



# HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

He's in Control

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Exodus 11:1-10

Clint Pressley

**11** The LORD said to Moses, "Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will drive you away completely. <sup>2</sup> Speak now in the hearing of the people, that they ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, for silver and gold jewelry." <sup>3</sup> And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.

<sup>4</sup> So Moses said, "Thus says the LORD: 'About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, <sup>5</sup> and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle. <sup>6</sup> There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again. <sup>7</sup> But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.' <sup>8</sup> And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, 'Get out, you and all the people who follow you.' And after that I will go out." And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. <sup>9</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh will not listen to you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt." <sup>10</sup> Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land.

*(Pastor Prays)*

By November 1942, Britain had taken a pounding for almost two years in World War II, the Second Great War. They had very little to celebrate by 1942. You could look back on the miracle of Dunkirk, but there's only so much you can celebrate on a retreat. Or maybe you could think about the Battle of Britain when they defended against the Nazi onslaught, but really, they hadn't had much to celebrate until November of 1942. News came out of the desert that

Rommel, the great Nazi tank general, had been defeated. There was an Allied victory over the Nazis at a place called El Alamein. And on November 10th, Winston Churchill knew that he needed to address the people. He needed to help them see that we can hold on. So, he made a speech, and this is what he said in part of it. Churchill said, this is not the end, it is not even the beginning of the end, but it is perhaps the end of the beginning.

Well, the same might be said for where we are in Exodus Chapter 11. It is not the end, it is not even the beginning of the end, but it is perhaps the end of the beginning. If you've been here since January, you know that a whole lot has happened in the 11 chapters that we've been reading. We have nine plagues behind us. God has done all kinds of things. A whole lot has happened, and the truth is that, sitting in this room right here, in the last six months for some of you, a whole lot has happened. There are a lot of you sitting here today that feel like a marathoner. You feel like a marathoner who thought you signed up to run the half-marathon, but you didn't know that you were running a marathon. So, you got 13 miles done, and you think the race is over, but really, you're just halfway. So this right here, in Chapter 11, is going to be a little bit of a water break for us. This chapter is meant to have us take our breath before we get to chapter 12. So, after the darkness of Chapter 10, this is designed to make us sit here a minute and have our souls nourished, thinking about this all-wise, all-ruling God that you can trust. And that's really all I want to do today, convince you that you can trust God. In fact, let's make that the point of the sermon. I'll go back to it time and again. Here's the theme of today's message.

### **Learn to Trust an All-Controlling God**

I want you to trust. What I want to do this morning is walk through just a little bit of these 10 verses. Let me walk through, and I'll just point out some things that I think are interesting. Maybe you will as well. Then I'll come back and try to make some application. So, you follow along in your copy of the Bible. Come there to verse one. The Lord said to Moses, yet one more plague. That word plague is the word strike. Don't think about God sending something passive. It is the word strike. One more time, God is going to hit the Egyptians and Pharaoh. In fact, in verses 1-3, God is speaking to Moses. In verses 4-8, Moses is speaking to Pharaoh. God tells Moses what to say. Moses then addresses the people of Israel, and then in verse 4, we join him as he's in front of Pharaoh. What does God say? God says that I will bring upon Pharaoh and

upon Egypt a plague, and after that, he will let you go. And when he lets you go, he will drive you out. So here is God saying, I'm not sending grasshoppers this time. This is not locust. God creates frogs, he creates lice, but not this time. This time, it's going to happen at midnight.

The people of Israel are told to speak to the Egyptians and ask them for silver and gold. Do you see that in verse 2-3? <sup>2</sup> *Speak now in the hearing of the people, that they ask, every man of his neighbor and every woman of her neighbor, for silver and gold jewelry.*” <sup>3</sup> *And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.*

This is exactly what God had said to Moses in Exodus Chapter 3:21-22, at the burning bush. When he appeared to Moses, he told Moses, <sup>21</sup> *And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty,* <sup>22</sup> *but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians.*” So here's a fulfillment of Exodus chapter 3. Can you imagine these Israelites going and knocking on the door of the Egyptians and telling them, look, we're going to be leaving here pretty soon, and we'd like to have all your jewelry. Give me all the money that you're having to save. I'd like the keys to that Porsche you have. Give that to me.

And the truth of the matter is, when you read it, they're going to do that. In verse 3, we find out that the people of Egypt actually thought of Moses in a positive light; they held him up. What's happened is that Pharaoh has done what Hitler did. He outstripped his people. He was a fanatic, and the people turned against him. And Moses has now gone to Pharaoh. So, you listen to the interchange here. <sup>4</sup> *So Moses said, “Thus says the LORD: ‘About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt,* <sup>5</sup> *and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle.* <sup>6</sup> *There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again.* <sup>7</sup> *But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.’* <sup>8</sup> *And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, ‘Get out, you and all the people who follow you.’ And after that I will go out.” And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger.* It is a catastrophic strike against Egypt.

Every single home will have someone dead and a family weeping. It is catastrophic heartbreak. There will be a great cry in Egypt.

For those of you who have been here reading this story, do you remember what happened 80 years ago? Moses was put in that basket into the river. Remember why he was put there. It's because Pharaoh was killing all the baby boys. Now, 80 years later, what had happened in Goshen with Israel is now going to happen with Egypt. What's interesting to me is that we are told that although all those babies are going to be killed there in Egypt, in verse 7, there's a contrast. Not a dog will growl against any of the people of Israel. A lot of you here have a pet. I have two dogs in my house: a 13-year-old Beagle named Spurgeon, who's on borrowed time, and Roman, our 2-year-old Rottweiler. He sort of gets all the attention now. We treat our pets oftentimes like they are humans. I was watching TV, and a commercial came on for dog food. I saw a guy finally got a date with the girl; she came to his house, and she said something about the dog food in the refrigerator, but he chose the dog over the woman. I think that's probably a reflection of real life. We treat our dogs differently. That is not how the Egyptians thought of their dogs. A dog was a feral animal, probably like a hyena; it was a filthy, wild animal. But God is so powerful and so involved that he shuts the mouths of feral dogs to show that there is a difference between those who are in Christ and those who are not.

What did Johnny Cash say? That everybody will not be treated the same. There are those who are loved by God in Christ because you've turned your heart toward Jesus. You've trusted in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ and believe that is the only way you're saved. You are loved in Christ, and if you are outside, then you feel that there's a difference. That's the distinction that's being made. So, we find that over in verse 8, this is Moses still talking to Pharaoh, <sup>8</sup>*And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, 'Get out, you and all the people who follow you.' And after that I will go out."* And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. At the very end of verse eight, look at Moses. And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. Why? Because he knew what was coming. He knew that there was going to be a needless tragedy in all of these homes, and you, Pharaoh, can stop it. I've been here 9 times trying to get you to do this. You can feel the frustration in Moses as he walks out.

Then in verses 9 and 10, you have just some commentary. <sup>9</sup>*Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh will not listen to you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt."*

<sup>10</sup> *Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land.* This tells us how God sovereignly moves. God tells him, 'I'm doing this for a reason; I'm showing my power.' God hardened Pharaoh's heart 19 times. Why? Because of his sinful nature. He was already evil, and God kept him in that. Why? So he could display and save his people. You can trust him, see.

I want you to learn to trust this all-controlling God.

So that's the Bible study part. Let's now catch our breath and see how we can apply this to you so that you might trust him. What can you trust him with? I'd like to offer a few suggestions. Here's the first thing, number one.

### **You can trust God with your future**

If you were to look at verse 1 and verse 4, verse 6, verse 8, and verse 9, you'll see it over and over again. I heard Kevin DeYoung say this. Here is God saying, I will. I will. There shall, there shall. I will. I will not. God doesn't just predict the future. So, be careful when you talk about how God knows things. God doesn't just know; He's not just some wise man who's been around a long time and knows what's going to happen. God doesn't just know, God plans, and God declares, and then he does. You see it in verse 4. See the divine, I will, I will go out. That is the picture of our God being personally involved. He is active, and God is in the details.

Look at all the details. I mean, it just spells out that it's going to happen at midnight. Here's the result. There will be a great cry. The reason I'm pointing this out is that this is more than I can trust God when times are hard. That's true. You can. That is true. If you're going through a storm, the Lord is going to be with you. Yes, that's true. But I want you to see that God is not just hanging back waiting for you to have a problem, to take care of you when things get bad. I want you to see that God is in it now. That God is sovereignly making it happen. That he is doing something right now. Romans 8:28 says, he's doing that for good. It helps us when we go through things that make no sense to trust and rely on a God who is all-controlling. You can trust him. You can trust him with your future. So what is it? What is it you are most concerned about right now? What are you most worried about? What's coming up tomorrow, this week, or the next month? What are you most worried about? Is it a child? If you have an adult child,

are you worried about that? Maybe you're sick, maybe you have a diagnosis of something, and you're battling it. You can't seem to shake it, and you're worried about that. Maybe it's money, or maybe it's a marriage or lack thereof, and you worry when you look into the future. So, this passage is here, Chapter 11, to get you to see that you can trust God with your future. You can trust God with that. You can trust him. Let me give you a second point, number two.

### **You can trust God with your enemies**

Pharaoh is the most powerful man in the known world. He has the most powerful people, the Egyptians, and you find in verse one, what does the Lord say? I am going to strike. I'll bring that on Pharaoh. Now, what you have here is the ultimate display of God's sovereign power. When you read it in verses 4-6, what you're going to find there is a punishment that is so great that Moses and the people will not only be let go, but Pharaoh is going to run them out. There's something else here, too, kind of tucked in the language of the firstborn. God will strike the firstborn in Egypt. It brought to mind Exodus 4:22, when God speaks about Israel, his children, and calls Israel his firstborn. Pharaoh has been brought up as the picture of the enemy of the people of God. Now, I'm not sure if you actually have enemies or if you just think there are people who are perceived as such, but when you have people against you, how do we deal with that? We leave them to the Lord, especially if you're in a dispute with someone who is a believer. Let's say your enemy is someone who is a professed believer, a confessing Christian. If that person happens to be a confessing Christian, it means that God is their Father or His Father. You can leave God to deal with his children. It's good for you to learn to trust God with your future. You trust God with those who are against you, your enemies. Let me give you a third thing to consider about trusting God, number three.

### **You can trust God with your needs**

Way back at the burning bush in Exodus 3:21, the Lord said to Moses, I will give the people favor. This is the idea with the Egyptians. When you get here in verse 3, we are told that God is meeting all of their needs. And all of their needs are going to be met by the Egyptians, giving them gold and silver. That's a good thing to remember. When we receive something from someone who is not a Christian, we receive it because God has given us favor. Connie and I were talking yesterday, and she was remarking on Elijah being fed by the ravens. If God can use

blackbirds to feed a man twice a day with meat and bread, if God can do that, then certainly he can provide for you. I'm sure you know the Lord's Prayer. It seems like everybody, Christian or not, knows the Lord's Prayer. When I was playing football at Independence High School, it seemed to be the only Christian thing we did. We would get in the huddle, and we'd all say the Lord's Prayer together. I don't know what we were praying for; we would just say the Lord's Prayer together. When you say the Lord's Prayer, just go through it line by line. It's good just to know the Lord's Prayer. Our Father who is in heaven. So think about how lofty God is. He is your Father, covenanted with you. You are his child because of the grace of God and Jesus. So think about that saving power. Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed or holy, is your name. Think of the Holiness of God and your own sinfulness and your need for the gospel. It's good to think through the Lord's Prayer. Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on Earth as it is in heaven. So the will of God is done perfectly in heaven, and you ask for it to happen here. You just ask God to provide. Give us our daily bread. And as you do, you know that you can trust that God will provide your needs. You can trust God with your future; you can trust God with your enemies. You can trust God with the needs you have day-to-day. I'm going to give you a fourth thing to consider, number four.

### **You can trust God with your reputation**

Notice it with me in verse 3. <sup>3</sup> *And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.* Everybody thought favorably of him. Pharaoh hated Moses and Aaron but the Egyptians held him in high esteem. Why am I pointing that out to you? Because Moses was being faithful, even though it seemed as if he's going against the leaders of the land. And I just want to remind you to think less of what people are going to think of you or what it is going to cost you. There are students in this room that this week decided to surrender their lives fully to Christ. I want to follow Christ at all costs. I'll do everything, and it's very difficult. It's good for you just to hear that you can trust God with your reputation. You can trust that if you put your faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and you've surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus and even if people think you're a fool, you can trust that God is going to use that for his own glory. You can trust the outcome. You can trust that God is going to take you to the right place. When we here at Hickory Grove baptize people, we don't do spontaneous

baptisms because we want to make sure those that are being baptized clearly understand why they are being baptized. We want to make sure that they know what it means to be in Christ. And when we do baptize people, it is a picture of being buried. We even say it, being buried with him in baptism, raised to walk in new life. I've now identified with Christ. You can trust God with your reputation. How about a fifth point, number five.

### **You can trust God with your aging**

You can trust God with your aging. You're getting old. You can trust God with that. You can trust that God is using all of that. Here's what I mean. It struck me while I was reading this that Moses became this great leader when he was 80. He really wasn't that useful until he was 80. All of his life prepared him to be an old man and then be used. Now, maybe it's not 80, maybe not 70, maybe it's 60. But you are aging. We are all getting older.

We're going to commission the Harrells today, and what a beautiful family – Brian and Becky Harrell and their beautiful kids. Jenna Kate is going into college. She's their daughter. They have three sons, and she's sort of the rose among thorns and that family. But anyway, she's going into college, and there's a picture on Facebook somewhere on my page where she's standing there with me. Her daddy is digging a well, and there I am digging that well; there's no gray in my beard. I was a younger man, and now she's going off to college, and I'm getting old and shriveling up. We're all aging. Everyone. How then do we make sure we're useful as we age? Here's one way. Keep moving. Don't sit down. Sitting down is the new smoking. Keep moving. Number two, get into God's word. Start reading God's word even more than you did before. Number three, don't idolize yesteryear. If you're an older saint here today, don't idolize how it used to be; don't get bitter at those who can go and serve. Encourage those that are doing that. Pray for your church. Ask God to give you joy. Look for opportunities to serve. Rehearse the gospel in your heart and most of all, stay faithful to Christ. You can trust God with your aging. I'm gonna give you another point, number six.

### **You can trust God with getting justice**

Some of you feel like you've been cheated one way or the other. Maybe someone has done something to you, and they got away with it. It feels like it when you read verses 4-6; it is brutal



when you read it. Go ahead and look at it. I'll just point it out. The striking of Egypt will leave a massive hole. There will be carnage in every home, rich and poor. It feels so harsh. Why would that happen? Look back at Exodus 4:23, <sup>23</sup> *and I say to you, "Let my son go that he may serve me." If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son."* Son for son. If you're a father in this room, if you're a parent, there is a protective instinct that you have for your children. Think about 80 plus years prior to this. Think about what the Pharaoh did to the Hebrew baby boys, all those little baby boys, so many years ago, and now the long arm of justice, God will not be mocked.

But when you keep pressing on this, you see, and you read the New Testament, and we are reminded that there is another only son who comes not just to satisfy the justice of God. It's true, Jesus died on the cross in the place of sinners to satisfy God's justice. But that is not all he did. He took the justice and the wrath of God away at the cross so that God could still be just and the justifier to give mercy. We think of Jesus Christ as the picture of mercy for us. Look, you can trust the justice of God, and you can fall on the mercy of God found at the cross of Jesus. Let me give you just a couple more, number seven.

### **You can trust God with your emotions**

I have read the Bible a bunch of times, and I haven't seen this. Sometimes you're reading, and you see something you have not seen before. Look at the description of Moses. He went out from Pharaoh in hot anger. Why is he frustrated? Moses is considering what's coming down the pipe. Moses is considering the needless death of so many thousands of men and boys; that is an avoidable tragedy. Pharaoh, if you'll just do this, all of it could be avoided. When you see somebody getting ready to make a colossal moral failure, like it's bad and you can see how it's going to turn out, and you've tried to convince them, don't do this, it's a colossal mistake, you see the danger, and they still do it. How do we manage that? I'm in no way saying that Moses had an affection for Pharaoh, but you and I have people in our lives that we have affection for, who have not listened to our counsel. How do we manage that? Let me give you some suggestions. One is to be convictional, stay true to what the Bible says, be true to the Bible. Don't let affection and family sway how you view what the Bible says. Be convictional but also be humble. Remember that we once were sinners, and we have been saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus. So, you're humbled in your heart. Be prayerful. Pray for the one we see

whose life is going off the rails. Be obedient to the word, stand under the word of God. Stand there being obedient and humble and prayerful and convictional. And if there is repentance, then you be forgiving. You extend the grace that has been extended to you. You learn to trust God with all of that that's inside of you. Look, you could keep reading. You could keep finding things to trust God with. You could get down to verse 10 and trust God with his sovereignty. You could trust God with what it does in people's hearts. You could trust God for his word. But let me just close with this one, number eight.

### **You can trust His grace**

Grace. Isn't that how you're saved? You see in verses 6 – 7, the distinction. <sup>6</sup> *There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again.* <sup>7</sup> *But not a dog shall growl against any of the people of Israel, either man or beast, that you may know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.* There is a distinction. Now, look, the Israelites weren't any less sinners than the Egyptians. The Israelites also had sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and of God's grace. And what does God do by his love? Not by their merits. God has made a distinction between Egypt and Israel.

This came up in one of the devotions of Paul Trip called New Morning Mercies. It's great. I would recommend it to you. Paul Trump makes the point that God made the dogs distinguish. He made individual animals do what he wanted them to do for his people. What does that tell us? That not so much as a mosquito can land on you without God giving the go ahead. All of that to say, I want you to trust him. Learn to trust an all-controlling God. With that in mind, this morning, let's go to the Lord in a moment of prayer and dedication. Let's turn our lives over to the Lord and get ready to sing. With your heads bowed this morning, join me as we pray. I want you to trust God with your future. What are you worried about? Trust him. Trust God with your enemies. You have needs; you can trust God. Has your reputation been harmed? Can you feel the effects of aging on your emotions? You turn those over to the Lord. Nail them to the Cross of Christ and trust him for his grace.

*(Pastor prays)*