to bring a spirit of appreciation for all that God has done for us. No arm of the flesh saved us and no arm of the flesh will sustain us, it is all of grace.

Are you grateful? Now listen: it resonates in the heart of every child of God that their salvation is all of grace. Somebody one time talked about the debate between the Arminian-professing Christian and the Calvinist-professing Christian. The Calvinist, of course, saying God is sovereign and formed it all and the full-blooded Arminian is saying, "Yes, God did some things but man must work some things to save himself."

Then a guy said, “But you know what? I’ve never seen a real Arminian on his knees in prayer.” No man gets on his knees in prayer and says, “God, you did a lot but I did something.” Come on. Nobody kneels before God and claims any credit before him. My friend, all men – listen – are fully humbled before God, at least if they know God at all.

That's what God is saying to the Israelites here, “You must perform this ritual. You must have this perpetual statute of remembrance that I am the one who saved you.” If you have a desire for the word of God, God put that there by grace. If you desire for the family of God and to be a part of a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ, God put that there by grace. If God didn't put that there, you'd be chasing one fad gimmick thing that comes through Christendom after another trying to fulfill your fanciful lusts just like you chase all the things in the world to find amusements. Only God can give you a faithfulness and a love and a treasuring of Christ and sound doctrine and the things that matter. God did all of that.

A few very practical thoughts here. When is the last time you wrote out your testimony? When is the last time you just got alone with God, maybe you got an open Bible and just a piece of paper and said, “Lord, remind me again of what I was before you saved me.” Think about your heart. Think about what you valued. Think about those old ugly jealousies and envies and bitterness. Think about those old dirty, vile practices. I'm not saying write out all the particulars but write out some generalities reminding yourself of what you are apart from Christ. Then write some things out about how the Lord began to deal with you, how you began to hear the gospel. Write about how you began to realize those things were sin and how you went from that old notion of, “Oh well, nobody's perfect. Well, all are sinners,” to when you began to realize, “I am a wretched sinner before a holy God.” Not just that all men are, no I am. And how you found the salvation that only Christ can bring and how wonderful and glorious and beyond description to know – listen to me – that he has cleansed you from all unrighteousness. When was the last time you wrote those things out? Then write some things down about how God changed your heart, how your values have changed, how your priorities began to change, how sin that you find in your life troubles you in a different way and now more deeply, how a new treasuring for God's word and God's people and God's truth and world missions and planting churches and seeing children genuinely come to know Christ, how a growing desire to see the church truly honor the Lord is a part of your life now. When is the last time you wrote out your testimony?

You know you have to cultivate and work at growing in appreciation. God said, “When you leave Egypt, you're going to leave with unleavened bread to remind you no arm of the flesh had anything to do with this. I saved you.” And that breeds appreciation.

Real quick as a cross-reference: Revelation 2. Would you turn there, all the way back to the last book of the Bible. Revelation 2:1-4. What a piercing text this is, so affirming and then so piercing. “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance.’” Stop right there. That's good. Praise the Lord. Thank God for a church that perseveres and toils in what matters.

Then he commends them some more, “and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false.” That's a commendable thing. How very few elders and how very few pastors really actively find out and call out false teachers and imposters who try to infiltrate the church. This is a huge commendation of the genuineness and perseverance in this church. Verse 3, “and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary.” Again, a great compliment. Verse 4, “But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.” So it's very possible to be diligent and careful and thorough and dot the i's and cross the t's but lose from your heart a deep gratitude and appreciation for the Lord's salvation he's wrought to you. I think for many of us this morning, a proper prayer at this time would be, “Oh God, don't let me forget of what I was. Don't let me forget what I would be had you not saved me, had you not called me, had you not changed me, had you not died for me.” Cultivate gratefulness and appreciation in your life.

There are lessons Paul said we can learn from how God dealt with Israel. First of all, when you leave Egypt you need to leave bringing your treasures with you, that speaks of appropriation. You need to leave Egypt bringing unleavened bread with you, that speaks of appreciation. Thirdly, you need to leave giving God first place in your life, that speaks of subjugation. Subjugate typically is a word that speaks of one who is coerced or forced into submitting to another but, however, there is a lot of truth in that for the child of God. Now once we're converted it is a joyous subjugation but it is only God that bring us down to be humbled before him. We would not do that on our own. There is no man anywhere who would ever by himself submit himself to God. It doesn't happen. John knew it and had it right. In the words of Amazing Grace, “Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,” to have a reverence and a submission and knowing that he's the Almighty and I'm nothing before him. Grace brings you to that humble position. “Twas grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved.” Grace taught me to fear the holy righteous justice of God that was against me and grace, that means God's gift, also taught me that I can find full release and relief and forgiveness in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's all grace though.

But this subjugation once you're converted is a glad thing. It is a joyous thing. Back to Exodus again, look at Exodus 13:1-2. For these Jews that he's bringing out of Egyptian bondage, that he's forming into his nation, the nation of God, Exodus 13:1-2,

“1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 'Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me.'”

What's the importance of the firstborn? The importance was this: I'm to have first place. And you have cattle and you've bought these cattle and you're starting out in your cattle business as a Jew and the first heifer has her first calf and then you say, “Oh, but I remember that's not mine. The first calf goes to the temple. I must give the firstborn to the Lord. But I waited so long and I spent a lot of money and I planted and I fertilized and I sprayed herbicide and I doctored and I cared and I drove the wolves away and I've got my first calf and I can't keep it.” “No, no, the first one goes to the Lord.” “Why?”

“Because I’m first place. You need the regular reminder that I’m first place.” Church, you need the regular reminder that God is first place. We slip in this life and this was a perpetual, continual reminder. The firstborn child had to be taken down to the priest and in a special way consecrated and dedicated to the Lord. Why? That Mom and Dad needed a reminder, “God saved us. God brought us out of brutal slavery and no liberties and no joys, out of Egyptian bondage. God did all of that. God gave us what we have. God deserves it all and God is to have first place.”

Note the contrast. The Israelites were required to bring the firstborn of everything as a special commitment and dedication to God. What happened to the firstborn of the Egyptians? The Death Angel came to the homes of the Egyptians and every firstborn Egyptian was executed. Every baby in Egypt was killed by God's Death Angel. In other words God is saying, “I wrought a heavy toll of judgment on them but I judge them to set you free.” Hasn't God done the same for us? The Bible says in Hebrews 12:23 that we are the church of the firstborn. Church of the firstborn, what does that mean? We're of the church of the firstborn? It means a lot of things I think, but I think one of the things that God wants us to keep in our mind was that for us to be like a firstborn, especially God's, especially set apart for God and unto God, to receive God's blessings and God's pleasures, every Christian is a firstborn but for that to happen, God took his firstborn Son, his one and only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and God executed him on a cross. God lay the judgment on the firstborn, Jesus, that we might go free and now for Christians God says, “I'm not interested in rites and rituals.” For Christians, God's not interested in you bringing down here your first heifer this next spring or whenever it is. What God is saying is, “I want in the totality of your being to know from your heart I’m first.” That's what you're striving toward, “I'm first.”

We don't have a lot of laws in Christian conduct. I mean, the Old Testament Jews had just law after law after law. We don't have a lot of laws like that but we have higher principles. For example, the Jews were required by law to bring tithes and offerings. If you average out what Jewish families were to bring to the Lord, it was about 23% of their income. It was a theocracy. It was a tax system also. However, God doesn't give us a law of tithing, he just expects that under grace for all you've been given, the principle is so real, you will always want to return a tithe. When you return the first 10%, that's a statement from your heart that God has first place and every two weeks whenever you bring your tithes and offerings, that's the reminder your old flesh needs that God is first place. You see, you don't bring God, don't ever, ever, ever when you write out your bills, never, ever, ever, write out your gift to the Lord's work last. Don't write it out second. Don't write it out in the middle. Write it out first. Why? Because you want the full measure of what God is trying to accomplish in your heart by bringing him the return of the first tithe of what he's given you. He's first place and that's what he's teaching the Jews and there's a great lesson in that for us.

He's first place in our hearts. He's to have first place in our homes. He's to have first place in our habits. We ought to give him the first part of the day and by the way, Sunday is not the last day of the week. Sunday is the first day of the week and the church meets on Sunday because the Lord has first place in our lives. In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus said

something interesting. He said, "Take my yoke upon you." Now "yoke" is an interesting word. It's a Greek word here that can have the idea of subjugation. Take this harness, this enslaving yoke upon you. But he says, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." It is because our hearts changed to where we want his yoke. Now, if you don't belong to him and you try to put his yoke on, it's the biggest burden in the world, in the universe.

So, we are gladly in subjugation to our God. When you leave Egypt, come out giving God first place in your lives, that speaks of subjugation. 4. When you leave Egypt, come out purposing to live for the glory of God. Go back to Exodus real quick. An interesting thing happens here and this brings us almost to our end but look at it there in Exodus 14, if you will, verses 1-4. This speaks of glorification, of course. Come out purposing to live for the glory of God.

"1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 'Tell the sons of Israel to turn back and camp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea; you shall camp in front of Baal-zephon, opposite it, by the sea. 3 For Pharaoh will say of the sons of Israel, "They are wandering aimlessly in the land."'"

Here God is saying, "I want you to camp in all these places so it will look like you're mixed up and confused and you're just going in circles." Verse 3, the last part,

"the wilderness has shut them in. 4 Thus I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will chase after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD. And they did so."

He says, "I want you guys to go out there and literally go around in circles so the Egyptians will be provoked to follow you. I'm going to harden their hearts so they'll be embittered about the fact that they've lost all these slaves by letting you guys go and they're going to chase after you because I want to be honored among them." That's very interesting. God doesn't just say, "I want to have a nation of Israel." God says, "In delivering you, I want to be glorified through the Egyptians." Did you get that? The goal and object of God is not just to get a task accomplished. No, no, no, the goal and object to God is to get a task accomplished so that he is glorified. So it wasn't just enough to get the Jews out of Egyptian bondage, they had to go out there, go around in circles or figure 8's, provoke the Egyptians to chase them because God's going to do something that will honor and glorify himself through the Egyptians.

Listen, the goal of your life is not to do better. The goal of your life is not to get a husband or a wife and have 3-4 kids and a dog and have a good paycheck and live happily ever after. That's not the goal of life. The goal of life is always, always, always, the glory of God. Friend, that will hold you when your dream comes crashing to the ground because it didn't work like you thought it was supposed to, your children didn't pan out like you'd planned for them, your grandchildren aren't what you hoped they would be, 1,001 things, that job, that spouse, whatever it is and things don't work out. At the end of the day if you belong to God, the Spirit of God is in you and if you will have

as your resolute conviction that my life primarily is for the glory of God, that will hold you because often God glorifies himself through situations, through circumstances, through events we could have never predicted, understood or explained and I have had those seasons in my life where I've had to get on my face in a dark room somewhere and cry out to God and say, "Oh God, if you're glorified, I'm okay." Are you hearing me, child of God? Happy church, pleasing platitudes and psychology with a little Christian truth smeared around the edges is not going to get you through this life but if you'll anchor in on truth that life is primarily about the glory of God, that will get you through. That will get you through. That will get you through.

So he tells the Jews, "Go out there and go around in circles because I want the Egyptians to come chasing after you thinking, why did we leave that nutty bunch out there? We could have them back at least working for us in slavery." Look at verse 17 and 18 of the same chapter, chapter 14 of Exodus.

"17 As for Me, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and I will be honored," there it is again, "through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. 18 Then the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD, when I am honored through Pharaoh, through his chariots and his horsemen."

Look up at verse 10 now,

"10 As Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD."

Here we are. Here we are, we're going to learn something about ourselves by the way these Jews are acting. Verse 11,

"11 Then they said to Moses, 'Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, "Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians"? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.'"

How many Christians give their life to Christ, sign up for church membership and then the pastors begin to disciple and teach you what carrying your cross in this world means and many of you do the same thing and say, "Wouldn't it have been better just to stay in slavery back in the world than this? This is hard. This is a trial. I'm losing my friends. I'm ridiculed at work. I'm scoffed and mocked. I'm left out at school. I eat alone in the lunchroom. Would it not have been better just to stay in the world?" That's what the Israelites said, "Wouldn't it have been better to stay back in Egypt? I mean, Moses, did you lead us out here to die? Here they come, the mighty chariots of Egypt are coming

crashing upon us. They've changed their minds. They're just going to kill us out here. This isn't working.”

There's an encouraging side to this. God brought them through after all that lack of faith, grumbling, griping and moaning and worldly and faithless outlook. Amen? So there's hope for you. Amen. There's hope for you. And there's hope for you, you grumbler and griper and complainer and lack of faith. Pastor can show you what the word of God says and you're still, “Oh, no, no, I don't know about that.” Grow up! Quit being a pantywaist! Be a man! Stand on something! Believe something! March for something! Make your life count for something! Anybody can go to Egypt and march lock-step to the dictates of the flesh and Satan, it takes a man to walk with God in this world. You know what I've found? There aren't any men, they're just mice, weak guys. But you know what I found out? God can take weak mice and make mighty men out of them. I'm one of those. Not that I'm what I ought to be, I'm not suggesting that but whatever strength I have it's God. It's God. This is instructive for Jeff Noblit. I hope it's instructive for you. This Christianity thing is hard. I'm going to go and find me a play church. I'm going to find me a modern church. I'm going to find me a cool church. I'm going to go and find me a fun place. I'm going to find a place where I'm not convicted and I'm comfortable and I go away blessed on Sunday morning. I don't know about this stuff.

Look at verses 24-28,

“24 At the morning watch, the LORD looked down on the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud and brought the army of the Egyptians into confusion. 25 He caused their chariot wheels to swerve, and He made them drive with difficulty; so the Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from Israel, for the LORD is fighting for them against the Egyptians.'”

There was no merited reason why God should fight for Israel. They're griping, complaining, unbelieving, whining but yet God, through his sovereign purposes to save for himself a people for the glory of his own name, has decided to fight for Israel and against the Egyptians. Verse 26,

“26 Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots and their horsemen.' 27 So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal state at daybreak, while the Egyptians were fleeing right into it; then the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28 The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen, even Pharaoh's entire army that had gone into the sea after them; not even one of them remained. 29 But the sons of Israel walked through on dry land.”

Here's my point, two sides to this coin, don't go to sleep yet, the roast is fine. Two sides to this coin: they left Egypt purposing to live for the glory of God or at least learning how to purpose to live for the glory of God. So God says, “Go out there and go around in

figure 8's and make the Egyptians think, we shouldn't let these people go, they don't know what they're doing out there. They'll be easy, we'll just go and get them and kill a bunch of them and enslave the rest and bring them back." God says, "But the reason I want you to do that is so that my name might be honored. Pharaoh challenged me. Pharaoh mocked me. Pharaoh denied me. Pharaoh blasphemed me and I'm going to show him who God is. I'm going to be glorified through my judgment of Pharaoh." So God brings them into the midst of the Red Sea where the Israelites walked through on dry land and God brought the waters in on them and destroyed all of them and to this day, God is honored: God's power, God's justice is glorified through his edict of punishing the Egyptians. But also, when we purposely live for the glory of God – are you listening? - it's not only for the glory of God, it is always for our good. Didn't it work out good for the Israelites? It worked out good for them. The Egyptians are swallowed up, they're all gone and we're a nation, we're out from under slavery and hallelujah! They had more trials and difficulties but it worked out good for them.

Have you learned that yet? Sir, when your business is genuinely dedicated to the glory of God, it's always going to work for your good. Moms and Dads, when your home is genuinely dedicated to the glory of God, I'm going to tell you, your kids are going to do better, everything is going to be good. Not perfect, there will be trials, there will be unforeseen things but it will be good. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you. For God causes all things to work together for the good to those who love God." That means they want his glory more than anything. "To those who love God and are called according to his purposes." When God is glorified, it's always his glory but it's always our good.

One last thing: when you leave Egypt, don't only just leave bringing your treasures with you, that speaks of appropriation. Don't only just leave bringing the unleavened bread, that speaks of appreciation. Don't only just leave giving God first place, that speaks of subjugation. Don't only just leave purposing to live for the glory of God, that speaks of glorification. But lastly: leave enjoying God's presence in your life. That speaks of consecration. Real quick in Exodus 13:21-22.

"21 The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night."

I love this phrase. Here's instruction for us and it's encouraging instruction, verse 22,

"22 He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."

In other words, when those Jewish Moms and Dads lay down in their tent out there in the wilderness when they fled from Egypt and they told their precious children, "Sweetheart, it's going to be fine. God is going to take care of us. Everything is going to be good." Because everything had changed but yet after they assured their children, they lay down and the thoughts of doubt and worries began to flood their own souls. They could peek

out through the opening in the tent and there was the pillar of fire always there. They'd finally go to sleep at night and get up in the morning and walk out and peek out of that tent right at daybreak and there was the pillar of cloud always there. God was always there. God was saying, "I want you to know, I am everywhere. I am omnipresent and I rule over all but in a special unique way I reside with you." Listen, "In a special way I am with you and I am choosing by the magnanimity of my own person to be with you with unlimited favor. I'm always with you in grace."

That's the way it is for a child of God. God is with every man in one sense but he's with some in judgment but with the child of God, he's always there like a pillar of fire and a pillar of cloud. The cloud covered them from the scorching sun of the desert, the fire illumined and gave them guidance and that's the presence of God in our lives. Simple question: do you enjoy the presence of God in your life? Enjoy it. I mean, just enjoy it. Listen to me: he's choosing to be in your life completely to show you unmerited favor. I could run around the building and scream for an hour that God has chosen despite all the wretched ungodliness and offensiveness of my being through the merits of his Son to abide with me permanently only to show me favor. Favor. That's what grace means, unmerited favor. Enjoy that. Let me tell you something: enjoy that when you do well, enjoy that when you sin because the greatest way to not sin again is to enjoy the grace that covered the sin that you just committed. Are you with me? You will never overcome sin by gritting your teeth and fighting it in the power of your flesh. You'll only overcome sin by joying in the provision of God through his Son Jesus Christ to completely cleanse you, to never leave you, to always be with you as your ever-present provision to show you favor.

When you get up in the morning, I want you to just think, "God's with me to show me favor." When you get in your car, "God is with me to show me favor." When you're going to work, "God is with me to show me favor." When you're serving your family meal, "God is with me to show me favor." You leave Egypt enjoying the presence of God. That's what they had. But in a far greater way, he lives in our hearts. We live and joy in the presence of God.

Let's stand together in prayer.