

The Plagues on Egypt and the Grace of God

Exodus 7:14-10:29

City of God Church

Big Idea: More than anything God wants to be known and loved *by* us because of his great love *for* us.

When you have to make a difficult decision, how do you ultimately choose what you do?

- Whether or not to discipline your child
- Whether or not to do your homework
- Whether or not to have a difficult conversation

What ultimately pushes you to make the decision that you make?

What would you have done if you were Aron Ralston?

- Went hiking in Utah without telling anyone where he was going
- Was trapped for five days when his arm was pinned between a boulder and rock wall.
- Ultimately had to decide to cut his arm off.

This will sound really simplistic, but ultimately what we want the most wins out. It might be a desire, or it might be love.

While we get into our text this morning keep wrestling with that question. Why do you make the difficult decisions that you make?

While you're thinking about that let's get into the book of Exodus this morning.

Text: Exodus 7:14-10:29

What has led up to this point?

- God's people are in slavery in Egypt
- He has been preparing Moses to lead the people out
- Pharaoh (the ruler of Egypt) has made life more difficult for Israel
- Moses is preparing to confront Pharaoh

⁴ Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. ⁵ The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them" (Ex. 7:4-5).

How did God stretch out his hand against Egypt?

Summary of the Plagues

1. Water into blood (7:17-19, 20-21)
 - a. Magicians could duplicate (7:22)
 - b. Think about how much water you use every day without thinking about it. Trying to get in the shower, grabbing a bottle of water, turning on a faucet, or even trying to grab a bottle of water. All of it had turned to blood.
2. Frogs (8:2b-4)
 - a. Magicians could duplicate (8:7)
 - b. The description shows all prevalent this would be. Trying to sleep on a mat on the floor at night, opening the cabinets in your kitchen, trying to walk around would be a challenge, imagine the noise.
 - c. Pharaoh: pray and I'll let you go
3. Gnats (mosquitos/lice) (8:17)
 - a. Magicians couldn't duplicate (8:18)
 - b. Have you ever had the feeling of getting a bug in your mouth while you're running? What about getting one stuck in your eye? Imagine living in that. Even trying to take a bite of food would be a challenge.
4. Flies (8:21)
 - a. God set apart his people (8:22)
 - b. Same problem. Literally there would be flies everywhere. Touching all of your food. The ground was covered with them.
 - c. Pharaoh: sacrifice but stay close
5. Livestock (9:3-4)
 - a. Now things started to get a little more serious.
 - b. This would have been a huge hit to their ability to work, and provide food. This would have been humiliating.
6. Boils (9:8-9)
 - a. Like to imagine him "Lebron Jamesing" the soot
 - b. Magicians couldn't stand before Moses (9:11)
 - c. Word means angry boils or skin ulcers
7. Hail (9:18-19)
 - a. Hail is devastating in parts of the world (1888/240 killed in N. India)
 - b. Some listened to God's instructions (9:20)
 - c. Description of the events (9:24-26)
 - d. Pharaoh: pray and I'll let you go
8. Locusts (10:5-6)
 - a. Last two plagues are a farmers nightmare.
 - b. Whatever crops the hail hadn't destroyed the locusts would have.
 - c. Description (10:14-15)
9. Darkness (10:21-23)
 - a. The sun God, national god of Egypt, was being humiliated

b. Pharaoh's final rejection (10:28)

These plagues would have absolutely devastated the land of Egypt.

- You seriously want to worship a God like this?
- Looks like the little kid with the magnifying glass

What was God's purpose in sending the plagues?

- To save his people (Ex. 7:4)

If God was only interested in saving his people why didn't he just wipe out the Egyptians (Ex. 9:15)?

More than saving his people from slavery God wanted to be known by all people

- By the Egyptians (7:5)
- Pharaoh (7:17; 9:14)
- Whole earth (9:16)

God wants to be known by people because of his love for them.

- Initially God created all things, including us, as good. All of this was for his glory.
- The greatest good, joy, and love for people was to be found in loving and worshiping God.
- That is what all joy and love on earth points to. A greater more real love and joy that is available.
- When we submit ourselves to God we are living for what we were created for.

Now imagine you're God. You created people out of love and you want what's best for them, but they constantly choose other things.

- Trying to teach Jordan about eating well, but she'll always grab ice cream.
- Many of you have relationships where your friend seems to sabotage everything good in his life.

So here is what God knows:

1. All things were created for his glory
2. People will find the most joy, love, and satisfaction in life when they worship me
3. All people default to rebelling against God and what he wants for their life

So what do you do? Do you leave them alone to make the decisions they want to make, or out of love do you try and get their attention even if it hurts?

Objections:

Why couldn't God have given them good things?

1. If God showed up and fixed my problems I would absolutely follow him. He'd be like the ultimate State Farm agent. Just show me you're there.
2. The Egyptians had gods that ruled over many of the good things they had in life. They worshiped their own gods to bring food, rain, and life.
3. For someone to come to faith in God it's usually not because of some good thing that happens, but because one of the idols that they worship has been destroyed.

Had God simply given good things to the Egyptians:

- They would have worshiped and praised their own gods
- In turn we too would worship our own gods. Rather than drawing us closer to God we are usually led into worshiping an idol.

For the Egyptians to believe in God he had to break them. He had to demolish the false idols in their life. This was the *most loving* thing that God could do.

What do the plagues teach us about us?

1. God has to break us and the idols we worship before we'll believe
 - a. Where are you going to turn when what's most important is taken from you? This might not even happen to you before your death bed.
 - b. This needs to happen for many Christians as well. God isn't treasured by them, but he's a means to the treasure that they really want.
 - c. The biggest idol many of you will encounter is comfort.
 - i. Life with God is good is good when life is comfortable.
 - ii. A church with all of the programs you want and no messy people.
 - iii. A life without stress or difficulty. All of your money and stuff is for you.
 - iv. Why is comfort so concerning? No passion for God, no need for him in your life, no life lived on mission.
2. Our biggest idol will be ourselves
 - a. Coming to God requires giving him control of life.
 - b. Pharaoh paints a picture of someone that will ultimately reject God (10:28). He wanted power over his own life even though giving God control would have been best for him.
 - c. Some of you are hesitating in giving yourself fully to God because you're worried about giving something up.
 - d. Don't you think God is infinitely better than anything else you might want?
3. God will give people what they want
 - a. Pharaoh got exactly what he wanted in the end.
 - b. Romans 1 says this is true for all people. Eventually God won't press anymore.

- c. We see the grace of God in that we're given by him what we don't deserve.

What do the plagues teach us about God?

1. God wants to be known
 - a. He went to great lengths to be known by the people. This would ultimately be the greatest good for them.
 - b. Some did choose to follow him (Ex. 9:20; 12:38)
 - c. Why doesn't God show himself to us today?
 - d. He's perfectly shown himself to us in Jesus. We have it all here.
2. God wants to save his people, even if it hurts short term
 - a. What would you be more upset to find out: that you had a comfortable life and God never showed himself to you, or you went through some hurt and ultimately found all that matters in life?
 - b. "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."
 - c. The issue of pain and suffering in the Bible is complex. There isn't one answer. Sometimes pain is discipline. Sometimes it is God trying to get our attention. Other times we're not told why.
 - d. God is going to try and break you at one point to show you your need for him. You're either going to run to him or from him in that moment.
3. God will punish sin
 - a. The Egyptians deserved death (9:15).
 - b. The plagues are only a small snapshot of the judgment to come.
 - c. The wrath of God is on people now (Rom. 1). One day it will be permanent.
4. He's removed his wrath from his people
 - a. Not because they were any better than the Egyptians (Deut. 7)
 - b. They are living in a restored relationship not because they are perfect

Conclusion: The extent of God's love doesn't stop at causing us pain. It ultimately cost God everything himself.

- He had perfectly had what we all want from eternity past. Not only was Jesus severed from God, but punished.
- God not only hurts over your pain he's been there himself.

What should you do?

1. Repent of your idols
2. Where has God shown you grace?