

2022 Theme - Extraordinary God + Ordinary People = Transformed Lives

Sermon Series - Transformed Leadership (Moses)

Sermon Title - Transformed Leadership by Obedience Part 2

Sermon Text - Hebrews 11:27-29 & Selected Passages in Exodus

Sermon Presenter - Pastor Larry

Full Sermon Notes

“You are Holy, Holy Are You Lord God Almighty, Worthy is the Lamb! Worthy is the Lamb!”

Today we're going to see some amazing things about Jesus, the Lamb of God, from our Old Testament story of the Exodus and it has the potential to transform our ability to lead with our lives. Let's pray!

Last week we talked about Moses having transformed leadership through his obedience by taking action in faith and approaching the leaders of the Hebrew people and then Pharaoh. We also talked about the fact that obedience will face push back and how Pharaoh flat out refused to allow Moses and the people to go! We then discussed how obedience confronts compromise. Pharaoh tempted Moses to compromise in his obedience to God numerous times.

Compromising with Satan and the world when it comes to our obedience to God is always a bad thing. Today we continue our look at transformed leadership by obedience as we see how Moses followed instructions and exercised his faith. However, before we get to those two points there's a couple of questions that arise from our message and text from last week. Answering these two things will help us understand why obedience by following instructions and exercising our faith is so important. Here's the first question...

Why The Plagues?

We know God was trying to get the Pharaoh to let His people go, but was there any other purpose for the plagues? Yes there was. The Pharaoh and the people of Egypt needed to know the reason Moses was so determined in his obedience. Moses had received his instructions from the One True God of the Universe. God was not only working in the circumstances of the Hebrew people to set them free from the Pharaoh, but He was also conveying the fact that there is only one true God who can free us from other forms of slavery! Sometimes the stories of the Old Testament are relegated to children's story books and are seen to have little application to deeper theological concepts. Nothing could be further from the truth! Let's look at the definition of theology...

Theology - The study of the nature of God and religious beliefs

In the great stories of the Old Testament, God reveals Himself to be the One, True, Almighty, Sovereign, Creator God! Today I will share with you some amazing truths you may have previously overlooked or been unaware of. Truths that could change your life and your ability to be a leader with the way you live your life! Who and where you get your instructions for life is so important! Remember from a couple of sermons back that God was calling Moses through the

burning bush, and Moses, a usually very tough man, was having some fears about what God was asking him to do and so he came up with several excuses as to why he didn't think he would be a good leader. However, God assured him of this...

Exo 3:18 "The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.'

Exo 3:19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him.

Exo 3:20 So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go.

What are the wonders God is talking about? The ten plagues! The plagues teach many lessons! Among them is that salvation is only found in the One True God, Yahweh God!

Remember, theology is the study of the nature of God and religious beliefs. There are some powerful theological reasons God chose the methods He did to obtain the Hebrew people's freedom. God could have just overpowered the Pharaoh from the get go, but He didn't. Why? God wanted people to know the truth about who He was. He wanted the Egyptians, the Hebrews, and all the world to know the One true God! The "I AM WHO I AM" God!! He knew the only way for people to find freedom from slavery, the bondage to sin, the futility of false god's, the deception of pagan religious practices, and the emptiness of worldly priorities, was through faith in the only God who had the power to create! So here's why He used the plagues.

The plagues were chosen because of the spiritual lessons they could teach!

I don't have the time to go into all the plagues, but let's look quickly at the first two and the last two plagues, and see how God was using the plagues not only to free His people from slavery, but also to show everyone the One True God!

The first plague was the plague of blood. Egypt rarely got rain, so the Nile river was their lifeline. Drinking water, fish for food, irrigation for their crops. Very important life line for them! As a result, the Nile river was worshiped as a god! But it was a created thing not God! When Moses lifted his staff the Nile turned to blood and had an awful stench and the fish died. The Creator God wanted everyone to know the Nile was not a god, but was in fact a life giving gift from the Creator God!

The second plague was the plague of frogs. "Within Egyptian mythology the frog was the embodiment of life-giving power." Broadman Commentary 1, pg 338. The frogs had now become a pestilence, and to reinforce the truth that life-giving power was not to be found in the frog, the frogs died rather than return to the river as they usually did.

There were 6 more plagues and then we get to the ninth. The ninth plague was the plague of darkness. And what a lesson this would teach! As you may know, Egyptians worshiped Re the sun god. Pharaoh was considered the embodiment of that god. When God Almighty used

Moses to bring about total darkness for three days straight, it struck a blow to the Egyptian theology of the sun and Pharaoh being god! However, Pharaoh was a very stubborn man, and it would take another more drastic plague to get his attention.

The death of the first born. Pharaoh was about to find out he was not a god who could rule the world, and in fact he didn't have the power to save his own son. Now I must be honest with you. This part of the story is difficult for me. I have struggled with the harshness of this plague. However, I've put my questions in the hands of God and from all I know and have seen of God in my life, I believe He is a just God. And because He is God, He doesn't owe me an explanation, but I believe someday He will show me why certain things had to happen the way they did and it will all make sense to me then. In the meantime, I trust Him with my life, my eternity, and my questions! You hear me say this all the time, but when I want to see the heart of God, I look to the Cross and we're going to see the cross in our story today! God's nature of love, mercy and willingness to forgive is on full display in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice. Ultimately, in our story, God was seeking to reveal Himself to Pharaoh, to the Egyptians and especially to the Hebrew people. Remember, there may be many great spiritual powers, but only one can be the Supreme Being. Only one!! I love the way Roy L. Honeycutt, Jr. put in his commentary on Exodus...

"Every aspect of the plague narratives touches in one way or another upon Egyptian theology as it related to the natural order. The triumph of Yahweh in the plagues is indicative of His sovereignty over creation. The earth belongs neither to a divinized king, Pharaoh, nor to the gods of Egypt. Whether in a world dominated by concepts of primitive gods interwoven into creation, or in a modern scientific world with theories of astrophysics and an expanding universe, the earth is the Lord's."

So do you see that Moses had good reason to take action to obey even in the face of push back and the temptation to compromise? His instructions had come from the One True God! And what does this matter for you? We all obey someone or something! Some people obey self! And as a result they obey fleshly desires or their quest for fame and fortune. Some obey false gods. Some obey their peers because of their desire for acceptance. Of course we are told to obey our parents in the Lord and earthly authorities as long as they are not asking us to do ungodly things. Outside of that what you obey is what you worship and there are consequences!

Romans 6:16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

Now there was a second question that comes up from our message last week and our story:

Did Pharaoh Have a Choice?

God knew Pharaoh was going to harden his heart and refuse to let God's people go, but I believe Pharaoh did have a free will and could have changed his mind. Why do I believe this? Look at Exodus 7:8-14...

Exo 7:8 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

Exo 7:9 "When Pharaoh says to you, 'Perform a miracle,' then say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh,' and it will become a snake."

Exo 7:10 So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the LORD commanded. Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake.

Exo 7:11 Pharaoh then summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the Egyptian magicians also did the same things by their secret arts:

Exo 7:12 Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs.

Exodus 7:13 Yet Pharaoh's heart became hard and he would not listen to them, just as the LORD had said.

I want you to notice the Scripture says Pharaoh's heart became hard...

Exodus 7:14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is unyielding; he refuses to let the people go.

So this was Pharaoh hardening his own heart! After the first plague where the Nile turned to blood, it also says Pharaoh's heart became hard. The second plague was the frogs, as we said, one of the Egyptian gods. Look at this...

Exo 8:8 Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Pray to the LORD to take the frogs away from me and my people, and I will let your people go to offer sacrifices to the LORD."

Exo 8:9 Moses said to Pharaoh, "I leave to you the honor of setting the time for me to pray for you and your officials and your people that you and your houses may be rid of the frogs, except for those that remain in the Nile."

Exo 8:10 "Tomorrow," Pharaoh said. Moses replied, "It will be as you say, so that you may know there is no one like the LORD our God.

And then look at verse 15...

Exo 8:15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said.

After the third plague, the plague of gnats, this happened...

Exo 8:19 The magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not listen, just as the LORD had said.

After the fourth plague, the plague of flies, Pharaoh said he would let the people go...

Exo 8:32 But this time also Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go.

After the fifth plague when all the Egyptian livestock died we see this...

Exo 9:7 Pharaoh sent men to investigate and found that not even one of the animals of the Israelites had died. Yet his heart was unyielding and he would not let the people go.

However, something changes with the sixth plague, the plague of boils...

Exo 9:11 The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils that were on them and on all the Egyptians.

Exo 9:12 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said to Moses.

After plague seven, the plague of hail falling from the skies, destroying their crops it says once more that Pharaoh and his officials hardened their hearts,

Exo 9:34 When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts.

Exo 9:35 So Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the LORD had said through Moses.

However, after every other plague, from this point on, we read that "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart!" What happened?

When God comes to a person, that person can choose to accept or reject. Many times when God first calls out to a person, their heart is touched by God and they at least consider accepting God. If they decide to harden their heart to God they can do so. But here's what can happen. After so many times of hardening your heart, the same Holy Spirit of God that once softened your heart and brought conviction will begin to have the opposite effect. It will begin to make you hard, cold and calloused. It's kind of like when I worked years ago roofing houses. When I first started, that hammer handle softened my hands and blistered and broke the skin. But as the summer wore on, calluses began to build up! The same hammer handle that had once softened and broken my skin was now having the opposite effect of making it tough and hard. It's the same way with a person who continues to reject the call of God. They become spiritually hardened. The same Holy Spirit, different impact! I don't know where you are with your heart and its receptivity to God, but I know where God's heart is in regards to you. If you are in slavery to sin God desires to set you free! And why does God want so badly to free you from your slavery to sin? It's very simple really...

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death...

Jesus once quoted this passage from Isaiah...

Isa 61:1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,

Isa 61:2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,

Isa 61:3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion-- to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

And here's the amazing thing. Jesus, God in the flesh, was willing to be the sacrifice that you might find freedom from bondage! But you must understand this truth:

Like Pharaoh, you have a choice to open your heart to God or to harden your heart to God!

And like Moses, you have a choice to obey God or disobey God!

Moses' obedience to follow God's instructions for the exodus out of Egypt is a powerful picture, a prophecy, and foreshadowing of the Cross! God used Moses in a powerful way and Moses' ability to lead was transformed by God because...

Obedience follows instructions

Hebrews 11:28 By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

The people were oppressed and enslaved. God was going to rescue them, but there were special instructions they were to follow in order for the rescue to be successful. We find God's instructions in Exodus chapter 12 beginning with verse 17...

Exo 12:17 "Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.

Exo 12:18 In the first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day.

The reason the bread was to be unleavened was that leaven or yeast was associated with fermentation and that was associated with corruption. So during the time of the passover they were not to eat leavened bread. Let's read on...

Exo 12:21 Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb.

Exo 12:22 Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning.

Hyssop is a small bushy plant, with flowers in bunches that could soak up liquid, so it was sometimes used as a brush. It was used to offer vinegar to Jesus when He was on the Cross. And speaking of the cross, let me share with you something that Oliver B. Greene said, (he was the evangelist I used to listen to on the radio when I was a teenager.) Speaking of Moses he said...

"It was by faith that he instituted the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood - that is, he was the instrument, the Divine agent, through whom God made known the way of deliverance by way of the lamb slain and the blood applied. The blood on either side and across the top of the door is a perfect picture of the cross of the Lamb of God. God made His plan known to Moses, Moses believed God and instituted the feast."

In our text, Moses continued with the instructions...

Exo 12:23 When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.

Exo 12:24 "Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants.

Exo 12:25 When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony.

Exo 12:26 And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?'

Exo 12:27 then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.'" Then the people bowed down and worshiped.

Exo 12:28 The Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.

Folks, do you see how detailed the instructions were to Moses and Aaron and how critical it was that they follow the instructions! Instructions matter when it comes to obedience to God. Why? Because God won't give you instructions to obey for no reason. God has a purpose when He asks you to obey Him and it's always for your ultimate good. Moses, by faith, follows God's instructions completely and the people, by faith, follow the instructions and it literally meant salvation for their first born that night and ultimately their salvation from their slavery in Egypt. Do you understand that our salvation is obtained the exact same way? By faith we ask God to apply the precious Blood of The Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, to our hearts and our lives. By faith we cry out for the grace, mercy and forgiveness of Jesus for our sins, our mistakes, our mess ups, our unrighteousness, and our failures. The Blood of Jesus washes our sins away and protects us from the eternal consequences of the punishment of sin. Now let me read a verse I read earlier and finish the verse...

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

How is this possible? John the Baptist, when he first saw Jesus and before Jesus ever went to the cross, spoke a prophecy...

John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

In fact the writer of the book of Hebrews said this...

Heb 9:11 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.

Heb 9:12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.

Heb 9:13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.

Heb 9:14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Heb 9:15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance--now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

We are under the new covenant. The new covenant was sealed with the very blood of the lamb, the perfect and precious lamb of God, Jesus Christ. Why did this have to happen? Why did Jesus have to die such a torturous death? The writer of Hebrews tells us...

Heb 9:22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Because Jesus willingly laid down His life and allowed those men to beat Him and then nail Him to the tree, we can find freedom from spiritual bondage!! Paul said it well when he said...

Gal 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

Moses was obedient and followed the instructions concerning the Passover Lamb and the death angel passed over their homes! Jesus, the ultimate Passover Lamb followed His Father's will and went to the Cross. Remember?

Matthew 26:39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

And the result of His obedience is salvation for anyone who will confess their sins and call upon the name of the Lord! Both Moses and Jesus led by being obedient to follow instructions! Are you willing to follow instructions and allow God to transform you into the spiritual leader and witness for others He created you to be? And here's something you must understand:

Following instructions by faith doesn't end with salvation...

Obedience continues to exercise faith

Hebrews 11:29 By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

Moses and Aaron took action when they stepped out on faith when they led the people to observe the passover meal and to apply the blood of the lamb on the door frame, top and sides! Now they've led the people on a route that brings them to the Red Sea. Here's the situation...

Exodus 14:10 As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD.

Exodus 14:11 They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt?"

Exodus 14:12 Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"

So after witnessing the salvation of the Lord through everyone of the plagues, and seeing the protection of their firstborn because of their obedience to follow instructions, they get in a tight spot and they are ready to give up! Okay, I know we're all tempted to send a little judgment their way. I mean come on, really, after seeing the ten plagues and God protecting you, you're going to that quickly give up and go back into your slavery? Really? But how many times have I seen a person who has experienced salvation and they're faced with a red sea moment, do the same thing. As soon as the heat is turned up we whine, we complain, we think it might have just been easier to just keep living in the world! But we have to decide whether or not we will trust God in obedience and let Him transform us into Godly leaders or turn back to our slavery and bondage to sin. More on that in just a moment. But listen to what Moses tells them...

Exodus 14:13 Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again.

Exodus 14:14 The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."

I love that! Moses continues to exercise his faith! And here's what happens...

Exodus 14:19 Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them,

Exodus 14:20 coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long.

Exodus 14:21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, Exodus 14:22 and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

Can you imagine the faith it took to step down into the sea when there's a wall of water on the left and on the right being held back not by a dam, but by a strong wind? What if the wind stops blowing? When they stepped off the bank and down into the sea bed what were they walking on? Dry ground? Yes, dry ground, but they were really walking on faith!

Obedience continues as we live for Jesus each and every day! We are saved by faith through grace and we stay saved by faith through grace and we live by faith through grace!

I'm going to ask Andrew and the Worship Band to make their way on up as I read to you what Paul says in Romans about this amazing life of grace we've been called to live and how it came to be...

Romans 5:17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!

Romans 6:1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?

Romans 6:2 By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

Romans 6:3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

We have two ordinances in the Church by which we remember Jesus' sacrifice as the Passover Lamb. One is the Lord's Supper and the other is Baptism! Today, we have the privilege to witness some folks reenact the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and how they've been raised to walk a new life in Jesus! As we get ready to celebrate with these folks, we're going to begin the celebration by singing about our Awesome God, and just how faithful He is!