

The Exodus - From Egypt to Canaan - Sermon 2 of 5

by Roy Hession

The exodus is a demonstration of God's power and presence in our lives, calling us to repentance and reminding us of God's faithfulness even in difficult times.

Duration: 54:51

Scripture: Exodus 12:7-13, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Exodus"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power of God's grace in our lives. He highlights the story of the Israelites fleeing from Egypt and how Pharaoh's heart was turned against them. The preacher draws a parallel to the history of slavery in the United States, pointing out the desire for cheap labor. He then explains the significance of Jesus' sacrifice and the power of His blood to cleanse us from sin. The sermon concludes by emphasizing that through redemption, we are not only freed from bondage but also purified to become God's possession.

Transcript

Unless they're very willful and obstinate and won't listen to me. And that's going to be our privilege and portion, all our days, from the moment of our first exodus until we get to glory. And what touched me in particular was this, he took not away the pillar of cloud nor the pillar of fire, never.

They're going to have many unhappy experiences on the way. They're going to sin, they're going to grieve the Lord, they're going to involve themselves in severe chastenings. Plagues are going to break out amongst them, epidemics, to chasten them for some of their disobediences and murmurings and so on.

And ultimately the wrath of God is going to come upon them in discipline inasmuch as they're going to be forbidden to enter the land until forty years later, when all that generation would have died out and their children would go in. But listen, he never took away the pillar of fire by day nor the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night. That was never, never taken away.

Even in that bitter day when coming to the borders of the land they were fearful and then said they wouldn't go in. God said, all right, you shall. Oh, well, have a go.

No, no, you're not going. Your real decision wasn't to go and I'm taking that. And they were condemned to wander up and down in that wilderness if you like, in God's second best.

But he never took away the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night. They always had God with them, even in their disciplines, even when they were under chastening, even when they were having to endure second best, grace was with them even so. And my friends, since our first exodus there have been many strange experiences.

We've turned aside, we've grieved the Lord, he's had to chasten us. Some of us have had to bow to what is not God's first purpose but his second because by our foolishness we missed the first. And we've had to submit perhaps to something better than was first, not so good perhaps as was first planned, though I doubt that.

Whatever God plans is wonderful. And if a thing is second best, remember it's best. It's second only in point of time.

But you can feel, oh, oh, his first purpose was this and that. I should have been in the mission field and I'm a mother of a family at home. That may be true.

If you are prepared to humble yourself and admit that fact, you'll never take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night. Even in those things when he has to chasten us, you're going to have his presence. He's going to be with you.

And you can count on his guidance, yes, even in what you say is second best because it's his second purpose. And he doesn't take it away, never. He's with you, available to you.

I know a friend of mine, he was a Christian leader in this country. And something went wrong with his marriage and he couldn't go on with his peace of service, quite obviously. And he felt he couldn't go on in England.

And so he emigrated to Canada and married again. He's repented. Although he, if you like, is under the discipline of God, he's not in the first place where God put him.

God hasn't taken away the pillar of cloud. Nor the pillar of fire. Jesus is there and is reconstructing out of the mess the new life.

And if you please, using him. Oh yes, it's a sinner's testimony he's got for other people, but isn't that what other people need? They don't want the super saint's testimony, they want a sinner's testimony. And no matter what happens, friend, what an encouragement for us to repent.

To admit that we've gone wrong. And to know even so, grace is never taken away. I love it.

He took not away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people. Why that gives me encouragement. Don't you believe the devil when he says, because you've made a mess of things, God left you.

Grace is there to reconstruct things out of the mess we so often make. And now we go on to the last part of this morning's subject. Out they came, out of Egypt, this is chapter 14, and this pillar of fire led them in a strange way.

It seemed to lead them into a difficulty. There were various ways of getting across the Sinai peninsula without too much difficulty. Though there were the Philistines in the way in one route.

But God seemed to do an extraordinary thing. He led them in such a way that they found themselves with a mountain either side and the Red Sea right in front of them. They were in a cul-de-sac.

And his God was God who led them there. The reason was that God was intending to get himself honour upon Pharaoh. He was going to do a marvellous thing for Israel.

But you know, that was very difficult for Israel's faith. And it broke down. Oh, why did we ever come out? When someone has said, when God is going to do a wonderful thing for us, he begins with a difficulty.

But when he's going to do a very wonderful thing, he begins with impossibility. But that's not very easy on our faith, is it? It's difficult to believe it. And very often God gives the young Christian a real test.

And they find that they're entangled in the land. It's not always their own fault. God's allowed them to get into a jam.

Only that he might show what a God they had. And that the world might see it too. And so it was, Pharaoh seeing they were entangled in the land, he stopped them, he said, why did we ever let them go? And he marshals his army, he pursues after them.

Now, what is this a picture of? Well, I think it is a picture of a recrudescence of our own problems. Old problems again. Pharaoh was our problem before, and it's Pharaoh now.

We thought we'd finished with him, but we haven't. And the old accusations come. Many a one has had to face.

The accusations of sins of years ago they thought were finished in this conference hall in past years. And has been in great trouble of heart. And the old temptations.

The devil says, you're no different. You're just the same old person, look what you've done. You say you're a Christian, what about this, that and the other? And you've got the same tendencies still.

You're no different, go on do it again and quit. And I think that's what's expressed here. And really you see their deliverance from Pharaoh is not quite complete.

As complete as God wanted it to be. And at one point they seem to have no answer. With the Red Sea in front of them, and Pharaoh behind.

Well we didn't go into the details of the story, we read the wonderful words that just cannot be improved. What a story. Cecil de Mills may make his films, but they're nothing quite matches.

The authentic, first hand reading of the original manuscript. Water was parted. Israel went on dry ground.

The Egyptians pursued and were drowned under those waters. And the Egyptians whom they saw that day, they saw them again no more. Oh dear friend, if you're in that sort of spiritual jam, there's going to be such a victory for you.

You're going to come into such joy and deliverance, if the Bible means anything to you. Now what does this passage through the Red Sea mean? Well 1 Corinthians 10, that was the first passage we read

yesterday, says that all our fathers were baptised unto Moses in the Red Sea. So apparently that Red Sea crossing was a sort of baptism.

Well it was, wasn't it? In thought of, when a person is immersed, they go down in the water and come out the other side. Well Israel went down into the river bed and came out the other side. It was a sort of baptism.

A picture, if you like, of baptism. And as you may know, baptism in the New Testament is in turn a picture of something else. Will you turn to the book of Exodus, to chapter 12? The book of Exodus, chapter 12, verse 29.

Now we call these morning hours Bible readings and we're going to read the Bible. And sometimes the very reading of it brings its message to us even before anybody has tried to explain it to us. Chapter 12, verse 29.

And it came to pass that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians. And there was a great cry in Egypt.

Oh, what a great cry is going to be heard one day when the Son of Man comes in this world of ours. And there was a great cry in Egypt for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night and said, Rise up and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel.

Go, serve the Lord as you have said. Also take your flocks and your herds as you have said and be gone and bless me also. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people that they might send them out of the land in haste for they said, We be all dead men.

And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their cloths upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses and they borrowed, revised version, they asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold and raiment. And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians so that they lent, revised version, so they let them have what they asked.

And they spoiled the Egyptians. There was nothing unethical in that. That and a great deal more was owing to the Israelites for the long years of bitter service they had done the Egyptians.

But when they went out, they didn't go out as paupers. They went out with a high hand, having possessed themselves of all this wealth. Chapter 13, verse 1, And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Sanctify unto me all the firstborn.

Whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast, it is thine. Verse 14, verse 11, And it shall be when the Lord shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, that thou shalt set apart unto the Lord all that openeth the womb, and that every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast, the males, shall be the Lord's. Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb, and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck.

And all the firstborn of man among my children, among thy children, shalt thou redeem. And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? That thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage. And it came to pass when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast.

Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the womb, being males, but all the firstborn of my children I redeem. Verse 20, And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. And the Lord went before them by day, in a pillar of cloud, to lead them in the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, to go by day and night.

He took not away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hi-hi-rah, between Migdal and the Sea, over against Baal-zethon. Before it shall ye encamp by the Sea.

For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them. And I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his hosts, that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord.

Israel had come to know that he was the Lord. But not only was Israel to know that he was Jehovah, Egypt was to know too. God wants to so work in our lives that not only we know that he is the Lord, but that the world will have to admit it too.

Because of the things that grace does for people as weak as we are. And they did so. And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled.

And the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people. And they said, Why have we done this? That we have let Israel go from serving us. And he made ready his chariot and took his people with him.

Most interesting how this has been repeated in history, the need for cheap labour. Why was it that the early settlers in the United States were so low to give up slavery? Even had that terrible civil war, it was cheap labour. And I have recently read the history of Australia.

And as you know, it was settled in the first place by convicts from England. And then came the settlers, the wealthy people, and the convicts provided them cheap labour. And oh, what an opposition there was to any move to cease the deportation of criminals to Australia because of cheap labour.

Indeed, it is very difficult to settle a new land and establish it on the lines of European civilization without cheap labour. And here is exactly the same problem. They wanted the cheap labour.

What have we done? We will have to do all the toil ourselves. And he made ready his chariot and took his people with him. And he took 600 chosen chariots and all the chariots of Egypt and captains over every one of them.

And the Lord hardened the heart of their oaking of Egypt. And he pursued after the children of Israel. And the children of Israel went out with an high hand.

But the Egyptians pursued after them all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh and his horsemen and his army and overtook them in camping by the sea beside Pyhaharas before Baal Zethon. And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. And they were sore afraid.

And the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness. Oh, I tell you, if a Christian come in the life of a young Christian and he could almost wish he had never been converted, for he never would have run into what he'd run into had he not owned allegiance to Jesus Christ.

Do you know something of those dark hours in your Christian experience? Maybe you do. And Moses said unto this people, Very ye not stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which he will show to you today for the Egyptians whom you've seen today you shall see them again, no more, forever. How gloriously final that sounds.

The Lord shall fight for you and you shall hold your peace. And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore Christ thou unto me speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward. First of all, stand still.

Now, go forward. But lift up thy rod and stretch out thy hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea and I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians and they shall follow them.

And I will get me honour upon Pharaoh and upon all his host and upon his chariots and upon his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh and upon his chariots and upon his horsemen. And the angel of God which went before the camp of Israel removed and went behind them.

And the pillar of cloud went from before their face and stood behind them. And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. And it was a cloud and darkness to them but it gave light by night to these so that the one came not near the other all the night.

What a wonderful Jehovah! And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and the Lord caused the sea to go back while strong east wind all that night had made the sea dry land and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground. And the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.

And the Egyptians pursued and went in after them to the midst of the sea even all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen right into God's trap. And it came to pass that in the morning watch the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire under the cloud and troubled the host of the Egyptians and took off their chariot wheels that they drove them heavily so that the Egyptians said let us flee from the face of Israel for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians. And the Lord said unto Moses stretch out thine hand over the sea that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians upon their chariots and upon their horsemen.

And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared. And the Egyptians fled against it and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them.

There remained not so much as one of them but the children of Israel walked upon dry ground in the midst of the sea and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore. And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians and the people feared the Lord and believed the Lord and his servant Moses then sang Moses and the children of Israel.

They never sang on Egypt but oh they sang and sang and sang on the shores of the Red Sea a whole nation singing, singing praising, worshiping when they saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians by which they were set free. Now this of course is properly speaking the exodus. This of course is the great incident from which the book gets its name.

And I want you to look at Luke 9 verse 31. Luke 9 verse 31 verse 30 The incident of the transfiguration of our Lord Jesus in the mountain. And as he prayed the fashion of his countenance was altered and his raiment was white and blistering and behold there talked with him two men which were Moses and Elijah who appeared, listen, verse 31, in glory and spake of his decease which he should accomplish in Jerusalem.

Well now you must take it from me as I in turn have taken it from others that the word translated decease the Greek word is really exodus. And Moses and Elijah were talking to Jesus about the exodus which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. It wasn't only going to be his own exodus that he was going to accomplish from this world back to glory in Jerusalem but it was going to be an exodus in which you and I can share.

Here is the rationale for looking at this incident and seeing it, a picture of our personal exodus out of the old life. And this great incident by which God brought his people out of Israel is ever after in the Old Testament referred to by the prophets as the unit of measurement of God's power. This is always, they want to say how great their God is, they always refer back to this.

And the interesting thing that in the New Testament the unit of measurement of God's power for us is always the exodus which Jesus has accomplished at Jerusalem. Look for instance at the epistle to the Ephesians chapter 1 for a moment. And there you see this exodus pointed to as the great unit of measurement of God's power.

It's always the norm that you might know how great is the power that worketh in you. We're always referred back to. In chapter 1, Paul prays that they may have their eyes open.

Verse 19, that they might know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe according to the working of his mighty power. How great is the power available to us. He tells you how great it is.

Which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places far above all principalities and powers. And the death and rising again of our Lord Jesus is always referred to in the New Testament as the unit of measurement of the mighty power of God on our

behalf in the same way that the exodus in the Old Testament is referred to as the unit of power. Way back there.

Now this leads me to this very simple observation. The Christian life begins with an exodus. An exodus out of an old life.

Out of an old condition. Into a life which is absolutely new. As I said the other day the Christian isn't necessarily better.

He ought to be, but not necessarily. Tell you what he is. He's new.

A new creation. The Christian life hasn't begun at all for us if it hasn't begun with a deathly exodus. And this is an exodus which we don't accomplish for ourselves but which is accomplished for us by the Lord Jesus, our Saviour.

And I want to pause at this point to ask you have you had an exodus? If you haven't. Or if there is any doubt as to whether you had a clear kind of exodus out of death unto life then you are bound to admit that you haven't. And you aren't a Christian in the New Testament sense at all.

The Christian life always begins with a coming out of it. If you're still in the world if you're still cheap by jowl within there's no need, no change. If sin still has the old time dominion over you then maybe you need to offer yourself in these days as a candidate for the grace of God which can accomplish for you here as it has for so many a glorious and blessed exodus.

Now the first step in this exodus we saw yesterday was taking that lamb that they might be saved from the judgment that was coming upon the Egypt in which they were living. And in chapter 12 when this way of salvation for Israel was made known this lovely way of grace I want you to notice the response of the Israelites. Verse 27, last half And the people bowed the head and worshipped and the children of Israel went away and did as the Lord had commanded.

Now that is ever the effect of grace upon us. Oh, when a poor man has been struggling to find peace by his own efforts and getting so condemned and can't find his way when there's a revelation of the old, old story of grace for sinners the way of the blood this easy, artless way available to the weakest it always has the effect of bowing the head and worship how wonderful, at last I see the way. And secondly you go and do as the Lord's commanded.

You go to those dear feet of Jesus. You go and bring out sin into the light and call it by its name and hide nothing. You go and appropriate the blood of Jesus for all that has been excluding you from the presence of God.

Well that as we saw yesterday was the first step in their exodus. But then in our message this morning there comes the actual exodus itself. When Israel discovered there wasn't a house of theirs in which there was not one dead.

When there was that great cry in Egypt when in the middle of the night they got up, we must get these people out. We'll all be dead men if we hold them any longer. And at last Israel got out from under the Egyptians.

And this comes to the actual exodus as far as we're concerned. Yesterday we were thinking what we've got to do to sprinkle the blood. But the actual exodus, our actual deliverance from out from under sin and Satan.

What is this to teach us? Well let me say this. Wherein does the power of sin and Satan consist? The Bible says we are under the power of sin and we're under the power of Satan the whole world. Wherein consists the power of sin? Well very often we talk about the power of sin in a person's life.

We seem to suggest that he's got certain bad habits which he keeps on committing. He can't stop. He tries to and then goes and does them again.

And we say he, you might even have to say I, I'm under the power of sin. Well I want to say that the ability of sin to fascinate us and to get us to go on with it is only a part of its power and not even the greater part of its power. I want to suggest to you that the greatest part of the power of sin over us is in the guilt which attaches to it and which it leaves behind.

A sin may be committed years ago. You may never have repeated it and it's likely you never will. But you're under its power to this day because the guilt of it is still there.

The accusation of it is still there. And that gives Satan his opportunity to accuse you to your own heart and conscience and to God. The passage of time does absolutely nothing to remove the power of sin over us.

I say again there are certain things in our past which we have never committed since and we may never do again. But we can be under its dominion to this day and under Satan's dominion because of it. Because the chief power of sin lies in its guilt.

You may drink a cup of tea last thing at night and you haven't got time to wash up the cup. The tea is gone. But in the morning the stains are there.

And if you leave that cup a whole week the stains will still be there a whole year. Time will do nothing to remove the stains. Now that is where the real power lies.

That is the real thing that comes between us and God. Not that you're forever doing the thing again. You haven't got to do it again to be absolutely under its dominion.

I don't think we shall understand the whole tract of the Epistle to the Romans unless we understand that simple thing. The Epistle to the Romans says sin shall not have dominion over you. And as we look at that passage we shall see it means in this sense we can be free.

And it isn't only things way back which have dominion over us. It's the day-to-day things. Even a Christian may know what it is for sin to have dominion over him.

Things have gone wrong. He's been bad-tempered or acted in a wrong way in his home and then he comes to worship at church. And he sits there accused with a condemning heart with the guilt of sin attaching to him.

He is under the dominion of sin. Or he might even feel well I'm not going to do it again. I'll go home and be very nice to my wife but just still under the dominion of it.

This is that in which the power of sin consists. Now what is our answer to this condition? Well the natural thing is to say well I'll try and be better. I'll espouse higher standards.

I'll make promises. I'll be a nicer, purer, better person. But you know the attempt to be better only plays the more into the hands of the devil.

And for this reason very good if you could achieve your standards but what if you don't achieve them? And I want to tell you you're not going to. The Bible doesn't expect me to think that man in the flesh is going to achieve his standards. Why? What then is going to be the result of his failure to achieve them? Why the devil has got only the more to accuse him of.

And thus it is a sensitive person who is trying to be so much better actually sometimes more under the power of sin and the devil because the devil has got the more to accuse them of. This one's got higher standards than the other man. And so our very attempts at self-improvement play into the hand of the devil.

And the earnest, sincere person may be more thrashed in heart and conscience by Satan than anybody else. And all his attempt to be better does nothing at all. So what? I say what for you? Oh go on, there's a devil.

Go and do it again and enjoy yourself. You get down in the mud and the mar again. And the devil says, ha ha now, didn't I tell you so? And all the wretched cycle goes on again.

You try and be better, you get some more condemned, get nowhere, go and do it again. And so it is you come under the whip of Satan. This, this is life in Egypt.

This is life under the whip of Pharaoh. And all of us have known it in greater or less degree. But listen, when a man goes and does what the Lord commands him, when he goes to the land that's already been slain for him, when he says, Jesus, you've died for sinners, therefore for a sinner like me, and he appropriates that precious blood through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus and it's sprinkled on the doorpost of his heart and made his, that blood is the answer to all the accusations of the devil and all the guilt that attaches to our sin.

As we saw, that blood is a token, a token of judgment, finished and met. The worst that sin deserves has been met and finished by our Lord Jesus on the cross. And the devil comes to accuse, that when God sees the blood he puts his wing over us, that as you come in here, judgment's already been had.

When was judgment on this man? He deserves it. It fell on him when it fell on me at Calvary. And in order that there might be no mistake about it, God declared his complete satisfaction with what Jesus did on our behalf by raising him again from the dead.

If Jesus had not paid the debt, he ne'er had been at freedom's end. But that which he did was enough for all the sins for which he took responsibility. And when he was set free, who took them all, potentially every sinner was set free too.

And when you appropriate that great work which our Lord Jesus has done for us, he said, it's for me, I qualify. My only qualification is that I am to be a sinner, and that's exactly what I see I am. The devil says, it's only for those who've got a little special, nice devotional feelings and who can praise some and so on.

No, no, your only qualification is that you're to be a sinner. And the whole thing was done for such. In that moment as you see that and claim it, the blood is upon your heart and Satan's got nothing to say.

Please turn the cassette over now. Do not fast-wind it in either direction. The blood is upon your heart and Satan's got nothing to say.

Without my shield and hiding place, that sheltered near thy side, I may my fierce accuser face and tell him thou hast died. The Pharaoh has to let you go. The dominion he's had over you for years, that wretched cycle is broken and finished.

And as Israel went out free, we do too. There then is the actual exodus. We hurry on to the next incident, and this is important.

No sooner had they got out of Egypt than God said this to them in chapter 13, verse 2. Sanctify unto me all the firstborn. Whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast, it is mine. God said, I'm claiming the firstborn of Egypt.

And later in that chapter we're told why. You're to tell your children, verse 15, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the womb, being males, but all the firstborn of my children I redeem.

But for the mercy and grace of God, those firstborn of Israel would all have been dead men. Their lives were forfeit, but for that sprinkled blood. And God in effect said this, the blood that saved you from judgment has bought you.

Those very men whose lives were spared by my grace, by that very fact, are mine. And I want you to sanctify the firstborn. In the case of the firstborn of beasts, every firstborn has got to be brought to the priest as a gift to God.

In the case of unclean animals like asses, which were never to be offered in sacrifice, you either redeem them with the lamb so you can go on using it, or if you won't do that you break its neck. And in the case of your children, you are to redeem them that they may go on with you, but there must be a sign that they're mine. There must be some simple offering brought on their behalf, and later it was said five shekels is to be given to the priest for every firstborn to show that the firstborn are mine, made mine by my redemption.

My dear friends, this is so important. The blood that saves me, the grace that redeems me, purchases me for God. And actually that surely is the meaning of the word redeem.

Here's a man who's taught me something to raise some money, and now he's in a position to get it back, and he goes to the pawn shop to redeem it. You might say it might be a valuable dog. I don't know whether you ever take a dog to a pawn shop.

Presumably a valuable dog, you could raise a hundred pounds on it, provided they look after it, they've got facilities. But you've got the hundred pounds now and you want that dog, and you go and you redeem it. Well, you do two things.

You redeem it out of those conditions, not nearly as good as the conditions it's been used to, poor little thing, and redeem it. But you redeem it supremely to yourself. And you and I have missed the whole meaning of the redemption of Jesus, unless we see we're not even redeemed out of the bondage and guilt

of our sin, but we've been redeemed to God.

Titus 1.14, we won't turn to it, but you can note it if you like, says, Jesus gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and, listen, purify unto himself a people for his own possession. All who know what this redemption is, and the splitting of the blood, by that way had been bought by God for himself. And if you will turn to Romans 6.18, you will see the same important truth mentioned to us.

Romans 6.18. Being then made free from sin, being then delivered from Egypt, being then delivered from peril, being then made free from condemnation, what happens? You became the servants of righteousness. And, oh, my friends, this is so important. Otherwise, the gospel could sound almost immoral.

You're set free to do as you like, oh, no, you're set free and then bought in that very act. It elsewhere says you are not your own. You are bought with the price, the price that redeemed us from hell, bought us for God and we're not our own.

And I was reminded this morning of that lovely hymn, I've Found a Friend. Oh, such a friend. He bled and died to save me.

And not alone the gift of life, but his own self he gave me. With what result? Not that I have. I call my own.

I hold it for the giver. My heart, my strength, my life, my all are his. And his forever.

But to him I've been held. And the grace that rescued me has bought me and gladly I ascend to that fact. And you go through life as a man who is God's.

Who has nothing that he calls his own. No life of his own, no rights of his own, no time of his own. He's God's.

And this actually happens. Oh, the amazing. Consecration follows grace.

Isn't consecration, which is the condition for grace, is grace coming to a man in all his unhappiness with Egypt, setting him free, that makes that man want to live for none other than Jesus. And we don't have to tell you to do this. It happens.

If it hasn't, maybe you aren't out of Egypt. We don't know what grace is. It's so natural.

For it answers hearts that are his. And his forever I don't want to lose. For anybody else.

Isn't that lovely? Being made free from sin. You're not left there. You find you become gladly the servants of the one.

Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, them I. Otherwise but for me they would all have been dead. And then we go on to yet another part of this exodus, turning back to chapter 12, chapter 13 rather. And we read, they began this great crowd, 600,000 men, apart from women and children.

It's reckoned there was a great company of something like 2 million people. That was a big operation, big military operation by modern standards. Terrific organizations involved in it, but Jehovah in this case was the organizer.

It was a marvel of the grace and power of God. And they didn't know which way to go, right, left or center. But God did.

And he was commander-in-chief. And he had his way of guiding them and leading them. Verse 20, and they took their journey from Succoth and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness.

And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them in the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light to go by day and by night. And there was this lovely provision. Where do we go? What do we do? Don't worry.

In the daytime there was that pillar of cloud, moving ahead of them. And when the sun fell, it glowed with supernatural light. They were never at a loss.

They were under God's captaincy. From that day till they got into the land of promise. And what's touched me very much is verse 22.

He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people. What does this pillar of cloud and fire betoken? It betokens the presence of the Lord Jesus with his people. By which presence he assures he's guiding them, giving them peace in their hearts when they're walking with him and on the right way.

If they should turn to the right hand or the left hand, then that pillar of cloud will deal with them and give them a sense of unrest. In the New Testament, baptism is a picture of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. Romans 6 says we were baptized into Jesus Christ, baptized into his death.

He was the first one to go through the Red Sea. He went down into the waters, the waters of judgment. They flowed over his soul.

And the third day God brought him again, out on the other side. But as we get baptized, we follow the same course. We partake in picture form, it's only a picture of his death and his rising again.

Now this is what the Red Sea is a picture of. It's a picture of the Lord Jesus going down into death for us and rising again, but also of us. I'll explain what I mean in a moment.

Going down into his death and rising with him in his resurrection. They went through the Red Sea and that was their way of deliverance. If you will turn to Romans 6, we'll see all that set out.

It says in verse 5, if we've been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. It says verse 7, he that is dead is freed from sin. Verse 8, we are dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live with him.

Now I confess with you, I've always been a bit foxed when Paul gets onto this doctrine of his about being dead with Christ. I've worked on it for many years and heard many other people work on it, and it's only recently that I really think I see the simplicity of the meaning behind it. Not only did Jesus die, we're told, but Paul says that we have died with him.

Now there's one passage which I think makes it clear what he means. Turn to 2 Corinthians 5 quickly. Verse 14, halfway through that verse, we thus judge, we reckon this, that if one died for all, then all were dead, all died.

Listen, if someone pays a bill for me, and does so in my name, the receipt comes to me, and as far as the credit is concerned, I've paid it, and I'm free. Though actually another's paid it for me. If one died for me, and paid the penalty for my sin in me, and exhausted the judgment of it for me, in the sight of high heaven, it's as if I've died for my own sin.

As if I've exhausted the penalty of it in my own person. And therefore I can't be held, called to book for it. He that is dead is free from sin in that sense.

What was that doctor, that immoral man, who was about to be sentenced and committed suicide? We couldn't condone him after that. He'd anticipated the law himself, and he was freed from the verdict. He that is dead is freed from sin.

And God says you can count, not only that Jesus died for you, but that the penalty has been borne, if you like, in your own person. The law can't condemn a man twice. If he's been to jail for a crime, he can't go to jail again for the same crime.

He's free. And that's what's in view here. I want to tell you, in the hour of difficulty, it's a wonderful thing when the Spirit shows you, that you are as clear of judgment as Jesus is.

You bore the penalty for your sin as much as he did. When he rose free from it, you rose free from it. And when God set him at his own right hand, far above the devil and all his works, he put you with him.

For my last minutes, let me turn you to Ephesians chapter one. I shall never forget going into a church in New York and hearing a man read Ephesians one. It was an inspired bit of commentary, although it was just a reading.

He added a word or two here and there. Now we've already read about God raising Christ from the dead, haven't we? But then you will remember, chapter two begins, and you have been raised from the death of sin, and have been raised up and made to sit in heavenly places. And so our reader anticipated what Ephesians two was going to say, and imported it into chapter one.

And this is how it read. It says, verse nineteen, I want you to know the exceeding greatness of his power, to us who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him and you from the dead, and set him and you at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and all the forces of the devil, and hath put all things under his feet and yours, and gave him to be head over all things to the church. If Jesus, who became our surety, is free from our sin, the ones for whom he stood surety are free too.

I want you to take, dear needy one, to your heart those words, him and you. If he is free now, having paid the price, so are you. You needn't be condemned with that hangover any longer.

He's raised him and you from the dead, and if he is above Satan, triumphing over them, that's where God's put you. Him and you. Now, I'm telling you this.

It doesn't mean a thing until the Spirit makes it clear. You say, I'm free. The devil who was telling me I'm just the same, my old sins are still there, I see him dead upon the seashore, at least as far as this is concerned.

I see my battle over. I'm free. All I can say, friends, without going into details, you are to expect an emancipation by the grace of God, commensurate with your need.

And with freedom, real freedom from guilt and hangover and accusation, there always comes deliverance from the past. I remember at Clevedon, a minister's wife, under the most terrible conviction of sin. She was rising in the most terrible agony.

At last she got it out. Since girlhood days she'd been a kleptomaniac, and even as a vicar's wife she'd been stealing, stealing. She could hardly go to wars, but she'd filled her bag with something.

She was converted, if you please. She'd begun to be blessed and even to repent, but she'd never allowed herself to face death. How can I put it right? It'll ruin my husband.

He'll never be able to bear it. What will happen? Oh, she said, I haven't got peace. Could I stay an extra week? So we squeezed her in.

Wait, I didn't say anything to the speakers that second week. Every message was on one thing, grace for sinners. We didn't somehow emphasise the duty of restitution, of paying things back.

Somehow God said, we'll need that for a moment, she needs something else. She needs to see grace for sinners. Everything, grace for sinners.

Grace for sinners, that's all God said to us in those days. And that dear woman's face bleeds. And she entered into peace.

She was set free from the guilt, and Satan could no longer choose her. The blood was really sprinkled. She saw Satan defeated on the seashore.

She was as free from the guilt of it as her Saviour was. For the blood that set Jesus free from the grave, set her free. And she was actually telling various ones the testimony.

And that dear woman is a dear soul. She's had many tests since, with regard to her family. But Jesus has been with her, she's been a winner of souls.

A blessing to others. And she saw her enemy dead upon the seashore. And, I tell you, she sang.

And she's singing. My dear friends, Jesus knows how to break us out from under the Egyptians, out from under Pharaoh, into freedom, gladness and light.

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