

Our Redeeming LORD

(7/4/2021)

Scripture 1: (Exodus 6:5-7; 12:3, 7, 12-14, 21-27 ESV)

Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. Say therefore to the people of **Israel**, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will **redeem** you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household.“Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. 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 no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

“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.

Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you. You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. And when you come to the land that the LORD will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. And when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ you shall say, ‘It is the sacrifice of the LORD's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.’” And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

Scripture 2: (Luke 22:14-20 ESV)

And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

Sermon:

Freedom.

That is the word of the day, Freedom; but I am not speaking of or preaching concerning “freedom” as contemporary America defines it. This is NOT a 4th of July sermon, but I am talking about the freedom we have, because of what the LORD has done for us. We are a free people because of the finished work of Christ, because of His atoning death on the cross. We are Redeemed!

We have been freed from bondage to sin and the fear of death, freed from the power of death in the longed for resurrection, to come. We live in Christ, because Christ lives within us (Gal 2:20). We have eternal life, through our faith in Him (John 3:16), and we do not fear the LORD's condemnation (Rom 8:1) or the Second Death (Rev 20:6, 21:8) because we have been justified by Christ (1 Cor 6:11), covered by His precious blood. Praise the Lord! That is the fount of true freedom!

However, that is not what the world defines as “freedom”. The dictionary defines “freedom”¹ as:

- 2. exemption from external control, interference, regulation, etc.
- 3. the power to determine action without restraint.
- 4. political or national independence.
- 5. personal liberty, as opposed to bondage or slavery.
- 6. exemption from the presence of anything specified (usually followed by *from*).

What the unregenerate, unrepentant person believes and considers to be freedom, is in truth still: bondage, slavery, restraint, chains, and imprisonment. They foolishly believe that we: who love the Law of God; who trust in Jesus Christ alone; who live dependent upon His faithfulness; who rest our eternal hope upon His complete obedience to the Law, with Jesus as the sole means for our justification, and His grace our only claim to righteousness; they believe we are not free. They believe that we are the ones enslaved to: an outdated morality; a restricted worldview; and an “unloving” or “intolerant” demeanor. But they *{the unregenerate, the reprobate, the “unsaved”}* are the ones still in bondage to Satan, enslaved to their sin, and imprisoned by the fear of death and eternal punishment; while we are free to obey God in love, to love Him and share His love with others, to offer hope to the hopeless; hopeless like we once were.

The Gospel message which Jesus proclaimed was *“to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;”*

¹ <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/freedom>

(Isa. 61:1-2 ESV); yet that Good News so infuriated those of the world that they tried to throw Him from a cliff (Luke 4:18-30).

The world teaches “freedom” as:

- 2. exemption from external control, interference, regulation, etc.
 - But, apart from the liberating work of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts: circumcising them (Jer 4:4), transforming them from hearts of stone into hearts of flesh (Ez 11:19, 36:26); we people, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, are unable to move towards the LORD, being interfered with and prevented by our sinfulness, so that we can not be allowed into the Father's presence (Is 6:5; Hab 1:13).
- 3. the power to determine action without restraint.
 - But, apart from union in Christ, every action is restricted and constrained by each action that ever came before; all the way back to the first sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden; a chain of events tainted forever by our sin, with a force, like gravity, forever inclining and bending our hearts towards evil (Gen 6:5; Ps 141:4; Jer 3:17, 11:8; Matt 12:34; Heb 3:12). Thus, the wicked are restrained from any good work.
- 4. political or national independence.
 - **No one** is free from personal, political, or national dependence upon the Almighty: our Creator, Sustainer, and Provider (Matt 5:45, 6:30). The LORD is the One who raises up kings and topples nations (1 Kings 14:14; Jer 30:9; Job 34:24-25)! Only the blind and self-deluded will say, “There is no God.” (Psalm 19; Romans 1:18-2:2); but, “*Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!*” (Ps. 33:12 ESV).
 - Sir Isaac Newton observed that, {an object at rest will remain at rest, while an object in motion will remain in motion unless some external “force” is exerted upon them} (Newton's 1st Law of Motion: i.e. Inertia²), making every object's motion (or lack thereof) dependent upon something outside themselves.
 - Similarly, nothing can exist except that which was created. If something IS, then someone must have made it. By reason of “Causality”, no thing is ever independent of its Maker, for its' very existence is dependent solely upon the Maker; only the non-Created, self-existent, only Sovereign LORD of Heaven and Earth can be truly independent. “*God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM."*” (Exod. 3:14 ESV) Only YHVH, whose very Name expresses the truth of His Being.
- 5. personal liberty, as opposed to bondage or slavery.

² *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687; *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*)

- Without a heart that is changed and inclined towards the LORD, all that we do is bound by our sin. Every charitable or kind work, considered to be “good” by the world, is still corrupted by sin. Motivation matters. The “Why” matters. Unless moved by the Holy Spirit and faith in Christ, the intention behind every work is sinful, whether it be: a desire for human accolades and recognition; a belief in some kind of intrinsic “human dignity” or a sense of divinity within man, divorced from the Divine Creator; a personal belief that it is simply “right and good” or being according to “conscience”, yet without any concrete and unchanging standard to compare it to.
- Only with a heart inclined towards the LORD, can any person, being conformed to the Image of Christ (Rom 8:29, 12:2; 1 Pet 1:14) in sanctification; who acknowledges their own sinfulness (1 John 1:8-10) and the righteousness of God's Holy Law (Ps 119); only then will they do “good works” because of their faith, from their faith, by living out their faith in Christ (Titus 3:8; James 2:17-26). Only these works are freely declared to be good, while they are yet corrupted by human sinfulness. They will be proven to have been built upon the foundation of Christ (1 Cor 3:10-15), and be redeemed in grace, to store us up treasures in heaven (Matt 19:21). These works are done in thanksgiving and gratitude, for the freedom we now possess, out of our faith and devotion to Christ Jesus.
- The redeemed, freed person in Christ desires to obey, to live in obedience to the LORD: not because they believe that they can ever be perfectly obedient; nor simply because the Law says we must obey; not because the Law constrains our choices away from destructive behaviors and actions, or limits our will; but because we love our Father in heaven, desiring to please Him because He has found pleasure in us (Ps 35:27, 41:11, 147:10-11; Rom 8:8; 1 Thes 4:1; Heb 11:6), loves us, and always desires and works towards our good (Rom 8:28)
- 6. exemption from the presence of anything specified (usually followed by *from*).
 - Without the cleansing power of Christ's blood and sacrificial death: without the sin-expiating satisfaction of Jesus, suffering God's wrath on behalf of all the elect; suffering the justice due us because of our sins; we are never exempt from the presence of sin. Even now, regenerated and redeemed by the power and grace of God, we will sin even as we do not desire to (Rom 7:7-25). We are being sanctified; we are being made Holy, from the moment of our regeneration until our translation into glory; we are being transformed into what Christ has declared us to be; but, we are not there yet. We have been freed from the power of sin in our lives, freed from the fear of death, but, unless Christ returns first, we are not free from sin (Rom 6:7) in our lives and are not free from death (Rom 6:23), until we are finally raised to stand justified before the LORD's Great White Throne, clothed in Christ's robe of righteousness (Is 61:10; Rev 20:11).

Our wills, our lives, even our very being is enslaved to and bound by sin, apart from Christ. Salvation comes from and belongs to the LORD, alone (Ps 3:8, 62:1-2; Jonah 2:9; Rev 7:10). Thanks be to God!

But, I digress from our text. Or do I?

No. The message of our text today is how we get the freedom that we now have, in Christ Jesus, because of the Sovereign work of the LORD, for the salvation and redemption of His Elect. The freedom we receive is by the LORD's redemption of His chosen people, granting us our independence from Satan.

Following the days of Abraham, his son Isaac and grandson Jacob lived in the land of Canaan. During the days of Jacob, a famine struck the land and following a series of “unfortunate” but divinely ordained, providential events (Gen 50:20), Jacob and his sons moved to the land of Goshen in northern (Lower) Egypt where Jacob's son, Joseph, had arranged a place for them. During their residence, the Egyptians dealt shrewdly with them *{as well as all the other people of Egypt}* such that all power, authority, and property rights came to be the possession of Pharaoh; while the children of Jacob, called Israel, came to be enslaved by the Egyptians; trading their freedom and service for food and survival. Then after four hundred years passed *{four generations, as the LORD had told Abraham (Gen 15:13-14)}*, the LORD called Moses into His service, at the tender age of eighty.

Moses: formerly a prince in Egypt, and now a fugitive from Egyptian criminal justice, for killing an Egyptian in defense of a Hebrew (Israelite) slave; had lived in the land of Midian for forty years as a shepherd, before the LORD sent him back to Egypt: to bring the Hebrews out from their bondage and slavery, to bring the people of Israel to the land which the LORD had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The LORD would redeem them from Egypt, claiming them as His own people.

Saying *{through Moses}*, “*I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.*” (Exod. 6:6-7 ESV)

Living, working, and suffering in Egypt under a yoke of pagan oppression, the Israelites turned to the LORD for deliverance. They recognized their need of a savior. They recognized their inability to stand against the greatest earthly power, which had enslaved them and was keeping them in bondage to a will not their own.

Willing to deliver this people, the LORD declares:

- I will deliver you from slavery
- I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and great acts of judgment
- I will take you to be My people

- I will be your God
- and you will know, (believe, trust, and understand) that I am the LORD, your God.

The people's groaning, their suffering in bondage, and their cries for deliverance, moved the LORD to mercy. The LORD “remembered” the covenant promise He made to Abraham. Their suffering and need for salvation proved that the time was right, thus the LORD acted: in His time, according to His eternal plan, just as and when He had promised Abraham (Gen 15:13-14).

Moses went and stood before Pharaoh, declaring ten wonders *{these judgments are never called plagues in Exodus, although their enactment may be referred to as a “plague” in their effect upon the people}* which the LORD would perform: each wonder a judgment against Egypt, her idolatrous people, and her so called gods.

The people living in the land of Egypt were judged and found deserving of the LORD's wrath. The final wonder performed, this final judgment against Egypt, the death of the firstborn, came during the first Passover celebration as the specific means of redemption for God's people.

During the Passover, every household was to claim a lamb without blemish, a “perfect lamb”, to be sacrificed by the family head. The blood from the lambs were then to be placed upon the doorway, covering above and beside it.

“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 no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.” (Exod. 12:13 ESV)

The blood was a sign for the people and for God, a propitiation against His judgment; seeing the blood covering each family, the LORD's wrath was turned aside from those whom He claimed and who sought refuge with Him.

“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.” (Exod. 12:14 ESV)

This temporal act of redemption is to be remembered forever, as it foreshadows the eternal redemption; pointing towards what the LORD is doing for His people, across all of history, until the Final Judgment before His throne; we remember it still when we celebrate the Lord's Supper.

During the Passover meal, it is customary for a child to ask an obligatory question, “Why is this night different from every other night?” to which the father answers, *“It is the sacrifice of the LORD's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.”* (Exod. 12:27 ESV). The people of God were commanded by the LORD to look back upon this great work of divine judgment and redemption, to remember what God has done for them in the past, so they would recognize what the LORD does in their lives, and would do for them in the future. In short, God told Moses to, *“Do this in remembrance of Me”* (Luke 22:19b).

The Passover and the exodus from Egypt are a “type”, a pattern, and a shadowed glimpse for us to see the LORD's eternal plan for the redemption of the Elect from the power of Satan, from the power of sin and death. Just like when the LORD made clothes of animal skin, to be a covering for Adam and Eve's sin, when He exiled them from the Garden as an earlier “type” of this same redemption. The skins were from a sacrifice turning aside God's wrath *{propitiation}* and granting mercy, but the life of an animal could not remove the guilt of our sin *{expiation}*; it was not equitable, nor was it justice *{neither was it “injustice”}*.

These “types” and animal sacrifices sufficed until the Messiah came: the “offspring of the woman” (Gen 3:15) who would redeem God's people, to satisfy Justice and give the people Mercy; who turned aside God's wrath and removed our guilt. These “types” sufficed, until the Truth came; until the “Arch-Type”, of which they were but a shadow, came to do the work, came and fulfilled the LORD's plan in the “*fullness of time*” (Gal 4:4-5; Eph 1:7-10). The Passover and the Lord's Supper are both celebrations of anticipation and memorial for the finished work of Christ.

This is why Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper upon the Passover.

John the Baptizer, upon seeing his cousin approach the Jordan river to be baptized, exclaimed, “*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*” (Jn. 1:29 ESV). John knew and understood just why Jesus was born, why the Christ, the God-man, came down into creation: to be the perfect and all sufficient sacrifice of atonement; the “*lamb without blemish*” to cover the sin of God's people.

As in Egypt, when every family's Passover lamb was sacrificed by the family head: the father or patriarch, being the family's spiritual head, acted in the role of family priest; so too did Caiaphas, the High Priest of the Jews, as the spiritual head of Israel, *{without understanding,}* offered Jesus in sacrifice for the whole family of God: the Elect.

John, chapter eleven tell us, “*But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.” He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.*” (Jn. 11:49-53 ESV)

After sacrificing the Passover lamb, the Hebrew families ate the sacrifice, together, as a celebratory meal. It is customary in ancient Near Eastern sacrificial practice, for the priest and the one offering the sacrifice, to eat together: the priest, being representative of the deity, as accepting the sacrifice and the offer-er as the means for receiving the benefit of the sacrifice, participating by sharing in the substitute. *{This was the practice that continued through the Second Temple Period.}*

Then, during another Passover meal nearly two thousand years ago, “*And [Jesus] took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”* (Lk. 22:19 ESV)

Only once, during that first Passover in Egypt, when sacrificing their paschal lambs, was the blood collected and spread as a covering on the Israelite homes, as a propitiation against the LORD's judgment. Every year on the Day of Atonement, *Yom Kippur*, the blood of that sacrifice was collected to cover the holy items, re-sanctifying them³; while the banished “scapegoat” carried the sins of the people away, removing the guilt of their sin, yet not satisfying justice. But Jesus carried our sins with Him, **once for all time**, when He was taken, cut off from His people, exiled, and executed outside of “the camp”, outside the walls of Jerusalem, by unclean foreigners, at Golgotha. There our Great High Priest, Jesus, both removed our sin from us and satisfied divine justice with His atonement.

“And likewise the cup after they had eaten, [Jesus said], “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.” (Lk. 22:20 ESV)

Jesus, when taking the cup, reminds us of the lamb's blood on the doorways in Egypt and of the LORD's promise proclaimed by the prophet Jeremiah, *“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD:....And I will be their God, and they shall be my people....For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (Jer. 31:33-34 ESV; See 31:31-36)*

Like the blood over their doors, the cup for us is a sign of the blood of Jesus Christ, which turns aside God's judgment due because of our sin and also removes our guilt, granting us His forgiveness and peace.

The blood of Jesus Christ sets us free, truly free; free from sin and the negative power of the Law, the penalty for transgression. We are now free to live obediently to the LORD and Christ. No longer must we obey God from an obligation which we are incapable of satisfying; now, we obey out of love and devotion, without fear of failure: because of our substitute; because our federal, representative head obeyed the LORD perfectly and He has already paid the entire penalty (*tetelestai*) for our failure and disobedience. Now, we are no longer under the Law, instead we are covered by Grace, so that we may love and obey the Law (Rom 6:14-18; Gal 5).

American “Founding Father”, Thomas Jefferson, wrote *{in a 1787 letter to William Stephens Smith, the son-in-law of John Adams }*, “The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.”⁴; but Jefferson is wrong! There is only one “tree of liberty”, the Cross of Christ. For Jesus is neither a patriot nor a tyrant, He is The King! King of kings and Lord of lords. That tree was watered and refreshed once, with the most precious blood of all, our Savior's blood. Jesus has redeemed us, granting us eternal life, salvation, and true freedom.

Again, this is not a Fourth of July sermon; but, it is an Independence Day sermon, so it is fitting that on this day, upon which we celebrate our American nation's independence from British Colonial rule, that we celebrate and remember the only source of our freedom, the LORD, and

³*“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.” (Lev. 17:11 ESV)*

⁴ <https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/tree-liberty-quotations>

our independence from sin and Satan's "colonial" rule over our lives, by the Holy Spirit covering us with Christ's blood, by faith.

We have been Redeemed!

We, as Christians, are blessed with freedom from the moment of our regeneration by the Holy Spirit. We now have the freedom and desire to respond to Christ's call, with positive and grateful affirmation.

Free in Christ, we live now a free people. As free people we are called to love others, because we have been and are loved (1 John 4:19). No longer restricted from our Father's (Matt 6:9) presence, we can take all things to the Lord in prayer (Hymn #630, What a Friend We Have in Jesus!) as we boldly approach His throne of Grace to receive Mercy (Heb 4:14-16).

By the blood of Jesus Christ, "*the Lamb who was slain*" (Rev 5:6,12, 13:8), covering that cross, God's judgment is turned away from us. Jesus is the Deliverer of His Elect, far greater than Moses. By His resurrection, Jesus is leading us in the True Exodus, out of our bondage and slavery to sin (1 Cor 15), leading us to the Promised Land, beyond the shores of that heavenly Jordan, to the New Jerusalem.

By the cross, Jesus, the "offspring of the woman", has crushed the head of the serpent and leads us where all the saints have trod, towards our eternal home: an eternal "*city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.*" (Heb. 11:10 ESV); a city with streets paved by the purest of gold (Rev 21:21); to our Father's home, which has so many rooms (John 14:2). Christ is leading us, with the cross as His banner, from our exile in the wilderness, east of Eden, to our eternal home.

Are you covered by the blood of Christ?

If yes, then your sin is forgiven and you have peace with God, and freedom in Christ. You have been Redeemed.

If no, do not harden your heart as Pharaoh did in Egypt, as the Israelites did at Meribah (Ps 95; Hebrews 4). If you hear Him calling, then turn to Christ; kneel at the cross; confess your sins to Him; earnestly repent; receive His forgiveness and peace; be changed and become truly free. Let today be your Independence Day!

Let the Redeemed of the LORD say, **AMEN**