

From Egypt with Love

Exodus

(preached Pine Grove 1/11/15; Sunday PM)

Introduction

Lantana is my favorite flower.

Lord willing, I can't wait to put some out this spring around the parsonage.

The ones with yellow flowers are probably the most popular, though they come in other colors as well.

There are 3 reasons I love them so much.

First, they are heat resistant.

The hotter it gets, the better they do.

Second, they can go without watering for days.

Which is wonderful news for someone like me who forgets to water something quite frequently.

And the final reason I love them is that they spread so quickly.

A little tiny plant can be 3 feet wide or more come the end of summer.

And that is wonderful because it means it takes up a lot of space and I won't have to plant anything else.

That rapid growth in plants can be a blessing unless you are talking about weeds or kudzu.

Then it becomes a problem.

Well, if you remember last week as we got a bird's eye view of the book of Genesis, we said that book ended with Israel still a small group of 70 people.

If you take these center 2 sections of chairs, that is a little more than 70 seats.

But if this section was almost full, that would be the size of the nation Israel at the end of Genesis.

And that small group of people is now in the land of Egypt as the book of Exodus opens.

70 people in a land of 3-4 million Egyptians eventually becomes 2 million Israelites who walk out of Egypt.

Though they were there for 430 years, that is still a very rapid growth of people.

And guess what?

The same reason my lantanas spread rapidly is the same reason that Israel grew rapidly.

God is and was in control of both situations.

He simply blessed the Jewish families in Egypt with children.

Studies have been done and though folks disagree, most feel that each husband and wife would need to average 8 kids...

Over those 430 years to reach 2 million by the time of the Exodus.

The simple truth and maybe the point of the entire book of Exodus is that God....

Takes 70 people grows them into a nation of 2-3 million...

And makes them into a nation.

What is the point?

He made that promise to Abraham.

He promised Abraham that he would be a great nation.

And the book of Exodus is the story of that great nation coming to life on the very pages of Scripture.

What was another promise that God made to Abraham?

Give him a land of his own.

And as we move on through the Bible, we will watch that unfold as well.

What was the final promise that God made to Abraham?

He would make him a blessing to all the nations.

Which is simply the rest of the Bible.

The ultimate end of choosing Abraham and growing his offspring into a nation is to bring forth a king and Messiah from that nation.

And we all know that to be Jesus Christ.

The King of kings.

But also the Lamb of lambs.

Who is the rightful king, but first become the rightful sacrifice for sin.

So, if you wanted to break down the rest of the Bible from Abraham until Revelation...

It is Abraham becoming a nation.

Then it would be Abraham getting a land.

Then it would be Abraham becoming a blessing to the world.

And along those lines, I want to say this.

Many people look at the OT and see the great love that God had for Israel.

And that is certainly true of the OT and even the NT.

But don't make the mistake of thinking that means that God hates the other nations.

God has always had a love for the nations other than Israel.

Even though they worship idols and practice gross sins, God still has a great love for them.

We are going to see God show his love for other nations and even people who are Gentiles in the OT.

We will certainly see that when we get to the NT.

We certainly see that in this very room tonight.

God loves the nations.

He has a special affection for Israel, but that special affection does not mean God has no concern for other nations.

We see words like the "people of God" or "God's people" in the Bible.

And just who is that?

Well, the people of God are those of every tribe, tongue, people or nation who have repented of sin and trusted alone in Jesus.

And that includes both Israel and Gentile nations.

Phrases like “God’s Chosen People” are often used to describe Israel.

And I think is a good title, but “God’s Chosen people” also includes anyone, Jew or Gentile, who has been saved through Christ on the cross.

I say all that to say that we are living in the days of Abraham being a blessing to the world.

We are living in days where we essentially tell the world that a descendant of Abraham...

Was slain for their sins, but will return to bless the world by becoming its true King.

And that news goes to every ear.

The promise to Abraham is that he would bless the world, not just bless Israel.

And that is what we are going to see as we move through the Scriptures each week.

God is going to grow Israel, set them in a land, provide for their needs, protect them from enemies...

With a two fold purpose...

One is to draw the nations to Him through Israel's witness.

The second and more important is to eventually bring forth a Messiah through that nation.

And if we can step back from that and think about that for a second, it is truly amazing!

God is going to take a country that is a 1/3 of the size of our state...

Israel is about the size of the state of New Jersey.

And he is going to protect them from enemies who want to destroy them.

And he is going to give them laws to keep them from destroying one another.

And from that dot on the world map, God is going to bring forth the Savior and the coming King of the world.

I mean just from an entirely human perspective, this is so incredible.

A tiny nation delivers the greatest gift against overwhelming odds.

But yet, that is the story of the Israel.

And tonight, we get to see that nation in its very early stages.

Here's the outline that we will be using....

I. Israel in Egypt (1-13)

- A. The Growth and Slavery of Israel (1)
- B. The Call of Moses (2-4)
- C. The Plagues (5-11)
- D. The First Passover (12:1-36)

II. Israel in Transit to Sinai (14-18)

- A. The Exodus from Egypt(12:37-14:14)
- B. The Crossing through the Red Sea (14:15-15:21)
- C. The Provisions of God along the Road (15:22-18)

III. Israel in Sinai (19-40)

- A. The Giving of the Law (19-24)
- B. The Golden Calf (32)
- C. The Tabernacle (40)

So, let's begin with.....

I. Israel in Egypt (1-13)

When you open up to the book of Exodus, you see in the first few verses the names of those who came to Egypt.

A. The Growth and Slavery of Israel (1)

And the Bible simply says in verse 7, that the land of Egypt was filled with them.

Well, as quick as we see Israel grow, we see another very important thing happen.

We find an immediate enemy of Israel.

The Egyptian king feels threatened by them, so he enslaves them.

The only problem is that the more he tried to harm them, the larger they grew.

I unhooked the water from the back of the washing machine the other day...

And I realized that that it wasn't off....

So, instead of reaching up to cut off the spigot, I tried to put my finger of the end of the hose.

And you know the result of that, it sprays everywhere.

My plan not only backfired, I shot water all over the room.

Well, the king's plan backfires and ends up with a bigger problem than when he started.

So he calls for all the sons of Israel to be cast into the Nile when they are born.

Like Joseph said last week, man meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.

Because that act of casting little boys into the water led to the next major part of Exodus and that is...

B. The Call of Moses (2-4)

A large group of people need a leader, and with 2 million people now, Israel needs a leader.

So, God raises up Moses for that purpose.

Though he is a murderer and fugitive, God comes to him in a burning bush in Exodus 3 and gives him a mission to lead Israel out of Egypt.

On top of his criminal record, Moses is also cowardly because of his pride.

Yet, God sends Aaron to go speak for Moses, and in chapters 5 -11, we see....

C. The Plagues (5-11)

God sends Moses to Pharaoh to plead for the release of Israel from bondage...

Yet, you all know the story, Pharaoh refuses, and God sends plague after plague upon the land to try and convince Pharaoh to let the people go.

The final plague is the death of the firstborn children of Egypt...

The result of that final plague is found in Exodus 12...

D. The First Passover (12:1-36)

And in that chapter, we get another small preview of Jesus.

If you remember from last week, we talked about how the OT gives us pictures of Jesus.

Clues, the NT calls them shadows of what was to come.

Well, this may be one of the greatest shadows or pictures of Jesus in the OT.

God told Moses that the final plague would be the death of the firstborn children in the land of Egypt.

The Lord would pass through the land at midnight and strike down every first born child in the land.

Even the Israelite's first born would be killed at midnight.

Yet, the Lord told Moses that the destroyer would pass over any house under one condition.

They needed to kill a perfect lamb.

Take some of the blood from that lamb and place it over the doorways to their homes.

When the Lord passed through the land, he would pass over the homes marked in blood.

Their first-born child would be spared and allowed to live.

And that is exactly what happened on that night in Egypt.

The angel of the Lord came and every firstborn was killed except the houses marked in blood.

And with those simple instructions, the Lord painted such an incredible picture of the cross.

Every man, woman and child is born under the curse of sin.

Death is coming to us all.

Yet, death can never touch those of us covered who have the blood covering our lives.

Jesus was the perfect Passover Lamb.

When he spilled his blood on the cross, it is available for every man, woman and child to take and apply to their life.

When someone repents of sin and trusts alone in Jesus Christ save, a huge paintbrush in the hand of God covers your life in the blood of Jesus.

And death never touches you.

Sure, you will go through a physical death, but that is simply a doorway to be with the Lord.

This simple act in Exodus 12 contains so much truth about the nature of God.

The Passover is a perfect picture of grace and justice.

There's justice for those who refused to kill the lamb and spread the blood.

But there's mercy for those who do.

And with that, Israel departs Egypt, which brings us to outline point 2....

II. Israel in Transit to Sinai (12:37 - 18:27)

A. The Exodus from Egypt(12:37-14:14)

And midway through chapter 12, Israel heads out of Egypt.

And they simply follow God.

He leads them by a cloud and fire which you see at the end of chapter 13...

Then in chapter 14, Pharaoh takes off after them, and in the middle of chapter 14 comes the famous...

B. The Crossing through the Red Sea (14:15-15:21)

In this well-known passage, God parts the Red Sea and Israel walks through the sea on dry ground.

As Pharaoh and his army chase after them, the sea collapses in around them and they are drowned.

And we see another great picture of God's protection of his people.

Moses and Israel rejoice at the Lord's care of them by singing to God in the first part of chapter 15.

Then right after the Lord's miraculous deliverance, look at Exodus 15:24...

C. The Provisions of God along the Road (15:22-18)

Then right after the Lord's miraculous deliverance,
look at Exodus 15:24...

The people grumbles at Moses for the water didn't
taste good.

So God provides good water.

Then look at 16:2....

The people grumbles at Moses for they have
nothing to eat.

Then God responds with bread and meat that comes
down out of heaven.

And the people eat and are satisfied.

Now, before we go to the last section of Exodus.

Just think about what has happened in just a short
amount of time...

Israel has gone from 70 to 2 million.

God has protected them by delivering them from the
hands of the Egyptian rulers who sought to harm
them.

He is guiding them by night and day.

He is parting seas and drowning enemies.

And he is providing food and drink.

In a sense, Israel is a newborn in his care.

They are unable to do anything but cry.

And cry they do, but God continues to meet their needs.

And why does he do it?

What had Israel done to earn such protection and provision?

Well, they had done nothing.

And that is just it.

The pattern of God's interaction with his nation and with people throughout the Bible....

Is the story of His Goodness and Mercy despite man's best effort to not deserve it.

God protects Israel all throughout her history because He said he would.

His faithfulness to Israel was simply to protect His own name.

And that is what he is doing here on the road to Sinai.

The people are complaining yet God responds with compassion.

Isn't it amazing that we are just the opposite in our fallen nature?

Let someone complain to us, and you know our response?

Fine, I'm finished with you.

Praise the Lord that He is faithful when we are not.

So, let's go to our final section in the book of Exodus...

III. Israel in Sinai (19-40)

A. The Giving of the Law (19-24)

Once they arrive at Sinai, the LORD God delivers the Ten Commandments to Moses.

In probably one of the most well-known sections of the OT, God speaks 10 commandments to the nation of Israel at Sinai in Exodus 20.

However, the law doesn't stop with those 10 commandments because chapters 21, 22 and 23 are more laws given to the people.

And here is the big picture...

God's laws were not meant to be a burden to the people.

They were designed for Israel's protection.

And they were designed for God to receive His proper glory from the people.

Yet, the fallen heart of man is unable to keep any of the laws of God much less the 10 commandments.

And the story of the 10 Commandments and the rest of the Law of God in the Bible is this...

They were a constant reminder that God is holy and Man is broken.

The NT says that the Law of God was a tutor that pointed every man to Jesus.

I know there have been fights to keep the 10 Commandments hanging in public buildings over the years..

And Christians get all up in arms over it.

But beside every monument of the Commandments needs to be the name of Jesus.

Because the commandments exist to point us to Jesus.

No one but Christ has kept them, and no one but Christ will keep them in the future.

So, God's law came to Israel at Mount Sinai in Exodus 19-23...

And it was the basis for another covenant between God and man..

We have seen the covenant with Noah to never destroy the earth by flood waters again.

We have seen the covenant with Abraham to make him a great nation, give him a land, and make him a blessing to the nation.

And now we see in Exodus 24:8, a covenant made between God and Israel.

If they would keep His laws, they would His people.

But there is one very important difference in this covenant.

It was never called an everlasting covenant.

The covenant with Noah is an everlasting covenant.

The covenant with Abraham was an everlasting covenant.

But the covenant at Sinai was never referred to as an everlasting covenant.

And the true is that the covenant at Sinai has been replaced by a new covenant.

The covenant at Sinai was replaced by the new covenant paid in Jesus blood.

And what does that mean for you in the church today?

You are under the law, you are under grace.

This is so important to remember because people get very confused here.

But how do you know you aren't under the law?

Well, when is the last time you headed to the temple to kill a lamb or a dove?

Do you enjoy pork as much as I do?

Well, those are all part of the old covenant.

Now, certainly some of the laws from the Covenant at Sinai carry forward to today.

But the NT clearly teaches that we aren't under the Law of the Old Covenant at Sinai...

Rather, we are under the law of Christ.

We have been set free from the Law and its demands...

Because Jesus fulfilled the Law for us.

But the law that Jesus kept was the law given right here in Exodus 19-24.

It was the same law that Israel couldn't keep.

In fact, no sooner had God given the Law that we see an example of Israel breaking it in chapter 32, which leads to the next outline point...

B. The Golden Calf (32)

In a clear violation of the first two commands, the nation of Israel first of all builds an idol and then places it ahead of the one true God.

And almost immediately, we see the greatest lesson of the 10 commandments...

They are impossible to keep.

And then to close out the book of Exodus, we see another important truth about God...

And we see this in the plans for Israel to build...

C. The Tabernacle (40)

Despite man's sins, God still desires to fellowship with them on earth...

So he gives plans for a tabernacle to be built.

It will become the place of worship for Israel.

It will be a place of sacrifice.

It will be a place for God to dwell among his people.

The book of Exodus ends with the construction of the tabernacle...

And to show that it was built according to God's plans, he takes up residence in it in the final few verses of Exodus 40.

And with that, you have a big picture view of the book of Exodus.

We began with 70 people in the land of Egypt.

We watched them multiply into a nation of 2 million or more.

We watched God deliver them from Egypt.

We watched God provide for their needs.

We watched God protect them.

We watched God give them a set of laws.

And then we watched as God takes up residence among them in the tabernacle.

And let's close with a few principles about God in the book of Exodus...

Conclusion

#1 – God is a provider.

He provided children to a small group of people.

So many children that they overwhelmed the nation in which they were living.

God provided water, food, and a system of laws to ensure the survival of his people.

#2 – God is a protector.

Even in the cruel system of slavery, God protected his people.

He protected them so well that their numbers didn't shrink under oppression.

In fact, the numbers increased.

He also protected through supernatural means.

He parted a sea to deliver the nation.

#3 – God is Holy.

We see this in his clear commands of how to be worshipped.

We see this in his clear instruction on how to construct the tabernacle.

God knows no sin.

God hates sin.

God is perfect in every way.

#4 – God is Wrathful.

Look no farther than the plagues in this book.

His wrath is poured out on people who oppose Him and His people.

But I want to end.

#5 – God is Patient.

Even in the face of sin, we read one of the best descriptions of God in the Bible.

So turn with me to Exodus 34:5....

⁵ The Lord descended in the cloud and stood there with him as ^[c]he called upon the name of the Lord. ⁶ Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and ^[d]truth; ⁷ who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers

on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.”

When I read that, I can't help but think back over my life.

And I wonder with amazement at the patience of God.

I was a man just the opposite of the God described here.

I had no compassion.

I was quick to anger.

I was not filled with lovingkindness.

I had no regard for the truth.

Yet, God spared me, and then called me to follow him.

And I think about this every time I sing the first verse of "I stand amazed"

I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene;

And wonder how He could love me a sinner condemned unclean.

Let us pray.

