



Series: Exodus: Out of Egypt

Date: May 1st, 2022

Speaker: Spence Shelton, Lead Pastor

Text: Exodus 8

Title: There is Only One God

STARTING POINT PLUG

This is an incredible season in the life of our church. You should jump in. Next step - Starting Point. Today after each service. 15 minutes. At Providence rd it's really right just right down in front of the stage. Here at MNE _____. If you are new or newer to Mercy, you really should stay for this. Finding your church home is CRUCIAL. The NT is so clear that you should belong to a local body of believers. I can't tell you if Mercy is that for you, but if you will take this next step, we'll do everything we can in that time to be super clear on what Mercy is all about & what your next step here would be. Ministry questions, faith questions, baptism questions...all goes here. If your friend brought you and they are a member here...They will COME WITH YOU to starting point. I just

committed them to it. And then they will buy you lunch afterwards so you can talk about all this. Isn't that awesome? I just set you up really well. Used to do this all the time in college. New guy came, rode with us. We stayed for the intro to church thing...then off to Bojangles we went where we got to know each other & our backgrounds in a more chill extra greasy setting. Maybe that's what you need to do today.

One thing you definitely need to do today is take note that NEXT SUNDAY is Mother's Day. She's your mom. And now you have no excuse. Boom. You have been pastored.

Introduction

Ok if you have your bible - Exodus 8. We have 3 more weeks after this one in Exodus. NO, we will not get to the end of exodus by then. This is Exodus Part 1: Out of Egypt. We'll come back to it next year. Some of you are like...why? Well, here's a little behind the scenes at sermon planning. A lot of you aren't going to live here in Charlotte for long. Average time in charlotte is about 4 years. SO, what I want to do is expose you to every genre of scripture over a 4-year period and teach you how to read it and walk with God from it. So, we usually have series that last for about 6-8 weeks in one book and then we move. Now hear me say "normally" we do that. Sometimes we go longer. So, if you stick with us for 4 years, you'll get the full scope of scripture.



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But at the end of May we are going to launch into the New Testament book called Philippians. Can't wait. Very personal book for me. In a crucial time in my life where I was just growing into my own faith it helped me live out this faith in the real world. So practical but so rich. I'm excited.

But today, Exodus 8. If you remember last week in Exodus 7, we saw the first plague. God turned the Nile river - the primary source of water for Egypt - into blood. Well today in chapter 8 we are going to see 3 more plagues. And I will go ahead and tell you...they will feel similar to one another. I'm actually going to highlight for you the distinct differences of each because they matter. BUT there is a repetitive feel to them. That is PURPOSEFUL.

You know how you get a hold of a good album and you just put that thing on repeat? Hamilton is in Charlotte right now. I love that soundtrack. When I first heard it, and when the Hamilton remix first came out, I put that thing on repeat. Cause the first few times I was wowed but I needed a few times to get the message in the music. So, I have a little button on my Spotify app that says, "enable repeat." It's a little loop icon. And I hit that button so I can hear a song a few times. And really get the message.

I think the way the accounts of the plagues are written... that's what God is doing. Like I said each plague is unique, but the 10

plagues as an album are saying something. And I struggled this week on how to structure this sermon because I felt like...man I'm gonna say some things I've said before.

And then it hit me. THAT'S GOOD! That's the design. We need to press the repeat button on God's word, and I think that's what the account of the plagues forces us to do. To press repeat on what God is saying to us. Now listen some of you are new to church so this will be your first time hearing the song. That's great! You may hear some people be like "amen, & that's good." That's because they've heard the song before. They catch feelings when these truths are spoken because they are true about the God they've come to know and walk with.

Last thing I'll say about this before we open up chapter 8 - How many of you Christians know it to be **good** that our God is unchanging? Hebrews 13.8 he is the SAME yesterday, today, and forever. That the God of Moses is The God of Hussein and Mandy and Carter. He's the same God with the same power and the same promises.

Which is good because what you need is not new truth for your new situation you've found yourself in since last Sunday. What you need is Old Truth that you can TRUST God will use IN that new situation. Sometimes for us Christians the way pride can lurk in us is to say "you've heard all this already."



Let's see if he says something NEW." And sermon listening becomes hunting for truth nuggets instead of savoring biblical truth and letting the Holy Spirit use it to move you in a fresh way.

So, we are going to be about that today. AS we look at this wild set of circumstances, you will see in the way it's written some wonderful truths written so long ago...that are completely applicable for us today about the God who delivers his people.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go into Pharaoh and tell him: This is what the Lord says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me.

Ok this theme has ALREADY come through enough that we can repeat it out loud together. Everybody on 3 let my people go SO THAT.

THEY MAY WORSHIP ME

God's destination for his people is worship. Adam & Eve were made for it. The Israelites were made for it. And you and I are made for it.

Track 1: All people are made to worship God

And God delivering his people FROM slavery in Egypt TO worship is a foreshadowing of how Christ will deliver US from the slavery of sin TO worship him. You are made for worship. When we are in heaven...it's gonna be us worshipping. And it's not gonna get old. Because we will be experiencing what we are made for! finally! And I'm not just talking about singing. I'm talking Romans 12.1 - give your whole life in service to God because it is a spiritual act of worship. Worship posture - hands go up...why? SURRENDER. Here is my life I'm giving it to you again. But it's my whole life. My job isn't about building my 401k it's about worship. My position in my friend group isn't about securing popularity it's about worship. My WHOLE LIFE is an offering of thanksgiving to God.

Word spoken over me this week: Some of you are wonderful servants of Christ. And what you need to hear - God didn't save you so he could USE you. He does use you. And he does so for his glory. That's why we are all about next steps here. So, you can grow in how he has gifted you for your life. But in Christ YOU ARE NOT A TOOL, YOU ARE A SON OR DAUGHTER. He saved you so you could know and worship him! That's it!! So, I hope from this moment forward in our service...you are released from needing to perform for God. And you can



just worship! In your community group, in your workplace...you were made to WORSHIP God. ABIDE. Make your home in his love for you. Your purpose is worship.

2 But if you refuse to let them go, then I will plague all your territory with frogs. **3** The Nile will swarm with frogs; they will come up and go into your palace, into your bedroom and on your bed, into the houses of your officials and your people, and into your ovens and kneading bowls. **4** The frogs will come up on you, your people, and all your officials.”

The Nile will swarm with frogs. Frogs were actually associated with 2 gods. The river God of the Nile and the god of fertility. Where does he say the frogs will go? From the river to the bed. And then everywhere. The gods they thought were there to bless them will now become a curse to them. What they thought made life good, in the end made life bad.

Is there anything you thought was good for you...but revealed itself to be toxic? Promised pleasure but delivered pain? All I can say is MAYBE God is revealing your god to be worthless so you will turn back to him.

5 The Lord then said to Moses, “Tell Aaron: Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, canals, and ponds, and cause the frogs to come up onto the land of Egypt.” **6** When Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.

Just as the Lord Said. If he says it, it will happen.

7 But the magicians did the same thing by their occult practices and brought frogs up onto the land of Egypt. **8** Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Appeal to the Lord to remove the frogs from me and my people. Then I will let the people go and they can sacrifice to the Lord.”

Now at this point Pharaoh is got to be getting frustrated with his guys. Guys...I don't need MORE FROGS. How is that helpful to me? It's interesting that as the one true God...Jehovah...as he turns these false gods against them...the magicians cannot push back. In their efforts to compete they only worsen the situation. How many times do I see people starting to see their god is failing them only to go harder at it? WORK is a big one. Man, you've worshipped at the temple of work for your adult life and then early 30s you start getting stressed at work,



so you double down and work harder...which doesn't make stress go away. It multiplies your stress. God in his grace is upending your little g "god" so you can come to him for identity instead of your powerless job.

Pharaoh doesn't ask these guys to get rid of them. He goes to Moses and Aaron. Cause they are the ones with access to the power to change things.

9 Moses said to Pharaoh, "You may have the honor of choosing. When should I appeal on behalf of you, your officials, and your people, that the frogs be taken away from you and your houses, and remain only in the Nile?"
10 "Tomorrow," he answered.

I know what you are thinking. The correct answer is...RIGHT NOW IMMEDIATELY!! But what pharaoh understands Moses to be asking is...What day? So, the soonest day possible is the next one. So, this really is his way of saying Right Now.

And notice what Moses says - "when I should appeal on behalf of you" - Moses is saying **I DON'T HAVE THE POWER. I have the ACCESS to the power.** And I'll go and appeal to the power on behalf of my enemies. When Jesus says Matt 5.44 & Luke 6.28 to pray for those who

persecute you - He's not introducing something new. He's modeling moss.

Moses replied, "As you have said, so that you may know there is no one like the Lord our God, 11 the frogs will go away from you, your houses, your officials, and your people. The frogs will remain only in the Nile."

SO THAT. Think about it. Why would Moses give Pharaoh some sense of control in this process? Well, I actually think it's a stroke of evangelistic genius. By giving him, some say in when relief comes, he's seeing there is no OTHER explanation. Remember what I told you last week? **The world would rather have irrational explanations that deny God than rational explanations that accept him.**

Well by Moses basically bringing Pharaoh into the content of his prayer he's further revealing there is no one like the one true God. I love this! You know...we don't have any reason to believe Moses consulted with God mid convo. Like put pharaoh on hold and texted God to see if tomorrow was good. Nope, he trusted God exalting himself in pharaoh's eyes was in line and went for it. NOW - what we do know is God had told Moses "You will be like God to pharaoh." So, there is a prophetic



commission he had that you and I don't have. BUT - we do have the same ACCESS.

12 After Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, Moses cried out to the Lord for help concerning the frogs that he had brought against Pharaoh.

PRAYER is the means by which God unleashes his power in the plagues. Prayer. Isn't that wild.

Track 2: Prayer is the means by which God unleashes his mercy in the world

Is this how you view prayer? I find the whole plague situation this big reminder that PEOPLE are God's chosen instruments for accomplishing his purposes in the world. And the way they do that is to GO PRAY TO HIM. Thereby showing it is HE who is merciful and has the power bring relief to hearts and bodies and relationships & situations.

And this is God's constant calling to his people. That we who have access to his power are to go to HIM on behalf of the people who live and work around us. God CAN heal people. But he calls the church in James 5 to PRAY for healing. Because the prayer of a righteous man has

great power. Prayer is like the power line that runs from the power source & powers your home. Is there any inherent power in the line? No. It is a conduit of the power. That's prayer. And as we pray, we channel God's power into whatever situation or purpose we are praying about.

I'm not saying he is a genie and prayer is the rubbing of the lamp. I'm saying he has chosen to unleash his merciful power, through our prayer.

13 The Lord did as Moses had said: the frogs in the houses, courtyards, and fields died. 14 They piled them in countless heaps, and there was a terrible odor in the land. 15 But when Pharaoh saw there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

There is a theme we are seeing with Pharaoh that is coming up so many times I can't NOT make it one of our songs today. It's pharaoh hardening his heart.

Track 3: Circumstances are weak saviors

Pharaoh isn't yielding to God; he's just wanting temporary relief from hardship. Now I do believe



hardship, tough circumstances, are things that God often uses to wake you up to your need for him. In fact, that's part of what God is doing here. But, if you only find yourself praying when life is difficult...God is not your heavenly father, he's your heavenly paramedic. There to give you first aid and improve your circumstances. Then get out of your way until you run into trouble again.

Ever heard the saying there are no atheists in foxholes? It's the idea that when the bullets fly, you'll pray. My offering to you is to bring the desperation for God you had in the foxhole INTO your everyday life. Because circumstances are weak saviors. They change & let you down.

16 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron: Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the land, and it will become gnats throughout the land of Egypt." **17** And they did this. Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff, and when he struck the dust of the land, gnats were on people and animals. All the dust of the land became gnats throughout the land of Egypt. **18** The magicians tried to produce gnats using their occult practices, but they could not. The gnats remained on people and animals. **19** "This is the finger of God," the magicians

said to Pharaoh. But Pharaoh's heart was hard, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

We knew this was coming. Eventually these magicians would prove to be no match for Jehovah. And in a little bit of a surprise, they own that. "This is the finger of God." This is surrender. It's a very important moment. From here on out the magicians fade into the background because they have been outmatched. Moses and Aaron aren't sorcerers performing tricks. THE ONLY explanation is God. If we are on the soundtrack of God's greatest hits this one might be the most prominent. That number one hit.

Track 4: **There is only one God**

I couldn't help this week but think of the centurion by the cross. Jesus dies, then an earthquake happens, and the curtain of the sanctuary is torn and the dead rise & start walking around...he is CLEARLY overpowered and says Truly this man is the son of God.

And this is the call of God to every one of us. He is the one true God. Alpha, Omega. He created the world by his breath, sustains it, controls it, and LOVES IT. He IS all powerful & unchanging, he is omni present so you can't



escape him. He is faithful, just, merciful, and true. He is a GOOD father, a POWERFUL KING, and a RIGHTEOUS JUDGE. HE IS HOLY, SOVEREIGN, AND ETERNAL. And in our relationship with him...HE SETS THE TERMS, not us.

And incredibly - his terms are an invitation. Come to him. Don't harden your heart. Some of you have been fighting God and I want to talk to you - WHAT ELSE is it going to take for you to surrender to him?

Maybe you have questions, that's fine. Ask your questions. But at the end of the day, you have to decide: IS the God of the bible the one true God? And if he is, you must come to him not with demands, but as a repentant sinner in need of forgiveness. Leads me right to the awesome last track.

20 The Lord said to Moses, "Get up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh when you see him going out to the water. Tell him: This is what the Lord says: Let my people go, so that they may worship^[b] me. **21** But if you will not let my people go, then I will send swarms of flies^[c] against you, your officials, your people, and your houses. The Egyptians' houses will swarm with flies, and so will the land where they live.^[d] **22** But on that day I will give special treatment to the land of Goshen, where my

people are living; no flies will be there. This way you will know that I, the Lord, am in the land. **23** I will make a distinction^[e] between my people and your people. This sign will take place tomorrow."

This is the first time we see this in the plagues. God's people are going to be spared.

Track 5 Gospel: **God saves his people**

God's people were set apart because of his covenant with Abraham long ago. You are my people, and I will bring you up out of the land. And as an evangelistic message to Pharaoh God says "SO THAT YOU WILL KNOW I THE LORD AM HERE" I'm going to protect my people. Who have I made my people? They didn't do anything. I CHOSE THEM. AND the relief I'm bringing to them carries a message for you.

The wonderful hope of scripture is that God now extends his offer of salvation to you and me.

the wage of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6.23



Salvation is a gift. Received through repentance and acceptance. Not earned through holiness. But received by sinners. And you can receive it today. It is not a new nugget of truth I'm telling you today. It is the announcement of Good News for all people that Jesus brought with him into the world 2k years ago. It is not new, but it is the most important message you will ever hear. And the most important decision you will ever make is whether or not you will turn from your sin, turn to God, and receive the gift of eternal life from God who is giving it to you.

CLOSING SUMMARY & INVITE

Nothing new here today. Beautiful ancient truth. Maybe God has put you in a place though where you are ready to receive it. Take a step.

COMMUNION - transition to jake @ MPR.

IF THERE'S TIME

24 And the Lord did this. Thick swarms of flies went into Pharaoh's palace and his officials' houses. Throughout Egypt the land was ruined because of the swarms of

flies. **25** Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Go sacrifice to your God within the country."

- The futility of trying to compromise with God

26 But Moses said, "It would not be right to do that, because what we will sacrifice to the Lord our God is detestable to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice what the Egyptians detest in front of them, won't they stone us?"

27 We must go a distance of three days into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God as he instructs us."

28 Pharaoh responded, "I will let you go and sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness, but don't go very far. Make an appeal for me."

29 "As soon as I leave you," Moses said, "I will appeal to the Lord, and tomorrow the swarms of flies will depart from Pharaoh, his officials, and his people. But Pharaoh must not act deceptively again by refusing to let the people go and sacrifice to the Lord." **30** Then Moses left Pharaoh's presence and appealed to the Lord. **31** The Lord did as Moses had said: He removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, his officials, and his people; not one



was left. **32** But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also and did not let the people go.