

Exodus Chapter 6 v 1 - 11

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[0 : 0 0] to them as well. Thank you, John. Let's turn then to Exodus and chapter 6, and we'll read from verse 1 to verse 11. Then the Lord said to Moses, Now you'll see what I will do to Pharaoh. Because of my mighty hand, he will let them go. Because of my mighty hand, he will drive them out of the country.

God also appeared to Moses, I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as God Almighty. But by my name, the Lord, I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant. Therefore, say to the Israelites, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand, to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession.

I am the Lord. Moses reported this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him, because of their bond, their discouragement and cruel bondage. Then the Lord said to Moses, go tell Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to let the Israelites go out of his country. And we'll stop there.

So if you turn back to Exodus and chapter 6, I'm just reminding you of the background.

Moses has been called by God to go to return to Egypt. Forty years he was in the desert as a shepherd. God called him back, go and tell Pharaoh to set my people free. And Moses went back, and the first thing that happened is that Pharaoh not only rejected God's word, but then made the life of the Hebrews even more difficult by removing their straw and insisting they find their own straw to make their bricks with and to fill the quota they had to do each day. So rather than things getting better, things had got worse. And Pharaoh was hardened in his heart against the Lord, and Moses was downright discouraged and disappointed. And so we come then to chapter 6 and verse 1.

[2 : 5 1] Now I'm sure that all of you have played pass the parcel, whether you were a child or you've done it with your own children or your grandchildren. One of the things, of course, that makes pass the parcel such a gripping game is, of course, everybody wants to get the prize in the middle, don't they?

Everybody wants to get the one thing that's really at the bottom. Each layer that you take off gets you a bit closer, and you hope that when the music stops, you get the layer, and underneath that layer will be the prize. But often, of course, it's not. Well, if you read the Bible from Genesis all the way through onwards, then you find that what's happening is that God is removing layer after layer to bring us to that place where we find the great prize, the wonderful prize, which is his son, Jesus Christ, in the New Testament. To change the imagery slightly, the Bible is like the sun rising in the morning. At first, there's an ever-so-dim light in the east, and then a gray sort of a tinge begins to appear upon everything until quite quickly light spreads, illuminating all things around about us as at last the sun floods the world with its glorious light. Well, the Lord Jesus

Christ called himself, rightly, the light of the world, but his light did not just appear, going to that way, in his birth and in his ministry and his life in the New Testament, but all the way from the beginning of creation, the light of Christ was beginning to rise and to shine through the Bible until at last, as we get to his life, we have the full light of the Gospels. Now, that's a principle, a truth that we see all the way through the Bible, and it's something which we see here as well, being explained in part by God to Moses. Moses is despondent and discouraged, and so God speaks to him about how he dealt with people in the past, his people, and how he was going to deal with them in the future. There was a progress taking place, something greater was happening, and this is exactly what Moses needed to hear. Verse 2, God also said to Moses, I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, as God Almighty, but my name, the Lord, I did not make myself known to them. So God says, when he spoke to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, those forefathers of Moses, he revealed something of himself, that he was God Almighty. But to Moses, as we saw in chapter 3, God revealed himself as the

Lord, I am. And so there was something more, another aspect of God's character being shown. And what God is telling Moses and is teaching him through these verses in between his first visit and speaking to Pharaoh and his second is that he is the God who is actively at work on behalf of his people whom he loves, that he never stops working, that he never stops revealing himself, that his ministry continues without end. And the Lord reassures Moses of what he's going to do, that he's going to keep his covenant promises to those of old. Verse 4, I established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens. And in one sense, now I've heard the groaning of the Israelites, and I've remembered my covenant, and I'm going to bring them out of that slavery and into their land I promised. But as we look at what God reveals to Moses here, because we see that the

Lord Jesus Christ, his light spreads into every part of the Bible, we can't help but see here what Jesus has done for everyone who puts their faith in him as well. Four amazing transformations take place by the powerful work of God. They're wrapped up in the layers of history in Exodus, but we know them to be true because they've been revealed to us in the Lord Jesus. And each one of these transformations, each one of these changes that God promises to bring about in the lives of the Hebrews, God has brought about in the lives of those of us who are his today. His light and his power have broken in to our lives. And so I want us just to look forward through Exodus to what Jesus has done for us and draw their encouragement for us when perhaps we are discouraged like Moses and draw from there light for us where perhaps things are dim at this time. The first thing that God promises that he will do for the Hebrews is this. He promises that he will bring them out of slavery. Verse 6, I will free them from being slaves. And the Bible makes it very clear that that's what Jesus has done for us. If we are

[7 : 58] Christians this morning, Christ has set us free. Now the slavery that the Israelites were under was very real and extremely painful. That's why they cried out, we're told, to God with groaning. Slavery is an awful, awful thing. We know that it continues even to this day in spite of all the great efforts of our forebears like Shaftesbury and Newton and others too. But for hundreds of years, the people of the Israelites were slaves. Every successive generation for 400 years was born into slavery and they were ill-treated.

They worked tirelessly and there was no hope of release. It was you were born, you were a slave, you died, that was it. Now Jesus made it very clear as he's teaching in the Gospels that every single person has been born a slave. That we too are slaves. In John chapter 8 and verse 34, as he's speaking to the religious leaders of his day, he says this, I tell you the truth. It's one of his verily, verily sayings.

I tell you the truth, this is certain, this is definite, this is absolutely without questioningly true. Everyone who sins is a slave of sin. Everyone who sins is a slave of sin.

We are slaves by our own making. You've either read the book or you've seen the film or you've seen the Muppets animation of it, Christmas Carol, Charles Dickens. I like actually the Muppets version of it most of all, if I'm honest. But in the book and in the film, the former partner of Scrooge called Jacob Marley appears to Scrooge as a ghost, but he's covered in chains. For head to toe, he's covered in all these chains and he explains to Scrooge, I wear the chain I'd forged in life. I made it link by link and yard by yard. I girded it on of my own free will and of my own free will I wore it.

We may not see the chains and they weren't apparent in Jacob Marley's life when he was alive, but they're surely there. And we wear those chains because of our sin. We're born with sin in our nature. We're born into slavery to sin because our DNA, our spiritual DNA is twisted and polluted and corrupted. In our genes, we have inherited from our forefathers a preeminence and a tendency towards what is sinful and what is wrong. King David, that great follower of God, says in one of his Psalms, surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. That's why we do things wrong. That's why we are selfish. That's why we are proud. That's why we are greedy. That's why we are all those things that we would rather we weren't because sin is there ever present. And sin rules us like a harsh taskmaster, like those taskmasters set over the Hebrews in Egypt. It gives us no rest from its desires. It keeps us wanting to serve it and to follow its ways. It gives us no hope of escaping and no way out. No one can release themselves from the tyranny of sin. We shall die like Jacob Marley in our chains. And those chains will drag us down into hell forever unless something happens.

[11 : 55] But this is the wonderful thing. God promised the people of the Hebrews and God has promised and given to us who put our faith in Jesus true and real liberty and freedom from sin. In that same passage in John 8 where Jesus says, I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. So if you've never sinned, you're free. But since every single one of us has sinned, we are all slaves. But Jesus says this, if you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. Then he goes on to make it quite personal and specific. If the son referring to himself sets you free, you'll be truly free. Jesus liberates us from the guilt of our sin that condemn us and he delivers us from the power of sin that rules over us, making us follow its commands.

Jesus takes, as it were, a great pair of bolt cutters to our chains and snaps them off so that we leave them all behind. That's why we had that verse at the very start of our service from Galatians chapter 5 verse 1. It is for freedom that Christ has set you free.

So dear Christian, this morning, if you put your faith in Jesus Christ, if you've given him the chains of your sin, then he has delivered you from them. You're no longer stand before God, a guilty, sinful person.

You no longer are enchained and enslaved having to follow the sinful desires of your life. You're set free. Are you living in that freedom, dear Christian? Are you living and enjoying that freedom?

That freedom that gives you the power to say no to sin, no to what is wrong and yes to what is right. Are you letting sin still rule a part of your life, that habit, which you know is wrong and shouldn't be there, but you like it and you're giving it room? Well, it's enslaving you.

[14 : 06] And Christ has set you free that you might not be a slave to it. See, it's not just bad thoughts and bad actions. Anything that enslaves us, it may be money, it may be career, it may be a relationship.

It may be fear. If any of those things are enslaving us, then we're not living and enjoying the freedom for which Christ set us free. One of my favourite films after Muppets Christmas Carol is The Great Escape.

Charles Bronson and several others tunnel their way out of the prisoner of war camp. There's no way that you and I can tunnel our way out of the sin and the mess we've made.

It's only Christ Jesus who can set us free. And he does it. The question is, how does he do it? Well, when God is speaking to Moses here, he tells him that he's going to do something.

Verse 6, God promises to redeem his people.

[15 : 30] He's going to rescue them by redeeming. Well, what does that mean? Well, to redeem something, of course, means to buy it back at a price, to pay a price for something which was previously ours, but is ours no longer.

Same as if you went into a pawnbroker's. What they will do is they'll buy an item that belongs to you and keep hold of it for a certain period of time until you have enough money to redeem it and buy it back to yourself.

Now, God created human beings. He created each of us. And we belong to him. Whoever we are, whatever our lives, the fact of the matter is we belong to God.

He gave us life. He created us. He provides for us. Our lives are not our own. But when we sin, we purposely place ourselves into the hands of someone else.

We take ourselves out of God's possession and we sell ourselves into the mastery of sin, of evil, devil, if you want to put it that way as well. We are cut off from our relationship with God.

[16 : 34] The only way that God can bring us back to himself and to rescue us is to redeem us, is to pay a price for us, for our sin, that we can be released and returned to him.

The price is something that we cannot afford. It's not money. It's not good works. It's not being religious. It's not saying enough prayers. We have no currency with which to pay for our own freedom and to buy it.

We cannot redeem ourselves, for sin impoverishes us and places us in the red to a degree that is impossible to return from.

We've got nothing to exchange for our ransom. God says to his people through Moses, I will redeem them. How? With an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.

God was going to rescue them and to bring them out by his power. And the redemption that he brings into our lives to redeem us from sin and slavery to sin was a price that he paid himself.

[17 : 43] Here's the Apostle Peter writing in his first letter. For you know that it was not with perishable things like silver or gold that you were redeemed, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

You were redeemed with a mighty act of God. The mighty act of God that redeemed us was the cross. You see, like those prisoners taken in, hostages taken in conflicts in Syria and other places.

They're taken in by hostile forces and the only way they'll ever be released or possibly be released is if there's an exchange. If you give us one of our prisoners, we'll give you our hostage and there'll be an exchange person for person, life for life.

So it is with us. For us to be released and delivered from the bondage and the slavery of sin, there had to be someone who was willing to take our place and that person was Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

And because he was and is the Son of God, he didn't just do one person for one person, but he was of infinite value so he could redeem and rescue an infinite number of people.

[19 : 02] And he had to do it through his death upon the cross. We've been redeemed with the blood of Christ, the precious blood of Christ, the costly blood of Christ.

God said to the Hebrews, with an outstretched arm, he would set them free. And he showed great power, didn't he? With the plagues that he sent upon Egypt to redeem them.

With the parting of the Red Sea with which he brought them through and from safety into safety. With later on, the bringing down of the wars of Jericho and all the other amazing things that God did, the mighty power.

He worked for his people to rescue them and bring them into the blessing of the promises he had for them. But there is no act of God that was so mighty as the outstretching of the arms of Christ upon the cross when he died in the place of sinful men and women.

When he died for those that he loved. When he died in our place. It was for us he died. It was as if we died.

[20 : 07] Here's Peter again later on. It is, for Christ died for sins, once for all. The good for the bad. The righteous for the unrighteous.

The perfect and sinless for the awful and sinful. That's what happened in the cross. Do you know that your sins have been taken at the cross?

Do you know that God has paid this price for you? Are you ever grateful for it? Every day rejoicing in it and assured that there is nothing now that stands between you and the freedom that Christ has won for you.

Do you know what it is to be forgiven? Completely, absolutely, totally forgiven. What was the aim of these great works of God?

Why did God set them free? Why did God do so with mighty acts and redeem them? Well, there was one purpose, one desire that was in God's heart and it's there revealed in Exodus chapter 6 and verse 7.

[21 : 19] I will take you as my own people and I will be your God. I will take you as my own people and I will be your God.

God's purpose in setting them free. God's purpose in redeeming them these mighty acts was that they might be his. That they might enter into and be part of this wonderful friendship and relationship with the living God.

A lasting relationship that can never be broken. There's some similarity, isn't there, really, in what those words that he says to the people, in what a couple may say to one another when exchanging vows at a wedding.

I will be your husband and you will be my wife. You will be mine and I will be yours and all that I have is yours and all that you have is mine. Something there, isn't there?

A sharing. That's why this is a covenant. The nearest thing we have to a covenant is what we have in marriage where two people bind themselves together for life and commit to one another that they will love each other and be for one another and support one another.

[22 : 27] I am, will take you to be my people. My own. This is my wife. This is my husband. Nobody else's. There's a exclusivity, isn't there, in marriage.

And so it is with God. He makes it even plainer later on in Exodus in chapter 19 when he says to the people that he will be theirs and they will be his. Chapter 19 of Exodus in verses 5.

He says this, Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all the nations you will be my treasured possession and you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Treasured possession. Do you feel yourself to be a treasured possession? Do you think, ever thought that when God looks on you, dear friend, when he looks upon you, he sees here is something that I treasure.

Treasure. Of course he treasures us. Think of the price he paid for us. Perhaps you've got an ornament or something or a piece of furniture or whatever it is in your house and it is a treasured possession.

[23 : 37] Why? Because you spend a lot of money on it and it's very precious to you because it is costly. God paid such a price for you and I that we might be his precious possession, that we might be his treasure.

That's the wonderful thing. That's why Jesus came and suffered and died to bring us to God. In that passage we read in 1 Peter and chapter 4, sorry, chapter 3 where it says, for Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous.

Why? To bring you to God. Isn't that amazing? To bring you to God. We were far from God. We were distant from God.

Because of our sin we'd pushed God away. We'd gone our own way. We'd wandered into great danger and slavery and all sorts of potential dangers. But here is God in his love in Christ Jesus.

He came to redeem us and to rescue us. To bring us back to himself. Not to bring us under his heel. Not to bring us back that we might be enslaved again. But to bring us back into his family.

[24 : 41] That's the wonderful thing that Christ has done. He's brought us into the very family of God. So we pray as we've been teaching the children our Father. In that passage in Galatians that we read in chapter 5 just a few verses earlier in chapter 4 Paul reminds the believers there that they have entered into all the blessings that belong to the sons of God.

When the time had fully come Paul says God sent his son born of a woman born under the law to redeem those under the law that we might receive the full rights of sons.

Because you are sons God sent his spirit of his son into your hearts the spirit who calls out Abba Father you're no longer a slave but a son. And since you're a son God has made you also an heir.

We have been doubly brought into the family of God. Once by adoption the Bible says he predestined us to be adopted as his sons Ephesians 5 God chose and set his heart upon us that we might be his that we might be adopted by his will we have become his son become his child but also by new birth we have become his child as well.

In John in chapter 1 and verse 12 John reminds us that when we put our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ something truly wonderful happens. Those who received him those who believed in him he gave the right to become children of God.

[26 : 18] Children not born of natural descent nor of a human decision or a husband's will but born of God. That's what the Bible means when it talks about being born again being a new creation.

The Holy Spirit of God comes upon us and gives us life when once we were dead once we were far away we were brought near once we were alienated from God and now we become his children.

His very life of God lives within us. That's why Jesus died. That's why he with outstretched arm went to the cross.

That's why God redeemed us and paid such a price. That's why he rescues us from our sin that we might belong to him and that we might be brought into his family and enjoy daily the delight of our heavenly father's love.

Again, are we doing that dear friends day by day? Are we talking and sharing with and spending time with our heavenly father? Are we enjoying the delights of his love?

[27 : 19] Are we spending time with our family? Those who belong to us we're brothers and sisters in Christ. Are they dear to us as they're dear to him? Are we talking to him in prayer?

Are we listening to him in his word? Is it to us the most vital and wonderful thing in all the world that we are children of God? And nothing can change that.

Nothing can remove that. Nothing can disempower us of that position. There's one last thing. One last thing that God promises to do for his people here in Exodus 6 and that has been done for us in Christ.

God says this I will take you as my own people and I will be your God. Verse 7 Then you will know that I am the Lord your God who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians and I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord. God was not only setting these people free from their slavery but leaving them in Egypt.

[28 : 28] They'd always be known as those who were the slaves. They'd always be second class citizens even if they were free. They'd always be in that constant sense of fear that perhaps the Egyptians again might enslave them and create them truly.

No. God was going to give them their own homeland. He was going to give them their own country. He promised it to Abraham centuries before as he says there and now he was going to do it.

He was going to bring them into a new place. A new home. A new country. A new kingdom. Again this is what Christ has done for us.

Again we think this with the children. Your kingdom come. When Christ is our king then we are part of his kingdom. Here's Paul as he writes to the Colossians. He says this.

For God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves in whom we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins.

[29 : 27] We've left the land of slavery. We've been brought out of the dominion of darkness where we lived and where millions of people still live in slavery in darkness in ignorance in a real place where they have no knowledge or experience of the love and the joy of God.

God. But we've been brought out of there by Christ outstretching his arms for us. By Christ paying the price for us. We've been delivered out of there and brought into this new place this new kingdom where Christ is the king where we have liberty and freedom where we enjoy his leading his government in our lives his protection and his care.

We're already citizens of the kingdom of heaven and we're going there too. We're not fully arrived at our destination just like the Hebrews as they left Egypt they still had several years through the desert journeying to the promised land so we in this life are still journeying already free enjoying God's favour but on our way to that land of milk and honey that place of heaven and life.

It's what Jesus promised his disciples the night before he was to be betrayed and crucified he said to him in John 14 in my father's house are many rooms if I were not so I would have told you I'm going there to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you I'll come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

That's the promise of Christ. In his life and his death and his resurrection Christ has prepared for us a place a home. This world is not our home we're just passing through we're just here for a while just for a few decades at most but we are heading to a promised land we are heading to heaven we have a hope which is real that this life in which we live is not all there is to live for it's not the end this is not the whole package this is just a layer if I can put it away on that parcel that we're playing with it's just a layer and under that layer there is life everlasting life either with God or life without God life either in that place of joy and peace or that life in that place of sorrow and darkness and distress dear friends when you put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and put your trust in him you can be certain that he will bring you there he'll bring you there and though you'll fail and fall like the Israelites did in the wilderness so you'll get it wrong and you'll sin it doesn't stop

[32 : 15] God from fulfilling his promises to you it's by his mighty power that we are kept his mighty power that we are brought into heaven so the question again is this are we living like citizens of heaven are we living as those who know that we have more than this will to live for are we living as those who are under the will and the rule of our king or are we still following the sheep as it were in the world are we still going the way of destruction are we still accumulating for ourselves pleasures in this world and treasures in this world which will rust and destroy and fade away and we'll become too old to enjoy them anyway or are we building up for ourselves treasures in heaven are we enjoying the riches that we already have in Christ and are we looking forward to that which is enduring and eternal now this message this wonderful good news that what God would do

Moses took as the message to the Israelites God said to him tell them tell them verse 6 say to the Israelites I'm the Lord I'm going to rescue you I'm going to redeem you you're going to be mine and I'm going to take you into the land what happens when Moses took this message to them how excited they must have been let's listen verse 9 Moses reported this to the Israelites but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and cruel bondage he took the message to them but they didn't listen they didn't listen because they were so caught up with their present troubles their present burdens their present difficulties they didn't receive the hope and the joy of what God had for them because all they could see was the difficulties at their feet what about you this morning will you listen to the message of Jesus Christ will you turn your eyes away from the things of this world the present things what about are you thinking about what's in the oven for lunch are you thinking about what work you're going to do tomorrow are you thinking about next week or your holiday dear friends don't miss out on the message don't miss out on the good news that is here because you're so caught up with today receive it don't be robbed of it don't be robbed of the benefits of God's promises because of present difficulties or present concerns receive it and put your faith in Christ and in his word put your trust in him accept him and all that he brings we're faced with two simple alternatives in life two simple choices as it were they're there in John in chapter 1 when Jesus

Christ came into the world and spoke to people we're told this he came to that which was his own but his own did not receive him yet to all received him to those who believed in his name he gave the right to become the children of God there is no fence to sit upon it's either that you receive Christ or you reject Christ if you reject Christ you stay in your sin and the slavery and darkness of Egypt do you really want to be there if you receive Christ and put your faith in him then you're brought into the kingdom of his son and you're made a child of his the freedom and the liberty that he brings what will you choose there's no alternative is there there's no choice any sane person can see that there's no way that you're going to stay there when you can be there Christ has done it without stretched arms God has done it by his power all you need to do is receive let's pray together let's pray you've done so much oh Lord for us you've done more than we could ever do all that we can ever even appreciate in your son the

Lord Jesus and we thank you again for that snapshot of your wonderful love to us and power to us that you did in the lives of the people of Israel Lord we ask that you would so move us that we might not be like those who would not listen because of our present concerns nor like those who would reject you because whatever reason we've got we just don't think we need you we ask oh Lord that you would soften our hearts and cause us to those who receive the wonderful deliverance liberty freedom that is in Jesus that we might journey onwards to that home that land that place which you've prepared for us help us Lord ever to remember who we are in Christ help us ever Lord to be rejoicing daily in these present blessings and these future hopes we ask it in

Jesus name Amen