

Exodus 12:1-32

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Preacher: Kenny Holt

[0 : 0 0] and in Peru. So it can be doctors, nurses, medics can go and work on our medical ships, or if you're just not medically gifted or you're not a medical professional, you can go to Tanzania and Peru to work with our construction teams building homes for orphans and children who have lost their parents through HIV and AIDS, and also we're working with children in Peru who are street children or vulnerable children. So that's the sort of the work that Vine Trust has been involved in for the last 30 years.

Fantastic, and at least a couple from our church have been out to Peru, and indeed one came back with a very special friendship from it. Kenny, what do you do? What is your role within the Vine Trust?

Yeah, well, my job title is Programmes Manager, which is very vague, and that's just to cover a multitude of different activities. Predominantly, my role is to be the link between the projects we have in Peru and Tanzania and the Vine Trust, so I'm the person that's chasing them up for reports, getting on their backs for different things, but also it's to what we call capacity building. Sounds very fancy, doesn't it? It's all about helping and equipping our partners in Peru and Tanzania to develop their skills and abilities to help the projects develop.

Fantastic, thanks very much. And just anything particularly we can pray for for Vine Trust yourself at the moment? Yeah, please pray for the new health project we have in Tanzania. We had a medical ship taken away from Greenock all the way to Lake Victoria, and we're now in the final stages of getting that up and running, hopefully in the month of March, and we're working with the African Indian Church to be using that to reach out to the island communities, so that's one thing to pray for. And also please pray for the work that's going on in Peru.

We're looking to develop the health work we've got there going there too, to reach more and more communities, and we're working with Scripture Union there, so just please pray for those two parts in particular. Fantastic. Let me just pray for both the work of Vine Trust and Kenny to come to speak to us now.

[1 : 5 4] Our Father, we thank you that here in Edinburgh we can partner with those around the world. We thank you with those who are actively involved and serve you in that way. We thank you for Kenny's work with Vine Trust, and we do pray for him as he coordinates things, as he holds things together, if you really give them wisdom and help in that.

We pray for the work in Tanzania. We thank you for this exciting new project. We pray for the work that will enable them to reach many more in the motor parks, in the islands and so on, and they'll be a real blessing for you.

We pray for the ongoing work in Peru as well, and as they will seek to reach further and to tell people that the Lord Jesus will provide for their medical needs. We pray that you will grant safety, that you will grant good care with the people, and that your world will really spread out and have wonderful effect, even as people's bodies too are healed.

We thank you for your presence with us this morning, and we quickly commit Kenny to you now as he brings us your words, that what you have shown to him, he will be able to present to us clearly, and that you will speak through him, and that we will be listeners and hearers and doers of the words.

We commit ourselves to you in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you. Well, good morning. It is a real privilege to share from God's word with you this morning, but before we turn to God's word, I just want to say on behalf of the family, thank you to Brunsfield for the way you've welcomed them.

[3 : 19] We felt very welcome as soon as we walked through the door. We had about five or six people welcoming us in the first five or six minutes, and I said, the clouds are amazing. We felt so welcome since we walked in the door, and over the last, well, it was an Easter Sunday last year that we came for the first time.

So it's just about a year, but we felt so welcomed here, and we just want to thank you for the way you've accepted us into the church family. We thank you for your patience with us as well. It's been quite a process for us as we've settled into life here in Scotland.

When we arrived back on the plane in July 2013, we thought we were going back to Bolivia in January 2014, but God had different plans for us completely, and by November of that year, I had a new job with the Vine Trust, and I had to go back to Bolivia myself and sell the house and move all the things around and come back with three suitcases of things.

And God really has blessed us as we've settled back in, but it's been a challenge. So we thank you for your patience with us, for your prayers, for your concern, for your encouragement. It's really a real blessing to us as a family.

As I say, it's been a real challenge, but also a real blessing during this time to have settled back into life in Scotland. I left Scotland at the age of 23, and I was out to Bolivia 15 years.

[4 : 36] So you can work out how roughly how old I am. I'm not as old as I look, going by the hair. But it's amazing having spent all that amount of time outside of Scotland how little really I knew of my own country.

And it's been a real pleasure to me to find out more about Scotland and do it with my family as well. One of the things we love to do as a family is go out and explore. And I must admit that part of that motivation is to find new things, but also I have three children.

And if any of you have seen or know our three children, or at least I've heard our three children, they have boundless energy. And often on Saturday it's the plan. The question I ask each other is, where are we going today?

Where can we go so the kids can burn up so energy and they'll sleep this evening? And so we often go to the beach. And North Berwick Beach, that's a picture of North Berwick Beach, is one of our favourite places. We also love Yellow Craigs Beach.

I don't know if anyone's ever been to these places. Great places not too far from here. And the places we go and we've got to know really well just by enjoying the scenery and just walking along the beach.

[5 : 38] But what we've found as a family is often we'd go walking for long distances and get to know the area in a very general sort of way. But sometimes the visits we enjoyed most is we would go to a certain part of the beach and just stop and start looking down.

And often you'll see the whole family on the beach when we were down and hunched down, looking and picking up tiny little shells. And we have a collection of different shells and stones that we've collected from all over different parts of Scotland. Really enjoying seeing some of the smaller details in this beautiful large landscape.

And that image came to my mind as I turned to this passage we're looking at today in Exodus chapter 11 and 12. It's a passage which for many people here today it'll be very familiar.

You'll have heard many times. Maybe as you came up through Sunday school you'll have heard this story over and over again. And the problem with that is when we know something we think we know something so well and become so familiar with it sometimes we can lose the small details.

And my prayer has been that as we turn to these chapters today as we turn to this story today that maybe there's something we just jump out of the page from God's word to you today. It happened to me a few weeks ago when we were in Exodus chapter 5.

[6 : 47] And we read these words. It said, this is Pharaoh speaking. He said, Who is the Lord that I should obey him? I've read that chapter I don't know how many times. But that question he asked Pharaoh, Who is the Lord that I should obey him?

And that link between knowing and obeying nearly come to my mind. And what also jumped to me from the page was that Moses didn't answer. He let God answer that question.

And my prayer this morning is that as we turn to God's word and we would have that question maybe in our minds, Who is the Lord? Who is he to me? Because I think this chapter 11 and chapter 12 really speak to us in a powerful way about who this true God is.

And there wouldn't be that you would hear me speaking this morning. In the same way that Moses just ignored the question altogether and let God answer it. I hope this morning as we look, turn to God's word that God will really speak to your hearts as we go through his words.

Last week John was going through the last nine of the ten plagues. And we now come to the final plague, probably the most gruesome of all. And chapter 11 and chapter 12, chapter 12 in particular, it's like a list of instructions when you read through it for the first time.

[7 : 58] Now, we men have a bad reputation when it comes to instructions. And if my wife asked me about me reading instructions, not often the first thing that I do when we buy something, not even in the Ikea flat pack furniture, have a go first of all, and it doesn't work, then you turn to the instructions.

Before it used to be asking directions in the car. Men on the doors were not asking directions too. Now we have GPS. So we no longer don't listen to the people in the neighborhood where to go to. We now don't listen to the GPS where it's telling us where to go to.

And we argue with the GPS. Well, I do anyway. Have a running battle. Turn right? No, I'm turning left. Turn right? No, I'm turning left. And that is the way it goes. But this chapter here, 11 and 12, 12 in particular, is a list of instructions that we really need to turn to and listen to.

And I'd like God to apply those truths to our hearts. These are sort of multi-layered, multi-purposed instructions that we have here in this part of God's words.

In chapter 11, we read in verse 1, it says there'll be, God tells Moses there'll be one more plague. One more plague. So God is making it very clear here to Moses and to all the Israelites, this is the end of the plagues.

[9 : 10] And then in verse 2, we read something which is maybe unusual in the context when we're reading through this. It says here, verse 2 of chapter 11, tell the people that men and women alike are to ask their neighbours for articles of silver and gold.

It seems like a very strange instruction right in the middle of all these plagues here. Tell the people that men and women alike are to ask their neighbours for articles of silver and gold.

And here we have this unusual, what seems to be a usual instruction by God, but actually God is linking this back, what's about to happen, to something that happened many, many years ago.

In Genesis chapter 15, in verse 14, we read this, when God's speaking to Abraham, the father of the Israel nation, he says, I will punish the nation they serve as slaves and afterwards they will come out with great possessions.

I will punish the nation they serve as slaves and afterwards they will come out with great possessions. So here we have God instructing them to ask for possessions. And by giving this instruction very clearly here, he's linking this back to a promise and a statement he made to Abraham many, many years ago.

[10 : 19] So what is about to happen is not something sort of random thing, it's not something which is just happening, it is part of a divine plan. This is God's plan for the Israelites, something that was planned many, many years beforehand.

So when Pharaoh is asking, who is the Lord? We find that here, he is about to declare to Egypt and leave them without any doubt at all, they are dealing with the eternal, all-powerful God who is in control of everything from the past and the present and into the future.

And in this demonstration of his power and this declaration of who he is will go even further than Egypt at that time. Later on, when you read about the Israelites going to the promised land and when the spies meet with Rahab in Jericho, we read this in Joshua chapter 2, he says, she says this, we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt.

When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you. For the Lord, your God, is God in heaven above and on earth below.

Who is the Lord? He is the all-powerful God in control of everything, past, present and future. So this last plague, a horrific plague, we're going to read from verses 4 to 8 in chapter 11.

[11 : 45] It says, so Moses, verse 4, this is what the Lord says, about midnight I will go throughout Egypt. Every firstborn son in Egypt will die from the firstborn son of Pharaoh who sits on the throne to the firstborn son of the male slave who is at her mill hand and all the firstborn of the cattle as well.

There will be a loud wailing throughout Egypt worse than there ever has been or will ever be again. Among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any person or animal. Then you will know that the Lord who makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.

All these officials of yours will come to me bowing down before me and saying, go, you and all the people who follow you, after that I will leave. Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh.

It's a horrific plague. As I say, we often read these words and we've heard them so often before that we may become numb to this last plague. It is the death of the firstborn of these families.

A truly tragic and horrific plague. I wonder if you can just, in your minds, just try and imagine something similar happening today. The firstborn of every family and even in the cattle dying just overnight.

[12 : 59] But we see in what is to follow in chapter 12 and it's highlighted here that it says that God will make a distinction between Egypt and Israel but God had instructions.

He had plans and some guidance for them so they could avoid being struck down by this horrible plague. And reading through chapter 12, I think there are three things that we can see from these instructions.

First of all, these are practical instructions. Practical instructions to save them from the final plague. what the Israelites had to do at that time. Then they have a remembrance element.

In God's instructions he says that they are to have a festival into the future to remind them of what God has done for them. And also these instructions are symbolic. And what I want to focus more time on this morning is just how what we see here in these instructions that God gives to them that there is an outline or a glimpse of God's great salvation plan.

Not just for the Israelites, not just for one nation, but for all humanity. In chapter 12 in verse 1 and 2 it says this, The Lord said to Moses in Egypt, This month is to be for you the first month the first month of your year.

[14 : 11] So here we have God outlining a new calendar. Changing the whole structure of their lives even from when their calendar the year starts. This is a momentous occasion that God is saying this is a new stage in your lives a new phase in your walk with me.

So much so that I'm going to change the whole calendar and you're going to start every year remembering what I have done in your lives. These are practical instructions.

Verses 3 to 11 in chapter 12 says, Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth year of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family one for each household.

If any household is too small for a whole lamb they must share one with their nearest neighbor having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb in accordance with what each person will eat.

The animals you choose must be year old males without defect and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.

[15 : 18] Then you are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the door frames of the houses where they eat the lambs. That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over fire along with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast.

Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water but roasted over a fire with the head, legs and internal organs. Do not leave any of it until morning. If some is left until morning you must burn it.

This is how you are to eat it with your cloak tucked into your belt your sandals on your feet your staff in your hands. Eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. There is always a bit of a worry when you are sharing from God's Word when it is talking about food and roasting food.

It is so close to lunchtime. I hope the stomachs are not rumbling too much and hopefully not be too much longer so you can get away and have that lunch but especially having roast lamb for dinner today. But these are very, very specific instructions God is giving to them.

On the tenth day I take a lamb one for each household. It is to be a year old lawn without any defect at all. On the fourteenth day they are to sacrifice that one at twilight.

[16 : 26] They are to paint blood on the door frames and then they are to roast not boil but roast the lamb eat it with bitter herbs eat bread without yeast and then eat or burn all the leftovers and be dressed ready to go and eat quickly.

Very, very specific instructions that God has put in place for them. But if they are complete and do what God has said and if they obey then verse 13 says this The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are and when I see the blood this is God speaking I will pass over you.

No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. What God is saying is here are some specific instructions if you obey then when I see the blood I will pass over you and my destructive hand will not touch your family.

Practical instructions. But these also have instructions for remembrance into the future. In verse 14 it says this is a day you are to commemorate for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord a lasting ordinance.

And in verse 25 it says this when you enter the land God is looking into the future when you enter the land the Lord will give you as he promised observe this ceremony and when your children ask you what does this ceremony mean to you then tell them it is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord who passed over the houses of the Israelites and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.

[18:10] So it's a new calendar some specific instructions to save themselves from the destruction of the final plague but also a reminder a festival which God starts to help them to reflect on what he has done and help them to worship too.

and it's to be passed down from generation to generation. When we're driving in the car going anywhere doesn't matter where we're going we can go to Tesco in the shops or Sainsbury's wherever it's always daddy and then there's a question daddy why is this and daddy's why that and I'm going you've got your mum sitting here too she can answer some questions too.

Kids are generally inquisitive well mine are anyway always asking why why is this why is that and God is saying when you're when you're celebrating this festival in the future and your children will ask you because that's what children do why then you can tell them what God did for you in the past because in years to come that generation was no longer good to be there and as humans we have this tendency to forget we're great at forgetting what's happened in the past and what God wants to do is make sure that the next generation the next generation the generations to come will know who God is and what he has done for them but this Passover isn't just practical it's just for remembrance but it's also symbolic and I want to pick out just very quickly some some symbols here in this passage which speak to us about God's great wonderful salvation plan not just as a for one nation not just for one night but for for all humanity forever it describes at the beginning of Genesis when we started this study a number of weeks ago right at the beginning we find out these Israelites this family who'd been invited to Egypt invited as guests were no longer guests they were now living as slaves and it says in verse 23 of chapter 2 that they cried for help they cried for help why?

because they were completely powerless to overthrow the Egyptian rulers their overlords they had no power to get rid of them at all and this is an example of where we are the Bible clearly illustrates and tells us that we are also slaves in Romans chapter 6 it talks about we are slaves to sin that sin controls our lives our thoughts our actions our motives our desires we are controlled by it and our destiny is shaped by the sin and we are completely powerless under our own strength to do anything at all about this when I was growing up as a kid there was only one television program worth watching as far as I was concerned it was the 18 now my daughter Ella's daughter Emma saw this picture and she says who are they?

I was shocked I thought what have I been doing what education have I been giving to my children they have no idea who the 18 is whatsoever I wanted to be that gentleman there on the right hand side B.A. Barakas he was my favourite I wanted to be like B.A. Barakas I have kind of like the reverse Mohican going on now instead of the but he was my hero he was a big tough guy and even I'm sure you must have most of you seen the A team at some time they were always these guys are running away from the police and from the army and they'd be always holed up somewhere in a warehouse and it looked like everything was lost and all of a sudden because there was guys these guys were geniuses they could get this old bit of metal from here and this old bit of metal from there and they would put together a tank from absolutely nothing it's ridiculous I actually turned around it's true I actually watched an episode a couple of years ago I thought why on earth did I watch this again it was completely ridiculous but they through their own just sort of genius were able to save themselves from a helpless situation and sometimes of course we don't run in warehouses making tanks to escape from helpless situations in our own life but we think that sometimes when problems arrive in our lives that through our own maybe cleverness through our own skills and our money and ability and influence we try to influence situations to escape from the problems that appear in our lives but this passage this book of Exodus and the whole Passover and what happens here clearly illustrates this to us in a symbolic way that there is one problem we can do absolutely nothing about under our own power and that is sin it doesn't matter how smart how clever how wealthy or powerful you are there is nothing you can do to escape from the problem of sin and this Passover teaches in a symbolic way that freedom from the slavery of sin is God's initiative it is God's plan it is through God's power and it is through

[22 : 52] God's grace see God didn't save the Israelites from the slavery in Egypt because they were worth it because I'm worth it like the advert says on television it wasn't because they had done something that justified or made God want to do it for them it was because God's grace he wanted to save them from slavery in Egypt and then we have the image of the lamb this was to be sacrificed in place or in substitute for the firstborn it was to be a lamb without defect and here we have such a beautiful picture of our Lord Jesus Christ do we not he who was without sin he who gave his life as a sacrifice as a substitute for us John the Baptist when he saw Jesus coming he said look the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world one of my favourite bible commentators is a man called Warren Wiersby he's tremendous way of opening up

God's word in simple ways for people who are simple like me can understand and he turns to these verses of verse 3 to verse 5 of Genesis of Exodus and he says here he points out three things in verse 3 it says each man is to take a lamb and then in verse 4 he says according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb and then in verse 5 he says your lamb shall be without blemish and he points out the progression here that is from a lamb to the lamb to your lamb to general to specific to personal and he points out that this this image of the lamb becoming something very general to specific and then to personal is also the plan that God has for our lives towards the lamb of God Jesus Christ he should be no longer just a lamb he would then move to the lamb of God and then our lamb or my lamb of God this wonderful progression here because God wants Jesus Christ to become personal to each one of us we're talking about the study in John chapter 17 this week from the young people of the day away

John 17 verse 3 gives us a wonderful definition of what eternal life is it says now this is eternal life definition that you may know the one true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent the eternal life which God has to offer each one of us is a personal relationship with God from a lamb to the lamb to my lamb and then there's the blood which we've been singing about in many of the songs this morning that people would understand clearly that blood was a symbol of life in the book of Deuteronomy we read the blood is the life the blood is the life I wonder what the Egyptians were thinking as they saw these Israelites slaughtering a lamb at twilight and all of a sudden starting to paint their doors with lamb's blood it must have been a shocking a worrying image to see but this painting of blood onto their door frames was an act of faith how on earth can just by painting blood onto a door frame save you from your firstborn dying but the thing is you have to understand that this simple blood of a lamb the power was in what God understood that lamb to represent that that blood being painted there was an act of faith an act of obedience an act of trust and that that blood of that lamb was to be in place or that sacrifice that lamb was in place of the firstborn in that household and that blood there was nothing else they can do there was no other way there was no other instruction just the blood of the lamb on the doorpost that's what they were to do and because God says when I see the blood

I will pass over this is a wonderful symbolic expression of what Jesus Christ has done for us his blood that covers us and our sin so that God passes over us he sees his son's blood that was shared on the cross for us and we no longer receive the punishment that we deserve in Ephesians chapter 1 verse 7 it says in him in Jesus Christ we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of our sins according to the riches of his grace again because of his grace in the same way that Israelites did not deserve to be forgiven and to be pardoned from this final plague we do not deserve to be pardoned either but it's from God's grace that he forgives us so Jesus Christ is our Passover lamb this Passover passage is not just about a new calendar it's not just about salvation from the tenth plague it's not just the introduction of a new festival that they are to celebrate but points us to very clearly the

Passover lamb Jesus Christ his life his death his sacrifice once and for all his victory you see that is the only way to salvation is to do to come before God and trust in him and receive what Jesus Christ done for us in faith and when they did this it says here it is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord who passed over the houses of Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians when Moses explains these things to the people what was the response when they heard this message it says then the people bowed down and worshipped bowed down and worshipped it was the only true response and understanding fully that as they were grasping what God was about to do for them their response was worship and that should be our response this morning that as we understand and appreciate what God has done for us to Jesus Christ it's to turn round and worship him

[28 : 55] I want to leave you with a quote from a hymn that was written almost 100 years ago in 1917 it says this the chorus of the hymn and I pray that these will be the words of our hearts and our worship to God this morning O Jesus Lord and Saviour I give myself to you for you in your atonement did give yourself for me I owe no other master my heart shall be your throne my life I give henceforth to live O Christ for you alone may God bless the reading of his words this morning thank you I love you God will let's bless you