

Preamble:

Sunday morning prayer meeting.
Member's introductions.

Prayer for illumination:

Please join me in prayer...

Sermon introduction:

During my senior year of college, I added an insurance minor to my history major. Why? So that I could be gainfully employed when I graduated. That Spring, a life insurance sales recruiter from NWML showed up to our campus to recruit the insurance minors and majors. We made a great connection after his presentation. We set up a job interview for 10am the following Wed. The following Wed, I put on my dress pants, my tie, and my sports coat and then I glanced one last time at my calendar. That is when I realized that I was in trouble. I forgot to write down the meeting location. And I had no way to get a hold of the recruiter. I wracked my brain, but I simply could not remember where we were supposed to meet.

As a result, the meeting never happened. I stood the guy up. My forgetfulness may have cost me millions of dollars in life insurance sales. Yet, I will never know!!!

How many of you are guilty of forgetting something important? Forgetting something important is often costly. This brings us to Exodus 12:1-13:16. In this text God exhorts Israel to never ever forget something very important. He urges them to never forget his great act of redemption.

Why does God remind Israel to never forget? Because God knows that his people are a forgetful people. We too are often guilty of forgetting God's mighty acts of redemption, resulting in condemnation, fear, hopelessness, and despair.

Like Israel, we too must never forget God's mighty act of redemption. How do we remember God's mighty act of redemption? By following three steps...

Step one- We must understand redemption.

Step two- We must apply redemption.

Step two- We must remember redemption.

Before we look at these steps, let me provide some context.

Moses and Aaron told Pharaoh to let God's people go. They warned and they pleaded. Pharaoh said, "No." So get sent nine plagues, wreaking havoc on Egypt and its people. These plagues revealed that YHWH was the one true God. But Pharaoh's heart was hard.

So, Moses threatened a tenth and final plague—the worst of all the plagues. Moses said, "Pharaoh, if you don't free God's people, every first-born child in Egypt will die." Yet, Pharaoh still refused.

As a result, God poured out his justice on Egypt, while redeeming Israel. And God's people, must never ever forget God's mighty acts of redemption!

How do we never forget?

Three steps...

Understanding redemption

Applying redemption

Remembering redemption

Step one- Understanding redemption.

In 12:1-13, God tells Israel how to avoid the tenth (devastating) plague.

Exodus 12:1-2 (ESV) — 1 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, **2** “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.

God is essentially saying, “I’m going to help you remember my great act of redemption by making it the basis for your new national calendar.”

Exodus 12:3-8 (ESV) — 3 Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household. **4** And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. **5** Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, **6** and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. **7** “Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. **8** They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it.

Due to their quick departure from Egypt, the Israelites are unable to bake bread leavened with yeast. Unleavened bread becomes a symbol of their swift departure.

Furthermore, the bitter herbs were meant to recall the bitter suffering of slavery in Egypt (1:14).

Exodus 12:12-13 (ESV) — 12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. **13** The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

Let me summarize verses 1-13.

Because Pharaoh refused to let Israel go, the angel of death is about to inflict vengeance on Egypt. God is about to strike down all the first born, both man and beast of the land.

At this point, some of you are thinking—how can I trust a God who kills babies?

This was Pharaoh's fault. God clearly warned him.

Furthermore, this was justice for the Israelites. Remember, earlier in the book of Exodus, Pharaoh tried to kill all the Israelite boys.

Back to the story.

It is important to notice that Israel is not exempt from this threat. If Israel does not prepare, in the exact way that God prescribes, they too will lose their firstborn sons. Why? We are all sinners, and we all deserve to die, not just the Egyptians (Rom. 6:23).

So how should Israel prepare? The head of every Israelite family was required to follow very specific instructions. He needed to find 14-day old lamb without blemish—one per household. Then on the appointed day, he was required to slaughter the lamb. Then he was required to paint the lamb's blood on the doorposts of his house. Then the family was required to feast on the meat of the lamb.

Why? Why this bizarre ritual? Every first-born child deserved to die. In fact, everyone who has ever lived, deserves to die, since the penalty for sin is death. All of us sin every day. Even children sin every day, in thought, word, and deed. Children are not innocent. We have all inherited guilt and corruption from Adam.

Blood represents life (Lev. 17:11). When the lamb's blood was shed it was symbolic of the animal dying. This clearly illustrates the principal of substitutionary atonement. Because the lamb died, the child was spared. The lamb died in the place of the first-born child. One life was spared, because one life was taken. The penalty for the child's sin was atoned for.

When the angel of death approached an Israelite house and saw blood on the doorpost, the angel of death passed over this house, sparing the child. Why? Justice had already been served. Sin had already been paid for.

What does the Passover have to do with us? Everything!

Jesus Christ is our Passover lamb. He shed his blood for us.

John 1:29 (ESV) — 29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Jesus is our Passover lamb, how takes away our sin.

1 Corinthians 5:7 (ESV) — 7 Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

Jesus is the Passover lamb who was sacrificed for us.

1 Peter 1:18–19 (ESV) — 18 knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, **19** but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Jesus was the perfect lamb, without blemish or spot, who was sacrificed for us.

Because Jesus, the lamb of God, died for us, in our place, the wrath of God will pass over us. Jesus Christ is our substitute. He willingly gave up his life to save billions.

Illustration:

Substitution page 60 (tornado, child, etc...) of HOTC

Sacrifice page 55 (Chernobyl pilot) of HOTC

Christ, the Passover lamb, died for us! This is the heart of redemption. Yet, it is not enough to understand these truths, they must be applied! Which brings us to the second step.

Step one- Understanding redemption.

Step two- Applying redemption.

How do we apply Christ's work of redemption? Consider a few glorious facts. For starters...

Since Christ redeemed us, we are without blemish!

The Passover lamb had to be without blemish. Why? It pointed to Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ was without blemish. He was perfect, and he needed to be perfect to redeem us.

We are covered in blemishes.

We are all guilty of pride, selfishness, idolatry, lack of love, ingratitude, ungodly speech, gossip, slander, lust, greed, etc...

Yet, Christ was without blemish. He was perfect. He not only died for us, but he also lived for us. His record of perfection is now applied to us, through our union with him.

Someday, Christ will present us spotless before his father.

Think of all the sins you have committed that no one knows about. Someday, you will stand before God's throne without blemish, perfect, and spotless.

Since Christ redeemed us, we are without blemish! In addition...

Since Christ redeemed us, God's wrath will pass over us!

Just like the angel of death passed over the homes with blood on the doorposts, God's wrath will pass over us.

We will never see it.

We will never experience it.

We never have to fear it.

It will never be a part of our reality.

Why? It was all spent on Jesus.

The greatest catastrophe one could ever possibly imagine has been averted for those who are simply trusting in Jesus Christ alone to save them.

But if you have not trusted Christ, his wrath is hurtling towards you! Which means that you are in deep trouble. I would be hating you to not warn you of God's impending Judgment. Yet there is a way of escape. Explain...

*Since Christ redeemed us, we are without blemish!
Since Christ redeemed us, God's wrath will pass over us!*

Since Christ redeemed us, we are freed from slavery!

When God struck down the firstborn of Egypt, Pharaoh finally saw the light. He finally relented. He finally freed Israel. Then we read...

Exodus 12:31–32 (ESV) — 31 Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, “Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as you have said. **32** Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also!”

Israel was finally freed from slavery to Egypt.
No more task masters.
No more whips
No more awful working conditions.

When God redeemed Israel, they were freed from slavery!

When God redeems us, we too are freed from slavery. Not slavery to Pharaoh, but slavery to the flesh, the devil, and the fear of death.

Some of you probably feel enslaved to...

Porn
Overeating
Spending
Fear of man
An eating disorder
An addiction
Swearing
Anger

If you are a Christian, you don't have to be enslaved. You have been freed (Read Romans 6:1-12 this afternoon). In the moment of temptation, you don't have to give in.

You have been freed from slavery to sin. Sadly, we often forget this fact, which brings us to the third (and most important) step.

Step one- *Understanding redemption.*
Step two- *Applying redemption.*

Step three- Remembering redemption.

How is Israel supposed to remember God's redemption? With a feast!

Exodus 12:14–28 (ESV) — 14 “This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast. **15** Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. **16** On the first day you shall hold a holy assembly, and on the seventh day a holy assembly. No work shall be done on those days. But what everyone needs to eat, that alone may be prepared by you. **17** And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as a statute forever. **18** In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. **19** For seven days no leaven is to be found in your houses. If anyone eats what is leavened, that person will be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a sojourner or a native of the land. **20** You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwelling places you shall eat unleavened bread.”

In these verses, God commands Israel to feast. Why? Every detail of the feast was designed to help them remember God's mighty act of redemption. For seven days, they were told to eat unleavened bread. The Festival of Unleavened Bread was initiated by the Passover feast and observed for seven days. These were not two separate holidays or feasts but one weeklong celebration. God likes to have a good time. We will feast for all eternity.

God knew that eventually, over time, Israel would forget what he did for them. He was concerned about their faulty memories. The history of Israel, for the next 1,000 years, proves that God's concerns were valid. Israel forgot about God's mighty act of redemption again, and again, and again, causing calamitous problems.

We do the same thing, don't we. We forget God's mighty act of redemption. Why do we forget the gospel? Consider a few reasons...

We are far too subjective!

Some of us give way too much authority to our emotions. We say things like...

I feel like God is a million miles away...

I don't feel like God loves me...

I don't feel close to God...

I feel condemned today...

I feel like God is treating me unfairly...

In light of this mentality, Sinclair Ferguson writes,

“The evangelical orientation is inward and subjective. We are far better at looking inward than we are at looking outward. Instead, we need to expend our energies admiring, exploring, expositing, and extolling Jesus Christ.” (Quoted by Mahaney, LTCCL, 48)

Our overly subjective orientation causes us to forget the gospel.

When subjectivity causes us to forget the gospel, we must talk to ourselves.

Commenting on Psalm 42, D. Lloyd Jones writes,

“Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? Take those thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. You have not originated them but they are talking to you, they bring back the problems of yesterday, etc. Somebody is talking. Who is talking to you? Yourself is talking to you. Now this man’s treatment [in Psalm 42] was this: instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself. “Why art thou cast down, O my soul?” he asks. His soul had been depressing him, crushing him. So he stands up and says, “Self, listen for moment, I will speak to you.” (D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, *Spiritual Depression*, 237).

When subjectivity causes us to forget the gospel, we must preach truth to ourselves (expand on this).

Not only are we far too subjective...

We also wallow in condemnation.

Condemnation is the opposite of justification. To be condemned is to be declared guilty. To be justified is to be declared righteous.

We often feel guilty—about what? All kinds of things...

Careless comments

Not praying enough

Not evangelizing our friends

Not reading our Bibles enough

Yelling at our kids

Wasting time at work or at home

Eating too much

Drinking too much.

Condemnation can burry us, causing us to forget the gospel. When it does, we must remember the difference between condemnation and genuine conviction of sin. Condemnation is often vague, unspecific, and hopeless. Genuine conviction of sin is very specific and life giving.

Author CJ Mahaney provides a helpful condemnation test.

Do you relate to God as if you were on a kind of permanent probation, suspecting that at any moment he may haul you back into the jail cell of his disfavor?

When you come to worship do you maintain a ‘respectful distance’ from God, as if he were a fascinating but ill-tempered celebrity known for lashing out at his fans?

When you read the Bible does it reveal the boundless love of the Savior or merely intensify your condemnation?

Are you more aware of your sin than you are of God’s grace, given to you through the cross?

When you think about God’s attitude towards you what do you think he thinks of you? (Mahaney, *LTCCL*, 39).

Are you suffering from condemnation?

Why do we forget the gospel?

We far too subjective.

We also wallow in condemnation. In addition...

We are performance-based creatures.

Most of life is based on performance. We must earn everything in life. When you work hard, you get good grades. When you work hard, you get promoted. When you work hard, you make more money. When you work hard, you get swull. But the gospel is entirely free of charge. Wow!

Because of these reasons, and many others, we frequently forget God's mighty act of redemption through Christ.

How do we remember? If only we had a feast, like the Passover feast. Here is the good news, God has given us our own Passover feast of sorts.

Luke 22:7-8 (ESV) — 7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8 So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it."

It is no coincidence that the gospel of Luke mentions the Passover six times when describing the Last Supper (Luke 22: 1, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15). Jesus Christ is the clear fulfilment of the Passover meal. He is the perfect lamb of God who was slain. Which is why he was slain during the season of the annual Passover feast.

Israel celebrated with a weeklong feast, because God's wrath passed over them, when God saw the slain lamb.

We celebrate with bread and wine, because God's wrath passed over us, when God saw the perfect lamb of God slain in our place.

Conclusion:

What do we do when we forget the gospel, because we are lost in the maze of subjectivity? We eat the bread and drink the wine.

What do we do when we forget the gospel because we are weighed down with condemnation? We eat the bread, and we drink the wine.

What do we do when we forget the gospel, because we are stuck on the performance tread mill? We eat the bread and drink the wine.

We must never ever forget God's mighty act of redemption!!!

There is no better way to conclude this sermon than by celebrating communion. But let me mention a few things first.

Fence the table...

Pray...

Invite folks to come forward...