

Preparing to Be Free (Part 1)

Preached at Cloverdale Church, 6/30/2024

Background: Independence Day, in the United States, commemorates the passage of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776.

I was eating lunch with my wife and during our conversation she mentioned she needed to go to the store to do some shopping before Independence Day rolls around and people rush out to prepare. That prompted me to wonder if we need to prepare to be free. The greatest story of freedom I've ever heard was how God delivered Israel from their bondage. It has served as a model for other freedom movements including the American Revolution and fight for freedom. Let's see how God prepared His people to be free.

Exodus 12 outlines the preparation instructions for independence.

Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ²“This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. ³Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household.

- The first preparation step is that a sacrifice needed to be made. Someone needed to sacrifice themselves to set everyone else free.
- Jesus is the sacrificial lamb of God and the first step in being free is to recognize our need to be free. To recognize we cannot set ourselves free by our efforts alone. We need God. We need Jesus. The first step in preparation is applying the blood of Jesus to our hearts.
 - How do I apply the blood? Come to Jesus and accept His sacrifice for you. Tell Him, I need you.
 - Humility is the key. Stop running away, instead run to Him.
 - We need to sacrifice ourselves and turn to Him.

¹³**Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. ¹⁴‘So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.**

- If Israel had to apply the blood to prepare to be free, as God's people, we have the same requirement and need.
- If we apply the blood by believing in Christ, when God sees we have come back to Him, some of the things that happen in the world won't be happening to us.
- Just as we prepare to celebrate Independence Day, God expects us to celebrate the day we took the first step to be spiritually free. We still need Jesus.

¹⁵ Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶ On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but *that* which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. ¹⁷ So you shall observe *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance.

²⁵ It will come to pass when you come to the land which the Lord will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service. ²⁶ And it shall be, when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ ²⁷ that you shall say, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice of the Lord, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.’ ” So the people bowed their heads and worshiped. ²⁸ Then the children of Israel went away and did so; just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

- Part of the preparation was to turn away from sin and following your own plan for freedom. We still need to go through the process of removing sin out of our lives. It is an ongoing process.
- Some things I’m going to stop doing today so I can be free tomorrow.
- Be prepared for a fight. There may be some conflict involved in the process of setting you free. God says He will bring you through the fight.
- Part of preparing for your freedom is understanding how to celebrate it and share the story with others. Know how this all will turn out, that there is a remembrance and party, and a day off coming behind this.
 - This is an important part of the preparation because knowing how to celebrate the victory will encourage you and give you hope along the way that you really will have victory and be free.
- Obedience to the preparation plan is the key to your freedom.

³¹ Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, “Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the Lord as you have said. ³² Also take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also.”

³⁴ So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders. ³⁵ Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. ³⁶ And the Lord had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them *what they requested*. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

- They had declared their freedom to Pharaoh before they were actually set free. Part of your freedom preparation is to declare it before it happens. We can celebrate and praise in advance because we know His will and plans for us.
- They didn’t wait around, when it was time to leave they took off.
- They obeyed and when it was time to go, the situation that was a problem before, gave them what they needed for their future. The problem that enslaved them was now providing an experience that would bless them. God allowed what caused them pain to bless them with gain.

³⁸ A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds—a great deal of livestock. ³⁹ And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought out of Egypt; for it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared provisions for themselves.

- Part of the preparations for freedom consists of your move. The miracle is in your move.
- A mixed multitude tells me God designed these freedom preparations for all people, not just Israel. Everybody is included.
- You can know Jesus, believe in Jesus, but if you never leave Egypt, you will never truly be free.
- God never designed in His preparation planning for His people to sit around in Egypt too long. They were being prepared to leave quickly. Are you still there?

⁵⁰ Thus all the children of Israel did; as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. ⁵¹ And it came to pass, on that very same day, that the Lord brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt according to their armies.

- He brought them out, He brought me out, He'll bring you out too. Just go through the preparations to be free.

Free from what? What has Jesus set us free from? We are free from the world. Free from sin. Free from bondage. Free from my past and the pain that I suffered in the last place and last season.

What is your Egypt? We all have one. Anger, pain, mistakes, addictions, sin, unforgiveness, bad relationships, etc. What is the place or things in your life that cause you pain, grief, hopelessness, etc.?

Don't you want to be free? Just follow the steps.

1. Cry out to Jesus. Stop trying to set yourself free. Give up on that move and give into Jesus. Accept His sacrifice in your life.
2. Leave behind the pain and experience you suffered in your Egypt. Let it go and turn to the hope that Jesus gives us through His word. Time to rise up...you been down long enough.
3. Look toward the hope that awaits as he sets you free. Notice the evidence happening around you and that he is starting to do something new in your life. There will be a fight involved, but don't be discouraged in your move, there is a freedom celebration on the other side of this season.

Summary

They were not free yet. They were just preparing and moving in the right direction. They were still within the confines of Egypt, but they had declared their freedom in advance. Still around Egyptian territory but celebrating in advance and on the move.

America declared independence in 1776, but the war started in 1775 and it didn't end officially until 1783 (Treaty of Paris). But they declared freedom in advance. Spoke it and claimed it before it actually happened.



God's benefits and freedoms are greater than the world's. It's time to prepare to be free. Time to declare it before God works it out. It's encouraging to know that God wants us to be free. May His will and His freedom become real in your life. It feels really good to be free!

Pathway to Freedom (A Spiritual Principle), Part 2

Background: Last week we looked at Exodus 12 and how God prepared His people to move from bondage to freedom. The steps in Exodus were a model for the fight for freedom in America. Why did our leaders back then use this story as inspiration? Because it worked. They saw themselves in the story and compared it to their situation. They must have believed that if God did it for Israel, He would do it for them. I also believe today, God desires to work the same freedom steps for each of us. Let me show you the way to go. In the preparation process, we made the following observations:

- It involves a sacrifice.
 - The lamb is sacrificed for Israel's freedom. Americans sacrificed for our freedom. Will you sacrifice for your freedom? You have to sacrifice self and your will and accept Jesus' sacrifice and God's will.
- It involves a move to repentance. It is a faith move.
 - You can't be comfortable in bondage. You must move and leave the past, the hurt, the sin, the mistakes, the heartbreak behind.
 - Once you see the need for freedom, you have to want to be free and leave your chains behind. Are you still holding onto stuff that you need to release?
- It involves new hope and a changed mind. It involves a declaration of independence.
- It involves a promise of better things to come.

Let's continue our analysis and review of the pathway to freedom.

Exodus 14

Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ²“Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea. ⁴Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the Lord.” And they did so. ⁵Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people; and they said, “Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?” ⁶So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him. ⁷Also, he took six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them.

- Everyone will not be excited about your desire and move to be freedom.
- Your desire and move to be free is not just about you. God will use what you are going through and use your situation to inspire others to be free.
- The fight and difficulties in front of you has no impact of the promises of God. He is faithful to deliver, keep moving forward. Stand on the promises....God really wants you to be free.

- Expect weapons to be formed against you, but what life throws at you, can't stop you.

¹⁰ And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord. ¹¹ Then they said to Moses, "Because *there were* no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? ¹² Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For *it would have been* better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." ¹³ And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. ¹⁴ The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace." ¹⁵ And the Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward.

- Challenges and scary situations may be encountered on your freedom journey. Don't worry.
- You are in a fight, but God will show up and fight for you. Process brings peace. When you understand the process, when you know the plan, when you know the will of God for you, you can stand still and not be afraid. Freedom is on the way; it is part of the plan.
 - You will need to fight against fear and doubt.
 - You will need to fight against your natural desires to turn back.
 - You will need to fight against talking crazy because better to be free than back in Egypt.
 - I would rather die free and standing on His promise, than to live in sin and bondage.
- Keep moving forward and don't get dragged back into sin and bondage.

¹⁶ But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry *ground* through the midst of the sea. ¹⁷ And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. ¹⁸ Then the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the Lord, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

- There is a higher purpose behind the problem. He will bring them out on purpose because He will receive glory from this story. Others will believe because of what God is doing through you.
- Your fight and battle is to keep the faith, God will take care of the real scary parts....keep moving.
- Praying to God and obedience is an important part of helping you to move.

²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry *land*, and the waters were divided. ²² So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry *ground*, and the waters *were* a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. ²³ And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

The pathway to freedom:

- It involves a miracle.
- It involves help, you are not alone.
- It involves victory.

- It involves looking back, but not going back. So you can see and share the results.

During the American Revolution, there are several stories and accounts of God making a way through several miracles. Washington crossing the Delaware to surprise the enemy reminds me of Israel crossing the Red Sea to surprise their enemies. There was bad weather, dense fog, storms, flash floods just popping up to provide cover and protection for America troops preventing the enemy from attacking or providing victory. Each miracle required a strategic move by the American Army.

The miracle is in your move. If they don't cross the Red Sea, Pharaoh doesn't get defeated that day. If they don't keep moving forward, God doesn't get the glory. If they don't move forward, others will not believe or overcome because there is no testimony.

America was not alone in the fight for freedom. The French were a critical ally along with some Native American groups and others. Israel was not alone....their ally was the one true God. You are not alone.

²⁷ And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. ²⁸ Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, *and* all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained. ²⁹ But the children of Israel had walked on dry *land* in the midst of the sea, and the waters *were* a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. ³⁰ So the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹ Thus Israel saw the great work which the Lord had done in Egypt; so the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses.

- Dry ground. When they finally made their way through, you wouldn't be able to tell it.
- What was once in their way was now helping them stay on track to move forward.
- Just because you experience a breakthrough, doesn't mean the enemy won't try to follow you.
- Nighttime looks bad as enemy pursues but by morning that problem will be dealt with.
- When you ain't doing right or chasing after the wrong things, God can cause you to be troubled.
- Verse 25 - God didn't allow the enemy to go any further. They got stuck right there. They didn't expect this to happen to them, wasn't in the plan. You will not realize you need God until you get stuck.
- God doesn't want the old problem following you into your new season. God will help you get past your past.
- Verse 30 - God keeps His promises from Verse 13.
- You should see some things wash away. After you've been freed, you ought to see the results of your washing in the water.
- God doesn't want you to leave with all that Egypt still on you. That is being Free!
- You can take us out of Egypt, but Egypt has to come out of us.