



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

The Godness of God

May 4, 2025

Exodus 7:14-25

Clint Pressley

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is hardened; he refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵ Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water. Stand on the bank of the Nile to meet him, and take in your hand the staff that turned into a serpent. ¹⁶ And you shall say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, "Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness." But so far, you have not obeyed. ¹⁷ Thus says the LORD, "By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood. ¹⁸ The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile.'"" ¹⁹ And the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they may become blood, and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.'"

²⁰ Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood. ²¹ And the fish in the Nile died, and the Nile stank, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. ²² But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts. So Pharaoh's heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said. ²³ Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not take even this to heart. ²⁴ And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the Nile.

²⁵ Seven full days passed after the LORD had struck the Nile.

(Pastor Prays)

So often, we think about and preach about and sing about the Goodness of God. We used to even have a little response. Some of you will remember it; I would say, "God is good all the time," and then you would say, "All the time, God is good.". And it's true. It's good for us to remember the unmitigated goodness of God. Remember how good God has been to save you. Look, if you are a child of God right now and you have been redeemed by Christ, and you've put your faith in his life, death, and resurrection, you need to think about the goodness of God in saving you. Or, for some of you who have been a Christian for a long time, remember the goodness of God to sustain you. You're still here; that's God's goodness to protect you. Some of you drive so crazy, God is protecting you. Thank God he's protected you or provisioned you a home to go to today. Look around your house and see how God has provided. Think about your soul and the sin you've committed. You ought to go to hell, and yet God has saved you and forgiven you. He's brought you into his presence. For some of you who have been abused, you've gone through abuse, and yet you know what God has done. He's healed you.

You see that God has loved us, that God has restored us. God is, in fact, good. It's helpful to think about the goodness of God. In addition to that, there are times when you run up on a passage in the Bible that is so strong, that is so remarkable that you are pressed not just to think about the goodness of God, you have to think about the Godness. There is no better place in the Bible to see the power, the Godness of God, than right here in the story of the 10 plagues. Honestly, it's been a struggle for me to know exactly how to deal with all of this; how to plan out the sermons. I mean, for instance, you could take all 10 plagues and bunch them together and preach one sermon on the 10 plagues. But that feels like I would be cheating the process. I don't want to do that. On the other hand, if I were to take all 10 plagues and preach a sermon on each one, I'm afraid some of you might tell your friends we're having this series of plagues and judgment at Hickory Grove. So, I'm not sure how to do it, and my whole preaching schedule has just been thrown out the window. I planned on preaching Exodus for a year. Now, I keep pushing it down the road. I don't know when we'll be done with it. So, what I want to do is take this first plague as an introduction and see, from here, how to best get at the power of God. This passage is here to remind us of the power of God. And for those of you that are a part of the family of God, you're sons and daughters of God; it is here to remind you of the power of God and the love that he has for his people.

This passage is also here to warn us of the power of God and the destruction that comes to his enemies. So, you take it in two hands, and in one hand, you look at it as a Christian. You read this passage, and you are to be strengthened. I want you to be made confident in what you read here. If you are not sure where you stand with God, you're not a believer. Then you read this passage, and you see the power of God, which should cause you to fear God. It should cause you to turn from your sin and run to Christ to save you. So, here's the theme of the sermon.

God Does God Things for God's Glory

When God is moving those things that are beyond our control, he does that for his glory. Let's walk through the message like we've been doing for the last few weeks. Join me there in verse 14. We will read the scripture, and I'll come back and then make some application. Let's go right to the Bible. Notice what the text says. Then the Lord said to Moses. Did you see that word, then? That's a follow-up on something that has happened. Chapter 7, verses 1-13, tells the story of Aaron and Moses and the Rod of God. In his hand, it turns into a serpent when he meets up with Pharaoh. Then, his magicians throw their staffs down on the ground, and they turn into serpents, too. Then, the serpent that came from Moses and Aaron swallowed up the magician's serpents. So, there is this picture of the power of God.

Then in verse 14, ¹⁴ *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is hardened; he refuses to let the people go.* In Romans 1, God gave them over to their sin. The Pharaoh is hard-hearted. He's in rebellion. He won't let the people go. It's pride. Be careful if you are a proud man or a proud woman. In verse 15, the command from God is to go to Pharaoh in the morning. In the morning, that is the worst time to meet somebody who's got a problem with you, early in the morning. The Pharaoh is trying to mind his own business down at the river Nile in the morning. I don't know what he's doing there. Maybe he's taking a bath or, getting a drink, or worshiping one of the false gods. Anyway, it's early in the morning. The sun's coming up, and that troublesome Moses is standing on the bank with his older brother, Aaron. He looks up and sees them. They are going to meet him early in the morning. He's got in his hand the staff that signifies the presence of God. They're standing on the banks of the Nile. The Nile was life for Egypt. If there is not the Nile, there is not an Egypt. Now, it's 3000 miles long, and on either side of it is a small ribbon of fertile land, which was Egypt. Right outside of that is the desert. The Nile gave them life.

¹⁶ *And you shall say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, "Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness."* You see, this is about God. This is not about Pharaoh. This is not the Israelites; this is not even about Moses and Aaron. This is about God. What's going on in your life is about God. Do you see that word, serve? I would circle that word. Serve, and the word Worship comes from the same Hebrew word, which means to worship. I'm going to save my people from the slavery so that they can come and worship. When God saves you through your faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, he saves you so that you become a man or woman of worship.

But so far, you have not obeyed. This is talking to the Pharaoh. ¹⁷ *Thus says the LORD, "By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood.* Here comes the plague. The word plague sounds like something that drifts across the country and slowly, people get whatever disease it is. When you think about what God is doing, it is a strike. Several times in this passage, it's going to be God striking the people. And here it comes. ¹⁸ *The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile."* ¹⁹ *And the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they may become blood, and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.'" It's going to turn water to blood, even at home. They have wooden bowls at home. They might have a dog bowl at home. It's going to turn into blood.*

²⁰ *Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood. ²¹ And the fish in the Nile died, and the Nile stank, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.* And then something in verse 22 happened. ²² *But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts. So Pharaoh's heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said. ²³ Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not take even this to heart. ²⁴ And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the Nile. ²⁵ Seven full days passed after the LORD had struck the Nile.*

You see, we didn't even take this into account: the Nile is now blood, so the Egyptians in verse 24 had to get beside the river and dig into the water underneath. If they dig a well, they might find some water, but the surface water is all blood. And it lasted seven full days. Now you think about creation and seven days. Six days, God created, and on the 7th, he rested. There's a picture of the goodness of God. Now you're looking at 7 days of judgment. Seven is the perfect number in the Bible. We see it oftentimes in the Bible to symbolize perfection. And here is the perfect judgment that's fallen on Egypt.

So, what do we do with this? We realize that God does God things for God's glory. If that's the case, let's come back and make some application. How do we apply this to our hearts? What does this mean for us? Here's the first thing I want you to notice about God, number one.

God is supremely sovereign

God is in absolute control. In verse 15, when you hear the talk about the Nile, without the Nile, Egypt doesn't exist, and here Moses will strike the Nile, and it turns into blood; here is a reminder of God's full victory over all the false gods in Egypt. Every one of their false gods is tied in some way to the Nile, and here is God striking the Nile. Do you know what this is? This is a display of God's power. By God's sovereign hand, Moses is called to go to the banks of the Nile, where he would meet Pharaoh. Years prior to that, on the banks of the Nile, Pharaoh's daughter would meet Moses. Moses would be in a little ark. That word, ark, is used one other time to describe Noah's Ark. In the New Testament, that is the saving power of Christ. So, blood in the Nile will point to the judgment of God. The blood of Christ will show us the life and forgiveness of God. The great Puritan, Matthew Henry, said that Pharaoh had stained the Nile with the blood of the Hebrew children, and now God made the Nile run with blood. And what you have here in this very first plague. All of the 10 plagues are going to be a picture of the power and the supreme sovereignty of God.

God is in absolute control of your life. And if that's the case, what do we do with that? I'm going to give you three ways to think about it. The first one is that I want you to yield your heart to the fact that God is in control. He is controlling all of these things. For you to complain is rebellion against God. For you to complain is to say that either God is not in control, or he is in

control, and he's not doing a very good job. So we yield our hearts. Maybe even now, you pray and ask God to help you to yield your heart to his control.

Maybe there is something else to trust in God. This has been very helpful for me to think through. If God is supremely sovereign, he is in control; if he's working all things together for the good of those who love him, then I need to trust him. To worry is to say that I really don't think he's in control. To worry is rebellion against God.

Here's the third kind of category. Let's ask God how do I discern and how do I grow in this? What is God doing? Maybe if you don't know what God is doing, you ask God, how can I grow as a believer in the middle of this mess, trusting that God is supremely sovereign? That's one thing. Let me give you another way, number two.

God uses and blesses obedience

God will use your obedience. He will bless your obedience when you read verses 14 and 15; you have God giving a command to Moses and Aaron, and they obey. You know what it takes to be obedient. It takes moral courage, moral courage, for you to obey what you know to be right and to follow through. In this world of filth that we live in, for a young man or a young woman to be obedient takes moral courage.

Let's see what else it takes. It takes discipline. When you read this story in the Bible about Moses and Aaron, God said you get up early and go there early in the morning. Early, because it takes discipline to do that. You say that sounds legalistic in the word disciple. It's going to take you getting your heart right and strengthening it in the Lord's word. Discipline. It takes you standing there on the bank. What else does it take?

It takes facing the issues. So you have Moses and Aaron here in verses 14 and 15 facing the issues. Don't ignore them and think that it's just going to take care of itself. Things don't typically take care of themselves. If you have a problem hanging out there, it takes actual courage to face the issue. You see Moses and Aaron with the staff of God standing there, the rod of God, and we are reminded you are not alone in this endeavor. You rely on God's presence in your life.

What act of obedience do you need to follow through with? Some of you have some secret sins going on. There's something you need to stop. What is something you, right now, need to stop doing for you to be obedient to God? What do you need to stop? There are others of you who are spiritually lazy. What do you need to start? Is it your own devotional life? Do you spend time in God's word? You need to be in a community group. You need to be a regular in church. Or maybe it's relational. Maybe there's someone you need to call and, in some way, be reconciled to.

Or maybe flip the coin over. Maybe for you to be obedient, you've been hanging out with somebody or spending time with people who are pulling you away from your walk with the Lord. It is detrimental to your spiritual growth, and you need to break that relationship up, even if it's painful. You need to just drop them. Who do you need to get rid of?

Or maybe, in your life, you've been holding some bitterness that is growing, and it's affecting your soul. There's somebody you need to forgive, forgive, and be done with it. Or maybe, sitting here this morning, you've seen the act of baptism. You've heard us talk about several times the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Maybe today, you need to trust Christ and Christ alone to save you.

There are two things you notice here. God is supremely sovereign. God will bless and use your obedience. Let me give you a third thing, number three.

God warns us of sin

¹⁶And you shall say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, "Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness." But so far, you have not obeyed. ¹⁷Thus says the LORD, "By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood. ¹⁸The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile.'" So God gives the warning. He tells the consequences. There are five things that are going to happen if you don't let my people go. Here they come; the river Nile is going to be turned into blood, and all the fish are going to die. There's not going to be any food to eat, no

water to drink. It's going to stink to high heaven, which adds insult to injury. The people are going to be weary. They have to dig for water.

There's a sixth thing that happens. ¹⁹ *And the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they may become blood, and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.'"* God said this is what's gonna happen.

You know what? It's good for us to think about the consequences of what we might do or say 3 or 4 steps down the road. Like what's going to happen if you keep this direction up? If you keep participating in this sin, what will happen? Who's going to get hurt? What's this going to do to your future or your family? Who's going to be left crying? Who's going to feel betrayed? What's going to happen to the children? What will this do for your reputation? God gives us a warning to say, if you aren't obedient, there is judgment.

Maybe you're sitting here, and you are living with the consequences of sin. Here's what you need to do. We go to the Gospel. Remember, we're gospel people. We go to the Gospel. We see the Gospel of redemption that Christ died on the cross to pay for our sins. Christ died there, and we are healed of his wounds. Go to the Gospel of redemption and receive hope and forgiveness. You see, the warning leads to repentance. Let me give you a fourth thing to consider, number four.

God is not silent

He is not silent. You see the text in verses 15 and 16. Moses will say, the Lord has sent me to tell you. And in verses 17 and 18, his word becomes true. Moses said, this is what's going to happen, and it happens. That's why we do what we do. That is why we read the Bible and then talk about it. That is why it's not so important who's standing up here; what is important is the right book is opened, and we're reading from it and saying, what does the word say? You open up the Old Testament there, and you have the law of God. You see, the Law of God makes us know we are sinners. We then go to the New Testament, and we see the grace of God found in Jesus. The Old Testament tells us of our sins. The New Testament tells us how we are saved by

Jesus. The Old Testament is God's promise made, and the New Testament is God's promise fulfilled in Christ. God is not silent. He is speaking through creation. He is speaking in the events of your life. He is directly speaking from his word to your heart so that you will turn to Christ. God is not silent. Here's the fifth thing.

God can be known

When you read this passage, you are reminded that our God can be known. You actually can know him. What does the text say in verse 17? *¹⁷ Thus says the LORD, "By this you shall know that I am the LORD: Through the creation order we know, through God's word we know. I mean, when you read the entire book of Exodus, the whole Exodus endeavor is us seeing that Moses and Aaron will know that he is God and there is no other. The Israelites will know he is God; there is no other. That the Egyptians will know he is God. There is no other. That Pharaoh is going to know he is God. There is no other.*

The psalmist will take this story and write about it in Psalm 78. He will tell us that this happened so that the nations will know that God is God and there is no other. This is what the Christian Gospel proclaims: that he is God. There is no other God, and he can be known through Jesus Christ our Lord. You can know this God. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, you can turn to this God. Our God can be known. There is something else you learned from this plague, number six.

God judges sin

God judges sin. In verses 14 and 15, we find Pharaoh described as having a hard heart. He is stubborn and arrogant. He refuses to yield. We come down the page to verse 23. *²³ Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not take even this to heart.* He's living in habitual sin, an affront to God, and God judges every bit of that. That judgment fell on Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and the truth of the matter is, if you are not in Christ, judgment will fall on you. This is the choice. God is a just God, and he will punish sin. And that punishment for your own sin will fall either on your head or the head of a substitute. And the good news of the gospel is that there is one who has come to say, let me stand in his place. Let me take the judgment that that

person deserves. Jesus has come to say; I will take the judgment you deserve. And I'm asking this morning, will you turn to the one who was pierced for our transgressions? God judges sin. That judgment falls on you or on Christ. Here's the seventh thing to consider, number seven.

God must be worshipped

God must be worshipped. I tried to point out in verse 16, where the Lord has told Moses, ¹⁶ *And you shall say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, "Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness." But so far, you have not obeyed.* The word serve is the word worship. God saves you so that you will worship him. God is going to pull his people out of slavery. What for? So they can go and worship him. What does it mean to worship? What I mean is for you to seek God, to pray to God, to listen to God, to respond to what you've heard in the word, to receive healing from God. To seek God as holy, to approach God with reverence. It's to have an attitude of humility before God. Our demeanor is set before God to see the importance of gathering together and worshipping. It's to prepare your heart to come and worship, to push away distractions, to concentrate on songs and prayer and the preached word. Worship is to participate, to engage and worship, to see, to think about God. Worship is to think about the holiness of God, my own sinfulness, and how it has been paid for by Christ's life and death on the cross and his resurrection. It's to receive God's grace by putting my faith in Jesus. God must be worshipped. Let me be an eighth thing you learned.

God rules and overrules

You have to pay attention to this one because I almost made this point - God owns Satan. But I was afraid somebody would tweet it and then not have the context. But here's what I mean: God rules and overrules. ²² *But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts. So Pharaoh's heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.* ²³ *Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not take even this to heart.* So Moses and Aaron strike the Nile, it turns the rivers into blood. Every place where there's a surface of water, it's turned to blood. But the satanically powered magicians, the magicians of Egypt, did the same thing. What Moses had done, they did. It's a plague. I want you to see that God owns Satan. That Satan is a dog on a chain. And on the other end of that chain is the hand

of God, holding him. Pharaohs and magicians, by the power of Satan, did exactly what the Lord did. They added to the plague.

So, think about Pop Warner football. When I played at Mint Hill, we had all these peewee mighty mites just stepping up. I'm thinking about a bunch of nine-year-olds on the football field learning how to play football. And there's one kid who wants to be a linebacker; he drops back into coverage, and a quarterback throws the football to his receiver, but this kid had a stroke of genius, makes the right cut, and catches and intercepts the football. And then, he turned around and ran to the wrong end zone. So he scored points for the wrong team. That's what the magicians have done. They have done exactly what God intended them to do. What does God do? God bends Satan's power to his own will. What does the Psalmist in 119 say? All things are your servants, Oh God. What did Joseph say at the end of Genesis? In Genesis Chapter 50, things are coming to a close, and his brothers had been so ugly to him, and Joseph says, what you meant for evil, God did it for good.

Brothers and sisters, he is using whatever it is in your life, whatever it is. Is it sadness, bad health, or bad job? You hate the family tension. Is it a lack of money, or maybe too much money? Maybe somebody has insulted you so badly, you've been wrongly accused, you've been betrayed, God is using that. Maybe Satan did it, but God is using that to fulfill his will in your life. When you flip to the pages of the New Testament and open up the gospel, you see Jesus is there, meeting Satan. Satan tempts Jesus in the wilderness. God uses that for us. Judas is possessed by the devil. He betrays Jesus. It is a satanic thing for him to do. God uses that for us. The Roman soldiers take a hammer and big spikes and drive them through the hands and feet of Jesus. It is an evil thing for them to do. God uses that for us. Our God is victorious. So here is the last point.

God's plan is perfect

God's plan for your life is perfect. Do you see it in verse 25? Seven days is the perfect number. What he's doing in the world and what God is doing in your life as he orchestrates his perfect plan in perfect time for his perfect will that he might receive perfect glory from your life. God does God things for God's own glory. I want you to trust him. I want you to love him. I want you

to obey him. I want you to worship and to be strengthened by him and know him through your faith in Jesus. God does God things for God's glory.

(Pastor prays)