DESPAIR

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HOPE

OPPRESSION

TO AUTHORITY

DEATH

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LIFE

2025

FALL

BECAUSE FREEDOM WAS ALWAYS GOD'S PLAN

то **FEAR** LOVE то **DOUBT TRUST GUILTY** то FREE **SEPARATION** то JOY WAITING ТО **PROMISE**



Exodus isn't just the story of Israel's escape from slavery—it's a powerful invitation to examine our own journey. As the Israelites learn to surrender and trust God for freedom, we're left asking a deeper question: Have we truly been set free?

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Recommended Resources

INTRODUCTION

Exodus is the story of God setting His people free.

After centuries of slavery in Egypt, the Israelites cried out for rescue—and God moved. He raised up Moses, confronted Pharaoh, split the sea, and led His people out of bondage. But freedom wasn't just about escape—it was about learning to follow God, trust Him, and live in His presence.

This isn't just their story—it's ours. We all long for freedom—from fear, sin, shame, and control. In Exodus, we see a God who hears, who fights for His people, and who leads them into a new way of living.

As we study this book, we'll see how the freedom God gave them is still available to us now. Let's walk the journey—and step into the freedom only He can give.

Each week includes:

God's plan.

Day 1: Learning from Exodus

Day 2: A New Testament connection

Day 3: A personal testimony of freedom

You'll also find reflection questions and a short prayer at the end of each week to help you process what you've read and grow closer to Jesus.

As you follow the Israelites on their journey from slavery to freedom, you'll see how God met them in the middle of their fears, doubts, and mess—and how He still does the same for us today. This study is an invitation to get honest, dig deep, and experience the God of the Universe, who cares so intimately about us that He created the most beautiful rescue plan to restore us back to Himself... because freedom was always

This 8-week Bible study walks you through the Israelites' freedom story and how it is connected to ours.

Leader Guide

The story of Exodus is the story of a people led by God to follow Him toward something new. It is our hope and prayer that lifegroups would experience a similar journey as they study individually throughout the week and then come together to listen, share, and grow in community. While we trust that leaders will listen to the Spirit and steward their groups as led, here are a few ideas for your group time during this study.

Read God's Word Together

Below you will find recommended readings for your group time selected from the assigned weekly reading. During group, read the passage aloud in its entirety, not stopping to discuss or ask questions but simply giving attention and space to the word of God.

Week 1: Exodus 2-3, Week 2: Exodus 6:28-7:24, Week 3: Exodus 13:17-14:31, Week 4: Exodus 16:1-22, Week 5: Exodus 20:1-23, Week 6: Exodus 32:1-35, Week 7: Exodus 40:1-38, Week 8: Joshua 1:1-18

Answer Reflection Questions

The same questions can be applied to the passage read aloud each week.

What are the major events in this passage of scripture? Is there anything surprising? What part stands out to you? What do we learn about the character of God? How should this passage shape the way we think or live?

Pray for Each Other

End your time together by praying for each other.



WEEK ONE: DAY ONE OLD TESTAMENT

Death on The Nile

By Mande Saitta

Read Exodus 5:6-23, 6:6-8

The notion of a newborn floating in a basket on the Nile River has always struck me as curious and wild. A defenseless infant, without the comfort of a mother, at the mercy of the water cradling him. But it's here that we begin the story of Moses, the author of Exodus.

The expanse of water Moses was rescued from was meant to be his death sentence. The decree of Pharaoh to murder all Hebrew sons should have numbered his days, but Moses' mother defied the command. She hid him for months, then tucked him into a papyrus vessel with a gentle push-off into the Nile. I think of this Levite woman with great boldness in what must have felt like extreme desperation. No mother sticks her little one in a basket and sets them in a river without immense trepidation. But Moses' mother trusted her God more, choosing to dwell in hope, rather than giving way to the very real anguish set before her.

The Nile was an epicenter of life for the Egyptian people. Its massive expanse and depth, stretching broadly throughout Africa, was exceptionally important to the economy and survival of the population. A vital source of water and food, the Nile teemed with sustenance. And on its banks, Moses washed ashore.

Years later, the Nile resurfaces in Moses' story. In Exodus 5:6-23, we read that Moses, at the Lord's behest and with Aaron by his side, approaches the powerful Egyptian Pharaoh with a plea to let the Israelite people go. Pharaoh wasn't buying it. Slaves with time for worshipping had time for working, he reasoned. So Pharaoh doubled down, requiring them to forage for the materials used in their brickmaking. The drudgery of the Israelites' existence loomed large before them.

The bricks at the center of Pharaoh's punishment relied on the Nile. The straw, likely sourced from the Nile Delta, almost certainly would have been mixed with mud from the Nile and dried in the plentiful sun of the desert, forming an exceptionally durable base for building.

As the people of Israel, forced into hundreds of years of slavery, scooped mud onto the chopped straw to form bricks, what must they have felt? Pharaoh's

flippant dismissal of them was a blow to their hopeful appeal. With no end in sight to their endless toiling, one can only assume that despair had become their constant companion.

But in our wandering, both literal and metaphorical, God knows the exact way to encourage His children. In the midst of Pharaoh's denials and the Israelites oppression, God's response was concise and soaked in love:

"Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord." Exodus 6:6–8 (ESV)

The commanding presence of the ruthless Pharaoh and his insistence on limitless labor for the Israelites was certain death. A baby was no match for the fierce waterways of the Nile; it was certain death, too. But what was designed to be Moses' watery grave was really the commencement of his deliverance.

The sons and daughters of Israel allowed hopelessness, born from years of bondage, to get the better of them time and again. Moses fell victim to despair, too, his conversations with God often veering into self-loathing and despondency as the norm not the exception. God was kind to entertain his doubt, but Moses was never permitted to linger there very long.

While you read today's passages, take some time to reflect on the way you interact with God. Are your conversations characterized by shame, fear, or uncertainty? Do you find yourself questioning the Lord instead of agreeing with Him? Has despair been given latitude in your life? Ask God what He longs to deliver you from.

The surest way to turn your despair into hope is with gratitude.

Take a moment to collect your distress, hand it over to God, and sink down into thankfulness. There is reason to rejoice! In the long and winding Nile, where Moses should have met death but instead found his assignment from God, the tides are changing.

Why? Because freedom was always God's plan.



WEEK ONE: DAY TWO NEW TESTAMENT

When Rescue Looks like a Baby

By Sarah McPherson

Read Exodus 2:1-10, Matthew 2:13-23

The Exodus story begins in Egypt, where the Israelites lived under brutal oppression. Yet even in slavery, their families multiplied. In response, Pharaoh issued a terrifying decree: every Hebrew boy born at that time was to be thrown into the Nile and killed (Exodus 1:22). It was in this dark time that Moses was born.

"A Levite woman . gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile." – Exodus 2:1–3 (NIV)

Moses was about 80 years old when he finally led God's people out of Egypt. Think about that—God's rescue plan for Israel began not with a leader ready for battle, but with a baby born eight decades earlier. And really, it started even before that: with two people marrying, starting a family, and trusting God in dangerous times.

God plays the long game. His plans often unfold more slowly than we expect—but they are never delayed.

He could have sent a ready-made hero to confront Pharaoh. Instead, He sent a baby. Sound familiar?

In the New Testament, we see a similar pattern. God's people were suffering and looking for a Messiah to save them. God sent them a baby that would need to grow up first. Jesus could have arrived as a political warrior or a powerful king. But instead, He came as a helpless newborn, born to an unwed teenage girl in an ordinary town.

In Matthew 2, King Herod tried to kill Jesus just as Pharaoh once tried to kill Moses. And just like before, God delivered him. No matter what harm was trying to stop Moses and Jesus, God was at work behind the scenes—shielding, guiding, and weaving His plan together. God saved Moses' life in the same place Pharaoh wanted Moses to die.

What do these stories tell us? God is a faithful Deliverer. He rescues. He saves. He brings freedom—often in ways we least expect and through people who seem completely ordinary. His timing may stretch beyond what we can see, but His plans never fail.

If you're waiting on God — if you feel stuck in a place where nothing seems to be changing — remember: God may be working on something that won't fully bloom for years. That doesn't mean He's absent. It means He's intentional. Somehow, someday, and in some way, God will work it all for our good.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." —

Romans 8:28

"But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise." — 2 Peter 3:8-9a

Look closely at the details in Moses' story. Over time, God used so many ordinary people in ordinary moments—a mother's courage, a basket waterproofed with pitch, Pharaoh's daughter's compassion—to accomplish something extraordinary. (Bonus: the Hebrew word translated as 'basket' is the same word translated as 'ark', as in Noah's ark. This is a vessel God used to save His people!) Even Jesus, our Lord and Savior, lived a quiet, ordinary life, with an ordinary family for 30 years before His public ministry started.

As you read today's passages, list all the "ordinary" circumstances that God used to bring about His plan. For example, the Nile river currents had to flow in the



right direction and speed in order for Pharaoh's daughter to discover the basket with Moses inside. Then, consider your own life. What everyday circumstances might God be working through right now? Is there any place you can turn God's perceived absence into a prayer of thanksgiving for all that He is doing that you can't see or control?

We can have hope in the face of uncertainty because freedom was always God's plan.

WEEK ONE: DAY THREE TESTIMONY

Waiting with Hope

By AnnDee Woodhead

"Those who sow their tears as seeds will reap a harvest with joyful shouts of glee. They may weep as they go out carrying their seed to sow, but they will return with joyful laughter and shouting with gladness as they bring back armloads of blessing and a harvest overflowing!" - Psalms 126:5-6

After almost three years of struggling with infertility and seeking fertility treatments, both my husband, Joel, and I felt the call to adopt. Seven years ago was the beginning of that adoption journey. I remember us being cautiously optimistic. We had such a hope of growing our family but did not know when or how it would happen. We laid it in God's hands, hopeful that His will would be done and that our home would one day be filled with children. In December of 2018, we had our first match which sadly did not go in our favor as the birth mom chose to not go through with the adoption. Devastation and heartache cannot even begin to describe hearing that news.

During the next three months we continued to pray and wait with the hope that God would provide our hearts' desires to be parents I fully remember reaching a point in my surrender that I knew that no matter the outcome, child or not, my hope and satisfaction would be in Christ alone.

It was such a freeing point in the waiting. In April of 2019, we received a call about a baby boy who had already been born—that baby ended up being our Henry. In the fall of 2020, after praying and hoping to grow our family again, we received a call that our son's birth mom was due in a month, and we said yes! We then adopted our son, Louis.

In January of 2023, we felt the call to adopt again. We were chosen by a birth mom who was due September of 2023, but we again experienced great loss, as the birth mom chose not to go through with the adoption and the baby boy ended up in the foster care system. We were devastated yet knew God was sovereign and faithful. We knew from previous experiences that God is always working in the waiting even when we cannot see and we continued

to keep our hope alive because we held fast to Him. For in Him is where we found strength, comfort, and an unshakable hope (Hebrews 6:18-20).

Again we laid it down; if He desired for us to have another child, it would happen. We trusted His perfect will no matter what, even through the heartbreak and the many, many tears. In December of that year, we received a call that we had been chosen to be the adoptive parents to a boy who had already been born. Forty-eight hours after the call, we were with our sweet James in the hospital. Our three boys' stories are nothing but miracles and reflections of God's faithfulness. He is so good, so faithful, so kind, and always working even when we cannot see. I am forever grateful for the season of waiting for a child and the continual surrender to His will that I experienced throughout it. As I learned to fully trust God, He graciously brought me to a place of freedom because freedom was always God's plan.

WEEKLY QUESTIONS

- 1. How are you feeling right now? Do you feel stuck in despair or hopeful? What situations in your life are contributing to those feelings?
- 2. You know the saying "hindsight is 20/20". What is a situation that took longer to work through than you hoped? When you look back on it, what parts of the story stand out that may be more significant now than you realized at the time?
- 3. What can you thank God for in this season of your life?

PRAYER

Father, I thank You for all that You are doing in my life. I don't see the complete picture, but You do. I pray today that You would give me the strength and courage to keep going when I feel like I want to give up. I pray that I won't be discouraged in the waiting. Please help me to trust You completely as I walk with You daily. In Jesus' name, amen.

WEEK TWO: DAY ONE OLD TESTAMENT

Plagues, Powers, & Principalities

By Jasmine Kruger

Here are a couple of examples.



Read Exodus 7:3-5

I have not been able to get something Jesus said during Holy Week out of my head. In John 12:31, He said, "Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out." I can only imagine that the crowd around Him thought He was speaking of the Romans. Who else could possibly rule this world? The Romans had a stranglehold on Western civilization of that time. But God is not concerned with our human enemies because He uses us to reach them. The Jews of that time were chomping at the bit to be rid of their oppressors, and would have followed Jesus in what would have been a spectacular revolt. Are there people in this world you are looking for God to overthrow?

But Jesus was not speaking of the Romans. He was speaking of the powers and principalities that ruled the hearts of men and kept us slaves to our own passions and instincts. Many theologians agree that this was just as when God sent the ten plagues to Egypt in Exodus; He was not showing up Pharaoh but the gods of that land.

The first plague in Exodus was turning water to blood (all water but specifically the Nile). The Nile was the source of life in Egypt and had its own deities associated with its functions. According to Egyptian mythology, Khnum was the originator of the Nile. The Nile's yearly floods were essential to agriculture and the plentiful land of the delta. Blood rendered the Nile not just useless but harmful. It became a putrid source of rot and disease. Attacking this deity as an opening act was also brilliant because this "god" was also known to the Egyptians as a creator god; one of the gods of the day that created humanity from the mud of the earth. By turning the Nile River into blood, Yahweh immediately attacked a core tenet of the Egyptian beliefs showing His great power. He did not start small.

Check out the fifth plague: attack on the livestock. This could be seen as an assault on Hathor, the goddess of love and femininity. This deity was often portrayed as a cow, making cattle sacred animals in Egyptian culture. If she could not save her symbol,

or this important resource from the all-powerful God of the universe, she is revealed to be helpless. Were Egyptian women now questioning their devotion to a mother god incapable of protecting anything?

How about the ninth plague: darkness. In most ancient faiths, the sun god is a prominent member of the pantheon. Ancient Egypt was no exception. Ra was the ruler god, supposedly the original pharaoh, and represented by the noon-day sun. But on the day that darkness fell, he was shown to be powerless in the face of the Adonai. The god who was said to have created other gods, could not hold back the darkness when the God of the Hebrews came to rescue them. But not just to rescue them, to reveal Himself to a lost world.

Whatever is holding us back, whatever stronghold exists in our lives, God attacks the root.

There is nothing that can stand against Him. He is for people. Yes, the Hebrew people saw their God triumph in those days, but who else saw evidence of the Creator of the Universe? The Egyptians. The Egyptians were shown evidence of a God who controls all on His timeline, and the gods who formerly held the people hostage at their whim were proven impotent! The power of God not only freed the Israelites who walked out but broke spiritual strongholds for those who watched because freedom was always God's plan.



WEEK TWO: DAY TWO NEW TESTAMENT

Calming the Storm

By Cami Gerdes

Read Matthew 8:23-34

Exodus 7 begins with an answer to a question asked a few chapters beforehand.

"Who is this Lord, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go?" (Exodus 5:2)

To which the Lord responds:

"The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them." (Exodus 7:5)

God was preparing to bring rightful order to His people. A redemptive story was unfolding that would be told and remembered for generations and generations to come. No longer would the people of Israel be held under the oppression of a hardened and resolute Pharaoh or the false gods of the Egyptian people. God was confronting order and through His authority alone would freedom be possible. Each plague was specifically sent to break the rule of the false gods and to lead the Israelites towards the path of freedom by the taming of the sea.

The disciples who followed Jesus onto the boat in

Matthew 8 would've known this story well. This story held immense significance. They would've grown up hearing of how Yahweh, ruler over all creation, split the chaotic waters of the sea to deliver them. They would've understood that throughout the scriptures, the biblical authors and poets would use the symbolism of chaotic waters to convey turmoil, disorder, overwhelming life circumstances, death, and danger. These waters spoke to the desperate need for rescue and that there is only One who can bring peace. The disciples would have understood what it felt like to be under the oppressive rule of Rome and chaos, desperately clinging to the promise of the second Moses— the Messiah who will set them free.

When the waves began to swell and water filled the boat the disciples knew what this meant: this was a threat to life. They woke Jesus and Jesus calmed the storm. When this happened, they were astounded and confronted with an uncomfortable question; were they fully convinced of who Jesus was? Up until that point they had seen the signs, they knew He was a great teacher and a good guide. But when Jesus rebuked the waters and brought calm to the chaos around them; this was something else entirely. He was more than what they understood Him to be.

Jesus didn't just have power, Jesus IS power.

And this was the moment Jesus chose to reveal His rightful claim on creation.

"What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?" (Matthew 8:23-27) The disciples were left marveling, and probably slightly terrified, at what they just witnessed. The only other who could tame the chaos in the waters was the One who had rescued them from Egypt a thousand years before. Matthew writes on this specifically because He is wanting to convince us of who Jesus really is. When the sea is calmed, we are gifted a revelation of identity; Jesus, the Son of God, came to fulfill the divine role of God in confronting chaos and oppression. Jesus holds authority over the forces of death and all creation. Remember, freedom was always God's plan.



WEEK TWO: DAY THREE TESTIMONY

Destroying Strongholds

By Cole Denne

Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-4

Our trailer had a bulky TV in the front of the living room. To the left were some steps leading down to the addition where our wood-burning stove and a pile of firewood lay. On the right was my couch, pressed up against the larger windows. For a time this was my bed, and from it I could see down our long narrow hallway. It led to my sister's bedroom, the bathroom, and way at the end, the demon before my mother's bedroom.

I only ever saw him in nightmares. I was always on the couch, and it was always staring at me from its post. Somehow, I knew the rules. I could look at it, and I would be okay. I could even move off my couch if I wanted. There was only one thing I couldn't do: speak. I knew intuitively that if I said a word and acknowledged its presence in a way someone else could hear, it would immediately kill me.

The nightmares were reflections of my boyhood. When my mother and her friends, especially her boyfriend, would smoke, drink, and fight loudly, my safe place was the couch. There I felt quietly removed from their buzzed spats. I embraced a simple message that preserved my life while awake and asleep:

Keep quiet and stay alive.

This became the root of one of my greatest strongholds. They are always built on lies. My lie said silence is life, and it produced isolation and secrets long after my childhood. As I grew, it was effective at making me feel safe, but hiding my thoughts, feelings, and sins from others produced great levels of distrust, bitterness, and shame. It became the fertile ground for addictions and other damaging beliefs about myself and God.

This is life in the dark.

It is the brilliance of God to not deliver us of our sins in the same isolation that birthed them. Eventually I encountered Christ and strived against my addictions. However, I was determined to overcome them without the help of others. This was a long, fruitless struggle. No one finds freedom while partnered with the same lies that took them captive.

Breakthrough didn't happen until I surrendered to trusting His process for freedom.

That meant confession and introspection in the presence of other men. I became spiritually and emotionally naked, sharing secrets I swore I never would. I identified old lies, began reconciling my childhood pains, and learned to stop keeping quiet. This is life in the light.	
The letter of the light.	
Shame melts there. Strongholds are toppled. I was	
given the divine weapons of warfare to destroy them	
(2 Cor. 10:3-4). Because of it, I found freedom. Not	
just from my addictions, but from the isolating lies	
that made them. Satan built an impressive stronghold out of wounds, fear, shame, lies, and nightmares. But	
Jesus knew how to dismantle it. Because freedom	
was always God's plan.	

WEEKLY QUESTIONS

What are some lies that you have believed that have kept your thoughts stuck in a stronghold? What are the truths you can use to break those strongholds?

Where have you seen God move in power in your life?

PRAYER

Father, I thank You for sending Your son to set me free. Today, I choose to set down the things in my life that keep me from You. I confess that strongholds have taken place in my life. I confess any areas where I have allowed fear, doubt, anxiety, or lies to dominate my thoughts and emotions. I ask for Your forgiveness for these sins. I choose to turn away from these things and towards You. Lord, you are my refuge and strength. Thank you for Your love and forgiveness. In Jesus' name, amen.

WEEK THREE: DAY ONE OLD TESTAMENT

Justice & Mercy

By Becky Swanberg

Read Exodus 11:6-7, Exodus 12:12-13

If you've been reading along in Exodus, you know that the tension has been building. For the last five chapters, we've watched the pattern of interactions between Moses and Pharaoh: Moses asks, Pharaoh denies, God performs miracles, and Pharaoh's hard heart follows. This cycle repeats over and over until Exodus 11:1 when God tells Moses, "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and Egypt. After that, he will let you go from here, and when he does, he will drive you out completely."

Finally! The people of Israel are on the brink of deliverance, and we are right there with them in longing for the next chapter and all that the promised land has to offer. We simply have to get through this last plague of (checks notes)...killing babies?

"So Moses said, "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 female slave,
who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn
of the cattle as well. There will be loud wailing
throughout Egypt—worse than there has ever
been or ever will be again. But among the

Israelites not a dog will bark at any person or animal.' Then you will know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel." Exodus 11:4-7 (NIV)

What was anticipated as a triumphant moment of liberation is carried out with the background noise of Egypt's collective grief. Moms holding lifeless babies. Fathers not waking in the morning. All the firstborn males killed in the night at the hand of God. When we identify with the Israelites, this is a story of mercy and provision. But when we think of the Egyptians, hundreds of thousands of people who had nothing to do with this ongoing conflict between God and Pharaoh, it seems more like a story of arbitrary judgment and wrath.

It can be tempting to read the Bible and ignore the ways of God that make us uncomfortable. We'll take the God who is concerned about his people (Exodus 4:31) along with the God who is giving them a song of redemption to sing (Exodus 15), but we'd rather not worship the God who has authority to give and take life in the final plague. In short, we want all the mercy and only the justice that will not cost anyone anything.

When we participate in this scriptural picking and choosing, we not only fail to trust in God's goodness but we are also in danger of making God in our image. We are essentially saying, "I'll only support the parts of you that make sense to me. I'll only get behind the things that I would do, too." While this may seem like an exercise in critical thinking and discernment, it has a faulty premise: the assumption that we are in a position to comprehend and judge the ways of God.

It's important to remember that the story of God's people in Egypt is part of the bigger story of God interacting with the whole world throughout time. While He was rescuing the Israelites, He was preparing them for the future rhythm of Passover (Exodus 12) and also bringing judgment on the gods of Egypt (Exodus 12:12).

God's actions are always purposeful and part of His bigger plan for us.

But what do we do when God's plans in scripture or our own lives just seem wrong? Instead of discounting parts of scripture or explaining it away, what if we brought our discomfort straight to the throne of our heavenly Father? God, I don't understand this. Father, why would you choose to do it this way? In the same way you would want your own children to bring their criticisms to you, God welcomes our honest dialogue and our willingness to listen at His feet. We don't ask in order to hold Him accountable; we come to seek His heart and grow in our understanding of who He is.

Infinitely loving. Unfailingly just. In our human condition, we can't achieve either of these qualities, yet God somehow strikes a perfect balance. In that tension, we strive to understand His justice, imitate His love, and worship Him for both.

Like the Israelites, we may find ourselves in places of longed-for liberation with the wailing grief of the world as our soundtrack. We don't follow because it's easy or because it's always clear. We follow because He has bid us to follow and because we want something much more valuable than comfort: we want freedom. And as with justice and mercy, freedom was always God's plan.



WEEK THREE: DAY TWO NEW TESTAMENT

The Takeover & The Table

By Mike Hintz

Read Matthew 26:17-30

I wasn't there, obviously—but I can imagine it.

Not in the way we imagine stained-glass saints or perfectly lit portraits of the Last Supper. I mean the real thing: Dust in the air. Low firelight. The tension of unspoken questions hanging thick between friends. And Jesus, fully God, fully human, sitting in the middle of it all.

He looks around the table—not just at the faces but at the story they've all stepped into. A story passed down over centuries. A meal soaked in memory. A tradition that defined an entire people.

And then He says it: "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you..."

This wasn't spontaneous. It wasn't casual. Jesus was stepping into over 1,400 years of sacred tradition. This meal wasn't just bread and wine—it was a story told through taste, texture, and memory. Bitter herbs dipped in salt water to recall the sting of slavery and the tears shed in bondage.

Unleavened bread, dry and cracking, a reminder of urgency—of how freedom demanded sacrifice and discomfort. It was a meal soaked in symbolism, one that tethered them to the God who rescued them with outstretched arms.

To call Passover "sacred" is almost an insult. It was the defining moment of Israel's identity. The moment God didn't just rescue His people, He chose to dwell with them—not in paradise, but in the dust and heat of the wilderness. And Jesus couldn't wait to sit in that moment with His friends before walking His own craggy path to death.

But what looked like nostalgia was actually disruption. Before the roasted lamb had made it around the table, Jesus dropped a bomb: "One of you will betray me."

Wait! This wasn't the same Passover script. This was a radical rewrite. That bread? No longer just about fleeing Egypt. "This is my body, broken for you."

That wine? Especially the fourth cup*—the "I will take you as my people" cup—now something new: "This is my blood of the covenant."

Jesus didn't just reinterpret Passover. He took it over. Entirely.

Jesus' take over was grittier, less comfortable, and more sacrificial than the exodus. He was the lamb about to be slain. He was the bread that was about to be broken. He was inviting His disciples into the story—and it would cost them everything. Passover would never mean the same again.

This wasn't just about deliverance from Egypt anymore.

This was a new Exodus—one that would free the soul not just the body.

A covenant written not on stone but on skin and bone. They had a role to play. And it would cost them everything.

This wasn't a table set for spectators. It was set for participants. For covenant-makers. For those willing to break with Him, bleed with Him, rise with Him.

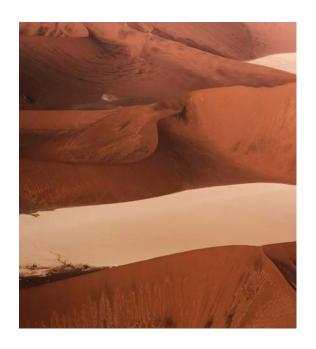
And now, centuries later, we still sit at that table. But sometimes, I wonder if we've dulled the edges of it. If we've swapped the rugged invitation for something safer, cleaner, easier to swallow. If we've forgotten that communion isn't just a moment to remember—it's a call to be remade.

Because this meal was never meant to be comfortable. It was meant to be commissioning. Jesus didn't wrap Himself in safety. He wrapped Himself in flesh and walked toward death. He didn't tweak tradition. He took it over. Rewrote it with blood. Fulfilled it with fire.

And why? Because freedom was always God's plan.

To dive deeper into the symbolism of the Seder meal, scan this QR code.





WEEK THREE: DAY THREE TESTIMONY

Salvation Testimony

By Charles O'Donnell

Read Exodus 20:2

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

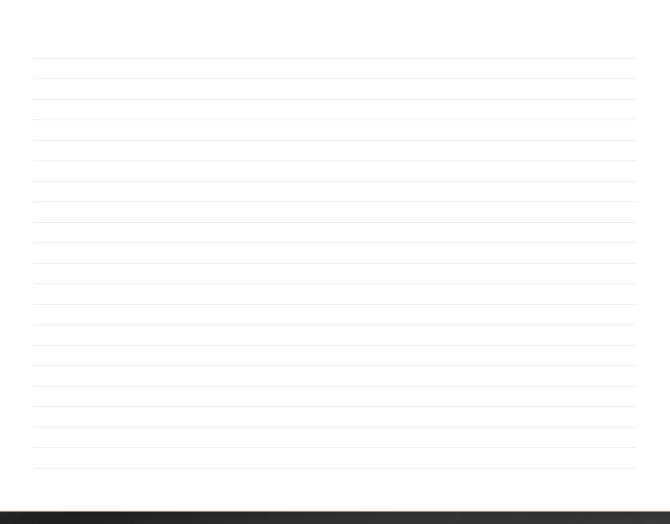
As I meditate on this verse and reflect on my own journey, I can't help but marvel at how God rescued me from my own kind of slavery. I may not have been physically enslaved in Egypt like the Israelites, but my soul was shackled by sin, weighed down by shame, and bound tightly by the exhausting need to perform and prove my worth. No matter how hard I tried to do better, be better, and earn acceptance, I always fell short. My efforts were never enough to reach the standard of true righteousness, and that reality haunted me every day. I felt isolated, convinced that no one could understand my struggles, and burdened by the belief that I alone had to find a way to fix my brokenness. Ironically, the more I tried to fix myself, the more tangled and defeated I became.

But then God stepped in and rescued me.

In His grace, He met me right where I was trapped and exhausted, and He brought me out of darkness and into freedom that only He could bring.

He didn't demand that I clean myself up first or earn His love through good behavior. Instead, He overwhelmed me with His unconditional love and showed me the way of life. My freedom and identity are found not in my own effort but in what Jesus has already done for me. It was through His love and mercy that my life changed.

The beauty of my story is that it's not unique to just me. God's heart is to rescue and redeem everyone; He's in the business of doing that. His love for you is just as deep and transformative as it was and continues to be for me. Take a moment and pause, consider your own life. What enslaves you? Bring it honestly before the Lord, and allow His perfect love and tender mercy to break every chain and set you free because freedom was always God's plan.



WEEKLY QUESTIONS

- 1. What is a moment or event in your life that you have had to live in the tension of justice and mercy? What did God reveal about Himself to you?
- 2. What are some questions or situations that feel uncomfortable that you can bring to God right now?
- 3. Take some time and list out some things that God has saved you from, maybe things that could have been generational but because you chose Him it is no longer in your future.

PRAYER

Father, I thank You for the gift of Passover which confirms Your covenant between You and me. I pray that it's never lost on me, the gift You gave of sacrificing Your one and only Son so that I can be forgiven of my sins and live in eternity with You. I pray that today You would renew my trust and dedication to You. Please forgive me where I have fallen short. Give me the strength to withstand the temptations of the evil one. Continue to protect me. In Jesus name, amen.

WEEK FOUR: DAY ONE OLD TESTAMENT

No Way Out

By Danny Woodhead

Read Exodus 14:10-16

To set the scene, Pharaoh let Moses and the Israelites leave Egypt, and they were finally on their way to the promised land. As they left, Pharaoh changed his mind and sent his army after them. (Just so everyone knows, Pharaoh didn't send his army to have a nice little conversation with them, but he sent them to either take them back into captivity or to eliminate them. Probably not a fun spot to be.)

As we begin reading in verse 10, the Israelites were in a crisis moment. They were terrified and probably in a state of panic. They were definitely at a crossroads and were crying out to God. Then they started questioning Moses and trying to figure out if they were just brought out there to die. After that, they attempted to convince themselves that they would've been better off staying in Egypt as slaves rather than dying in the desert. The Israelites were just trying to figure this thing out. The problem is they were trying to do this on their own.

After all the craziness from the people, it was time for Moses to respond. He let them know that the Lord was going to take care of them and deliver them. He also let them know that God would handle the Egyptians. Moses told them that all they had to do was be still/calm, and let the Lord fight for them. In the heat of being attacked by an army, that would be a wild thing to hear. That is a hard one to imagine, but that is exactly the message the Lord had Moses relay to the Israelites. They didn't have to be afraid or try to control the whole chaotic situation, but instead, lay everything at God's feet and let Him battle it out.

Verse 15 is a very interesting one as they were told to be still/calm and the Lord would do the fighting, but in the next moment, the Lord told Moses that they need to get moving. Yes, the Lord is fighting for them but that doesn't mean that the Israelites just stay put. They are supposed to move forward with their hearts in full surrender. The Lord would show them and direct them where to go. In verse 16, the Lord tells Moses to stretch out his hand and raise his staff to part the sea. God fully directs Moses on what he is supposed to do. It's pretty cool how God said to let Him fight for them, and then He also used Moses as part of the plan. What an unexpected yet incredible plan God had in parting the Red Sea and having them cross on dry land. God knew what He was doing and, man, did He ever fight for the Israelites.

At the end of the day, God wanted the Israelites to have freedom from trying to control things in their lives.

He wanted to teach them how to surrender and fully trust in His plans.

He didn't want them to have to carry the daily fifty-pound backpack of being the lord of their lives. God doesn't want us to do that either. He wants to be the Lord of our lives. He wants to fight for us and take care of us. He also will probably use us in it, too. That was such a wild way that God provided the Israelites freedom from themselves, but He did it because He deeply loved them and because freedom was always God's plan.



WEEK FOUR: DAY TWO NEW TESTAMENT

Love that Saves

By Josiah Gerdes

Read John 15:3, 1 John 4:18

The story of God splitting the Red Sea is undeniably one of the most recognizable stories in all of the Bible. The story is retold in countless children's books, paintings, and even movies. There are so many aspects of the story to explore, from the walls of water to the miraculously dry ground. There are subtle differences to how this event is depicted, but a recurring theme across all these retellings of the story is the palpable fear amidst the Israelites. After hundreds of years of captivity and bondage, freedom feels so close yet so uncertain. It is hard to imagine the level of desperation and fear that would have been felt in the moment. In the midst of the fear, God provided salvation for His people in the form of a split sea and a perfectly-timed recession of the waters. As the story comes to a close, there is one thing that always stands out to me: God delivered His people from their bondage and fear because of His love for them.

For those familiar with the Bible, you may already know that this is not the only time God has provided salvation for His people. This story in Exodus points us to the New Testament where Jesus' love for all of humanity drove Him to the cross. In John 15:13, we

read, "No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends." Once again, love is the driving factor in the story. Jesus' love for humanity is so great that He would not just sit and watch us in our bondage and fear. 1 John 4:18 reminds us, "There is no fear in love; instead, perfect love drives out fear, because fear involves punishment. So the one who fears is not complete in love." Jesus desires that we would live in love and operate from the perfect love He has for us.

When we live in fear of the punishment and bondage our sin will bring, our life is incompatible with one of love. Here is the good news: it is not in our power to attain this kind of love. It is only through reconciliation and relationship with Jesus that we can live in perfect love. Christ's love was powerful enough to hold Him on the cross, and it is perfect enough to free us from fear and bondage.

Perhaps you can relate to how the Israelites were feeling while fleeing Egypt. Gripped by fear, bondage at your heels, and desperately needing salvation, we often find ourselves trying to escape bondage in one way or another, fearing what may come if we do not become free.

While our captors are not chasing after us with swords and in chariots, the strongholds of sin and fear can feel just as treacherous.

Through Jesus' sacrifice, He showed Himself to be the new Moses. Upon a spear being thrust through His side, the living water flowed from our savior. Just as God used Moses to guide His people to salvation, Jesus came to guide us to an eternal salvation.

When we confess Jesus is Lord, we find ourselves in the same place the Israelites found themselves in as the waters receded. Passing from death to life, from fear to love. No longer are we bound by our sin and our fear. Jesus created a path to salvation because freedom was always God's plan.



WEEK FOUR: DAY THREE TESTIMONY

There is No Fear in Love

By Lexie & Zoe Freshman

When we think of someone with confidence, it's easy for us to see their accomplishments and assume that is what helped grow their confidence. When you're a follower of Jesus though, there is a different level of confidence that can be found. It's built by walking through the fires of life, big or small, and knowing that you have a God who loves you and is a steady foundation to rest your feet upon.

My daughter was at the end of her fifth grade year when Covid started, and along with it came a season of intense fear for her. Anything new or unfamiliar was a trigger for tears and worry. Every night was a battle to get her to go to bed. She rarely slept in her own room and, for sure, did not sleep alone. My husband and I did everything we knew how to do. We prayed, we had others pray, we hung scripture up on her walls for her to read over and over as she fell asleep. This lasted for about eighteen months.

The summer before her seventh grade year, while attending summer camp, Jesus's love became real to her. I began to see a change happening in her. We even moved to a new house where her room was in the basement and she began to sleep all night, in her room, alone. She was beginning to trust that "perfect love drives out fear".

I was able to see this come full circle when she recently chose to be baptized. Public speaking is another fear point for her and to see her stand boldly in front of her peers, declaring Jesus as Lord of her life, was a testimony in itself of how the love of Jesus transforms us. Here is her testimony, shared with her permission:

I've grown up in a Christian home my whole life. But Jesus' love became real to me at summer camp in middle school. Since then. the Lord has been my foundation through all of my struggles. For the longest time, I've avoided getting baptized because I hate public speaking but also because I never felt like I had a big testimony to share. Over time, the Lord began showing me the mini testimonies I have everyday and the way He is so near in the mundane things. Whether it's a small prayer for a good day or good grade, or something bigger than that, He's always answered me. He's shown me that sometimes His presence looks like comforting peace on a hard day. He's taught me that while on earth we won't live a life free of suffering, we can live a life free from suffering alone. Even in the darkest moments if I look back hard enough, the Lord's light was there. The more I searched, the easier it became to find Him.

Instead of a big testimony, He gave me a new one everyday so that I could clearly see He's always been there and always will be. Because of that I am so grateful to be able to call Jesus the Lord of my life.	
Zoe learned that her struggle with fear wasn't the end of	
her story because freedom was always God's plan.	

WEEKLY QUESTIONS

- 1. When do you remember first recognizing the love of Jesus in your life? Spend time writing about that experience.
- 2. Where have you found freedom because of His love?
- 3. What is an area of your life that you struggle to trust that His love is enough for you?

PRAYER

Father, I pray that today Your love would overwhelm me. I pray that when fear, doubt, or anxiety try to creep in and take me down You would remind me of Your love for me. Father, remind me of all the ways in which You love and care for me not because of anything I've done or not done but simply because I'm your child. I thank You, Father, that You care so much for me and my well-being. I pray that as I go about my day, I will see Your love all around me. I love You, Jesus. In Jesus name, amen.

WEEK FIVE: DAY ONE OLD TESTAMENT

"Is the Lord among Us or not?"

By Bethany Loux Fatahian

Read Exodus 17:2-7

What is the longest you have worn a pair of shoes before they wore out? I think for me it would be a few years tops. Well, imagine shoes that don't wear out for forty years because of God's level of provision for you. This was the reality of the Israelites (Deut. 8:40). They had witnessed their enemies cast into the sea as they miraculously escaped centurieslong slavery. God literally rained food down from heaven for them daily. They left Egypt with all the silver and gold they could want, and not a single feeble one was among them (Psalm 105:37). Miracle after miracle, they witnessed the lengths God would go to not only free them but to care for them.

So in chapter 17, they come to a rock and a hard place (please enjoy this pun). They don't have water and what is the response? Remembering all the ways God had miraculously provided up until this point? (Any time spent in the Old Testament will tell you this wasn't really the Israelites' style). Nope. Grumbling.

Now we can read this story and wonder how they didn't have the faith to believe that the same

God that rescued them with His mighty hand and outstretched arm could surely provide some water for them. He was sustaining them in every way. And yet, I must say even today as I write this, I am convicted.

I may not have walked through the Red Sea with an army chasing me, or followed a cloud by day or a fire by night to lead me, but I have, for sure, experienced the mighty, healing, and saving hand of God. I have witnessed prayers answered for healing and provision, and lives changed by His love. Yet literally as I write this, I find myself questioning, Where is God? I turn on the news and am bombarded with sadness and devastation. Personally, there are areas that I am asking God to move on my behalf or for those around me, and I am still waiting. It is easy to be overcome with the questions, Will God actually show up this time, and what if He doesn't? That can manifest in different ways: sadness, grief, anger, and, for sure, grumbling.

In little and in much, the invitation is to trust God and His timing.

The same God that sustained His people with just enough food for that day, no more, no less. The same God that brought His people out of Egypt 430 years to the day (Ex. 12:40). His timing is perfect, and His care is unmatched.

It is no accident that God had Moses use wood to strike the rock and from that, the water flowed. 1 Corinthians 10:4 says that rock was Christ. It is from Christ that our sustenance comes: in Him we live and move and breathe.

When we find ourselves starting to doubt God's goodness, care, and provision in our lives, we can be tempted to echo the Israelites as we ask, "Is the Lord among us?" (Ex. 17:7) Instead, we can remind ourselves of His character and nature revealed in scripture time and time again. Then, we can look back and remember all the ways He has provided before. Grumbling is really a lack of trust, so we are invited to take heart and have faith in our ever-faithful God. He miraculously provided for the Israelites then, giving an example for us today, because freedom was always God's plan.



WEEK FIVE: DAY TWO NEW TESTAMENT

Double-minded Doubt

By Mary Kinnison

Read Matthew 14:22-33

Approximately three months after leaving Egypt, the Israelites arrived at the foot of Mt. Sinai. God called Moses to the top of the mountain where He relayed the Ten Commandments as well as multiple statutes designed to set Israel apart from the surrounding nations. In the middle of giving these new societal laws and religious practices, God explained the conditions of His covenant to the Israelites:

"I will make all your enemies turn and run. Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land. I will establish your borders. Do not make a covenant with them or with their gods. Do not let them live in your land or they will cause you to sin against me, because the worship of their gods will certainly be a snare to you." Exodus 23:27; 30–3 (NIV)

God promised to drive Israel's enemies from the land of Canaan only if Israel kept themselves separate from the vile practices of the land. Immediately after the covenant was sealed, God provided instructions for a formal system of sacrifice and worship. He knew the Israelites would not remain devoted to His

prescribed path of freedom, yet He did not forsake them.

Fast forward to the New Testament. By the time Jesus came on the scene, the Israelites long ago had inhabited their Promised Land. However, their history was filled with disobedience and rebellion. More than 1,300 years had passed, and God's people still doubted the benefit of living in single-minded devotion to their Deliverer.

The nation of Israel was double-minded, but God wasn't. He sent Jesus, the promised Messiah, into the world to reveal that freedom was always God's plan.

Scripture reveals:

"When the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but God's child, and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir." Galatians 4:4-7 (NIV)

In today's culture, doubt is often associated with a skeptical mindset that wrestles with God's existence. According to this definition, doubt is the opposite of faith. However, the word doubt derives from the word "duo" and carries the connotation of having two minds. In this sense, doubt involves a division of allegiance and exists within the context of faith, not in the absence of it.

James expands on this linguistic connection when he says that the man who doubts is "double-minded, unstable in all his ways" (James 1:6-8). Double mindedness caused Israel's faith to destabilize. The Israelites constantly questioned if God's future promise was worth the present struggles.

In Matthew 14:28-33, we read about Peter's experience with doubt. One minute he was walking on the sea, experiencing the fullness of God's power, and the next minute he was sinking into the water. Jesus's words to Peter were, "You of little faith. Why did you doubt?" Jesus didn't accuse Peter of having no faith. Instead, He challenged Peter's mindset in the midst of a faith crisis. Peter was distracted by the wind, and his mind was destabilized by fear rather than awed by a miracle.

We are made up of both flesh and spirit, so our default mode is double-mindedness. Therefore, it is wise to condition our spiritual reflexes before we find ourselves in a faith crisis like Peter or in destructive generational patterns like the Israelites. The Apostle Paul said, "Do not be conformed to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Rom. 12:2, NIV) We renew our minds by studying God's Word and engaging in spiritual practices like worship, prayer, fasting, and fellowship. When we seek to be in proximity to Jesus, He is faithful to deliver us from all bondage because freedom was always God's plan.



WEEK FIVE: DAY THREE TESTIMONY

"God, where are you?"

By Emily Lanphier

If I had to name the situations I would have done anything to avoid, losing both of my parents at once in a sudden car accident would undoubtedly rank among the top three. Other extenuating circumstances such as being five months pregnant with my third child and my husband starting a new business compounded my stress. But somehow, that is the exact nightmare I found myself living in August of 2015. Grief, doubt, and fear felt suffocating. Could I live the abundant life that Jesus talked about while my new day-to-day life felt the exact opposite? Could God's grace and goodness reach me in such a deep pit of heartache? It seemed I was going to find out.

The days following Mom and Dad's death were a blur of tears and adrenaline. The true challenge was the weeks, months, and even years after that seemed to trickle by when everyone else went back to their normal life, but my normal was gone forever. Loss is like losing an appendage, and I felt I couldn't function with such a gaping absence. I was mothering with two young kids, pregnant, and desperate. God, where are you? My heart would cry out. How do I survive this?

As the shock of my sudden tragedy wore off, I realized I was going to have to make some core decisions about life moving forward. I could let myself drown in an ocean of grief, still surviving on the outside but perpetually sad and bitter about the future I had envisioned, or I could bring my shattered heart to Jesus and trust him day by day, moment by moment to bring beauty out of ashes. As a girl, I had surrendered completely to Jesus. I had given him full control of my life. But did I actually mean it? Could I trust Him when the worst had happened?

I remember the exact moment when I chose to trust His plan and this circumstance He had allowed in my life, over the alternative option of existentialism and despair. I wept and cried for the future I'd envisioned, but told Him He could use my story and heart in any way He saw fit. I gave God the pieces of my life and the parts of my story I hadn't chosen, and I clung. I took Him at His word that He could resurrect, redeem, and heal anything. Romans 8:28 tells us, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

As I daily spent time in His word and rooted myself in gratitude and praise, His miraculous love slowly, but ever so surely swallowed up my darkness.

My pain didn't miraculously disappear, but it slowly ceased to be debilitating. God has been faithful to bring redemption and life from death. Sharing my story of His faithfulness has brought not only healing to my own heart, but also been a source of encouragement to others who are experiencing loss. If He can do it in my story, He can do it in yours because freedom was always God's plan.

WEEKLY QUESTIONS

- 1. Are there any situations in your life you are struggling to believe that God will provide a way through or is He providing but not in the way you hoped He would?
- 2. What desires or cultural temptations have distracted you from single-mindedly pursuing Jesus?
- 3. Write down some characteristics of God to help remind yourself of who He is, no matter what your life's circumstances look like.
- 4. Are God's future promises worth the present struggles that come with choosing His path?

PRAYER

Father, I come to You today asking You to help me believe in the places I'm having doubt. I ask for forgiveness for the times I have complained and doubted. I don't want to be like the Israelites, who complained about their difficulties and failed to see where You had provided for them. When I'm tempted to complain or become fearful, I want to run to You in prayer and worship. Lord, you have never forsaken me, and I know You never will. I choose to trust You today no matter my circumstances. I choose to let Your goodness and love follow me for all my days. In Jesus name, amen.

WEEK SIX: DAY ONE OLD TESTAMENT

We Don't Earn Deliverance

By Bethany Loux Fatahian

Read Exodus 20:1-17, Exodus 34:5-7

We take up our story with this newly redeemed people, the Israelites, as they continue their journey in the wilderness. Fresh out of the bondage of Egypt, slavery is all they have known. Now they find themselves trying to live in this new freedom, all while navigating living on the move with an estimated 2-3 million others. So God gives Moses the Ten Commandments (as well as 613 other laws) to direct this new way of living. The first three commandments emphasized being in right relationship with God. Every other nation in the world had many gods; one for crops, one for fertility, one to protect in war, etc. Israel needed to trust in God for all areas of life and not try to add "insurance policies" of other gods for provision.

The next commandment said to remember the Sabbath and shared how to have right relationship with the worship of God. Trust God with one day a week as an act of obedience and worship to Him. And from these first commandments, the last few commandments flowed, showing them how to have right relationships with one another. With that many people together in the desert, they needed some guidelines on how to treat one another as fellow image-bearers of God. Pop quiz: Did Israel get these

laws before or after their deliverance? The answer is important and has huge implications for us today.

After! They didn't use the law to earn deliverance. It was only after the grace God showed in delivering and redeeming His people that the law was given. This new law was given to a redeemed people to reveal the character of God and show them a new way of life without creating a merit system to gain all the goodness of God. Another purpose of these commandments was to remind the Israelites of their stubborn tendencies and moral distance from God, while also showing the need for a mediator (ultimately that would be Jesus).

So let's continue the story a bit. Moses is up receiving these laws from God, meanwhile, the Israelites are down below, literally breaking the first few commandments by adding a new god into their mix and making an idol of it out of gold. Moses comes down and sees this and goes berserk. He throws the tablets and breaks them, takes the golden calf and burns it down into a powder, and if that isn't enough, he scatters the powder on the water and makes people drink it. That is one powerful way to teach a lesson.

So back up the mountain Moses goes, chiseling out two new tablets, and getting to literally experience the glory of God. The golden calf incident just happened and yet when God comes down in a cloud to Moses and passes in front of him, he introduces Himself. He says his name, Yahweh, and then starts into, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to the thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation (Ex. 34:6)." Let's look a bit more closely at these adjectives and characteristics of God...

COMPASSIONATE: womb-like, deep-seated feelings similar to a mother and her child.

GRACIOUS GOD: unmerited favor on those who have no claim whatsoever on it.

SLOW TO ANGER: an idiom that means lengthened nostrils. Imagine God taking a slow, deep breath in response to human sin and destruction.

ABOUNDING IN LOVE: unrelenting or pursuing. This tenacious, loyal, bonded love.

AND FAITHFULNESS: completely reliable and trustworthy.

MAINTAINING LOVE TO THOUSANDS: his love lasts forever.

DOES NOT LEAVE THE GUILTY UNPUNISHED: forgiveness doesn't eliminate the consequences of our sin.

PUNISHES CHILDREN TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH: the natural consequences of sin from generation to generation.

This verse is a theological center for us as God introduces Himself. When we see laws that seem strange or confining, verses that confuse, or stories that confound, this is the verse to come back to. God is compassionate and abounds in love. When we see injustice, we remember that God does deal with it but in His timing.

Following the God that maintains His love for thousands of generations, is faithful like no other, and shows grace upon grace is a joy!

We too are a redeemed people, empowered to live the laws of God and fulfilled in Christ Jesus.

God, full of compassion and love, wants us to truly know Him as He knows us. The Law is a promise — a covenant between God and His People. It is a covenant that frees us from the brokenness of this world because freedom was always God's plan.

WEEK SIX: DAY TWO NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus Fulfills The Law

By Emily Wagoner

Read Matthew 5:17-18

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."

In Jesus's day, the "teachers of the law" were the foundation of the rabbinical system. Hebrew boys would spend years studying and memorizing the law and the prophets. Those who did exceptionally well would be asked by a rabbi to follow in his ways. Every rabbi had done the work to form his own interpretations, philosophies, and ways of moving through life according to Torah (the writings of Moses and the Law). His followers would grow to become rabbis themselves, and the cycle continued. Jesus was not the first rabbi to formulate an interpretation of Torah and teach others in His ways, but He definitely had remarkable authority through the Spirit of God (Matthew 7:28). When Jesus spoke, people listened because there was something not entirely quantifiable about the way Jesus lived the Law that both attracted and repelled the people around Him.

One of the most controversial things Jesus ever preached (and the thing that got Him killed) was that God was His father, and He lived and worked according to what he saw the Father doing (John 5:16-19). He taught Torah the way it was meant to be taught, and, more importantly, He lived His life in perfect accordance with His own teaching. This baffled and infuriated the Pharisees and other teachers of the Law. In retrospect, it is clear to us that this was God's plan all along – to send His Son for the deliverance of mankind back to Himself. The Father revealed Himself through the law, and, over a thousand years after Moses died, He revealed Himself again through the person of Jesus and His correct interpretation of that law.

Jesus said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." (Matt 5:17) We can understand what Jesus meant by "fulfill the prophets." He came to do as was foretold. But how does Jesus fulfill the Law?

Here in the West, we often think in terms of guilt and innocence. That's how our gospel is often preached – "You have been found guilty, but Jesus took the penalty for your guilt, and now you are innocent."

This is absolutely biblical, but it's not the full picture. "Fulfillment of the Law" may come across to us in legal terms – the law had a requirement (death) that Jesus fulfilled. But what if the Hebrew audience heard it differently? What if they heard "fulfillment" in covenant language?

If Torah is a covenant given by God to reveal His character to His people, then Jesus is the fulfillment of that covenant. He becomes the ultimate revelation of God's character. If we think only in legal terms, then the "fulfillment of the Law" would mean that Jesus's death rendered the Law null and void. In fact, that's how many Christians today live their lives: "under grace," able to ignore large swaths of scripture because we exist on this side of the cross. But if Jesus came to fulfill the covenant, revealing God's character because His laws are good and right, then we are left with the command to "follow Jesus" and all His ways. We are motivated by love because God is motivated by love.

We are children of God not because He is some legalistic monster, but because He has promised us Himself.

Jesus said, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather it is the Father, living in me, who is doing His work." (John 14:9-10) This is incredible news! What other God would reveal Himself in such a way?

God made a covenant with Israel, knowing they could never hold up their end of the promise. Jesus offers us a new covenant in Himself, knowing that He has fulfilled it. The gospel is a love story, through and through. Jesus didn't come to enslave us but to free us by fulfilling the Law because freedom was always God's plan.



WEEK SIX: DAY THREE TESTIMONY

Freedom from The Law

By Derrick Shire

I grew up with three brothers and a sister. I also grew up going to a Lutheran church and school until sixth grade. This means I grew up with a lot about the rules at home and a strong teaching of the laws given in the Bible. When you grow up in a house with four boys, rules were definitely needed and without them it would have been absolute chaos. If I'm honest, it was still chaotic, and I'm not sure how my mom put up with us.

At church/school, I was not only told the Law, I had to memorize it. I remember memorizing the Ten Commandments at school, and at home I had watched the Charlton Heston The Ten Commandments movie at least half a dozen times. When you grew up seeing God as a God of judgment and plagues, you form expectations of how you are expected to act and the punishments that you expect to receive. Rules and laws became the lens that I viewed my relationship with God through. I was following the rules at home to please my parents and the biblical laws to please God. This way of viewing God never allowed me to form a relationship with Him because I was so worried about being perfect and not disappointing Him. Rules were definitely needed in my house, and the Israelites needed the Law as well. The problem was my life revolved solely around following the rules and never knowing the heart of the person who set them.

Thankfully for me, my best friend growing up brought me with him to a different church where the main focus wasn't on the law but the law-giver. The more I moved from knowing about God to knowing God, the more the old lens I used to view the world through began to shatter. I used to judge others for their ability to follow the same rules I could never completely follow.

Now, I see God as the great grace-giver whenever I read the Bible and no longer as the strict enforcer.

The focus is no longer on the flawed characters in the Bible but on the infinite love of God for His people. When this became my focus, I started to love others the way God loves as well. Now when I read the Ten Commandments, I see God's heart behind the laws for His people. I understand exactly why

God describes Himself as compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love, and faithful. When we form a relationship with God as the life-giver, we find the freedom to live from His heart for our lives because freedom was always God's plan.	

WEEKLY QUESTIONS

- 1. What did you know about God growing up? Did you know Him for His love or for His rules?
- 2. Who has helped shape how you view God and how did your views change?
- 3. Where in life have you experienced the compassion and mercy of God?

PRAYER

Father, there is no one greater than You. You are the God of compassion and mercy. You are slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. You love to lavish your unfailing love upon your children. You are gracious and forgiving. I pray that You would shape me into a person with the same qualities. Help me to be loving, compassionate, faithful, forgiving, and full of joy. Help me to see people how You see them. I pray that today, I can use the gifts that You've given me and be a blessing to someone else. In Jesus name, amen.

WEEK SEVEN: DAY ONE OLD TESTAMENT

From Captives to Covenant

By Mike Snow

Read Exodus 35:20-22, 40:34-38

Change is hard—especially when it happens within the heart. But for growth to take place, change is necessary. As the Israelites moved from slavery to freedom and grumbled through the process, we see again and again God's unwavering faithfulness. The story of Exodus isn't just a record of events—it's a journey of transformation.

The Israelites' hearts had been shaped by oppression. Slavery in Egypt was their norm. Deep down they groaned for something better, but fear and despair ruled their lives. Their identity was rooted in survival not freedom. Yet God saw them. "God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob." (Exodus 2:24)

God called Moses from a burning bush, lighting his heart on fire for his people. Though reluctant, Moses obeyed and returned to Egypt to deliver God's message. But things got worse. Pharaoh increased their labor, and the people, bitter and exhausted, blamed Moses: "You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh... And put a sword in their hand to kill us." (Exodus 5:21) Their hearts were still in chains—unable to trust.

Then came the plagues and the first Passover. God demonstrated His power, and the Israelites began to obey. They painted their doorposts with lamb's blood—and death passed over them. As Egypt mourned, Israel witnessed God's saving hand. While Pharaoh's heart hardened, God softened the hearts of His people from fear of man to faith in God.

But freedom brings new challenges. When Pharaoh's army pursued them to the Red Sea, panic returned, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die?" (Exodus 14:11) Yet Moses called them to faith, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today." (Exodus 14:13) The sea parted, and Israel walked through on dry ground. The waters then swallowed their enemies. In that moment, "the people feared the Lord and put their trust in Him and in Moses." (Exodus 14:31)

Transformation, however, is rarely linear. Days later, hunger and thirst led to more grumbling. God, full of patience, provided manna from heaven and water from rocks. The wilderness became a classroom of trust. Slowly, daily, their hearts began to shift from complaint to dependence.

At Mount Sinai, God called them into something deeper. "If you obey me fully... you will be my treasured possession... a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:5–6) The people responded but with fear. They stood at a distance, trembling at God's holiness. Their hearts were opening but still afraid of His closeness.

Then came their greatest failure: the golden calf. While Moses was on the mountain, the Israelites turned to idolatry. Old habits returned—but this time, they grieved. "When the people heard these distressing words, they began to mourn..." (Exodus 33:4). Moses interceded, and "the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in love and rich in mercy" relented and renewed the covenant (Exodus 34:6).

Their transformation became reality when the people were invited to build the Tabernacle. No grumbling. No reluctance. Instead, "everyone whose heart was stirred... brought an offering to the Lord." (Exodus 35:21) They gave so generously that Moses had to ask them to stop (Exodus 36:6). From bitter to generous, fearful to faithful—their hearts were changing. Exodus ends with God's presence filling the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:34–38).

God not only brought His people out of Egypt, but He also brought Egypt out of His people.

The journey of the Israelites out of Egypt reminds us that real transformation takes time. It isn't just about letting go of something familiar but about being made new. God didn't just want to rescue them—He wanted to bring them into an abundant relationship with Him, and He still does because freedom was always God's plan.



WEEK SEVEN: DAY TWO NEW TESTAMENT

Free to Dwell

By Chris Williams

Read Acts 2:2-4

The tabernacle was the beginning of something special. God is a storyteller, and He is always telling the story of His love, grace, and mercy. Guiding us through history, His love yielded the freedom of Israel in Exodus. Then His love yielded greater freedom with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in Acts. What did He free us from? What has He freed us into? To tell this story, He uses the tabernacle, the temple, and you!

Tabernacle

The tabernacle was God's place of dwelling on earth after He called the Israelites out of Egypt. As they began the journey to the Promised Land, they would set up camp. In the middle of camp was the tabernacle. The place God would dwell. This was all His idea. Every detail accounted for. From how many cubits long and wide the Ark was to be, to how many lamps and bulbs fashioned the lamp stand, His house was His design. All God's people worshiped Him there. The dwelling place of the divine (Exodus 29:43-46).

God vowed to dwell with them so long as they kept His commands, abiding in Him. He even offered them warnings, lest He turn away from them (Leviticus 26:14-46).

Israel did not always continue in His commands and faced the discipline of defeat many times— even having the tabernacle looted and the Ark carried away. This was devastating! How could they find favor with no place to worship? There was no place for God to dwell with them, and sin abounded.

Temples

Enter David. As David established Jerusalem as his city, he built his own house there. Then God put it on David's heart to build a house for Him. He promised David that one of his seed would build it (2 Samuel 7).

His son Solomon, a man of great wisdom, took it upon himself to do as his father set out to do: establish a house for the Lord. Solomon was as wealthy as he was wise and used the finest elements on earth to get the job done. He employed over 30,000 men over the course of thirteen years to build the temple, God's house. But Psalm 127 (written by Solomon) reminds us unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain.

God's people would fall into sin again. The temple would be destroyed, rebuilt, and destroyed again. As the Israelites moved from tabernacle to temples, they longed for something greater. The soul is not built to be bound to places of worship that could be carried away, robbed, or occupied by enemies (Psalm 23). Many hoped in the promised Messiah (the seed of David) to protect the dwelling place forever. For the faithful, this hope was the deposit of greater freedom to come.

Indwelling

Enter Jesus. The seed. He reminded the Israelites of the futility of dwelling places made with human hands. As they marveled at the temple, He foretold the temple's destruction. He proclaimed He was going to build another that could never be destroyed (John 2:19-22). He told the woman at the well she would soon worship in spirit, not in places (John 4:21-24). He promised His followers that He would send them a Helper to abide with them forever (John 14:16-17). Then the apostle Paul wondered if we knew our bodies were sanctuaries of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).

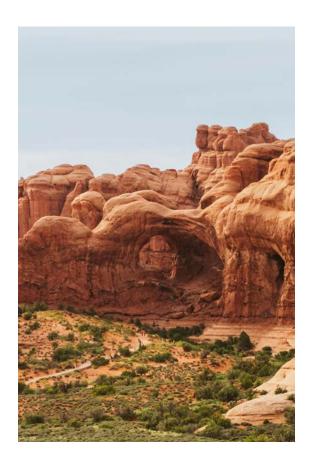
Jesus fulfilled the promise of the Helper in Acts 2. The apostles were filled with the Spirit while praying. Fire rested on them and they began speaking in many tongues. Those outside within earshot mocked them saying, "they are full of new wine." Indeed they were. Filled with new wine as new skins (Matthew 9:17, John 3:3-7). New, living tabernacles of God. A dwelling place of the Lord forever and ever.

In this, those of us who believe are freed from worldly

masters, structures, and idols— even freed from ourselves.

We are freed into true, spiritual communion with the one true God.

To work and create and love with us. For the faithful, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the deposit of greater freedom to come. It is what He desired before we desired Him, because freedom was always God's plan.



WEEK SEVEN: DAY THREE TESTIMONY

Joy Unspeakable In the Presence of God

By Dave Collins

In the mid-to-late 1990's, there was a wonderful, and, quite frankly, amazing outpouring of God's Spirit at Brownsville Assemblies of God Church in Pensacola, Florida. Beginning on Father's Day 1995 and continuing for five years, the "Brownsville Revival" saw tens of thousands of people repent, give their lives to Christ, and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Untold thousands came from all over the world to experience the manifest presence of God. Lines formed early in the morning for services each evening. Every available meeting space, within the building, was converted to accommodate the crowds (youth chapel, cafeteria, choir room, fellowship hall, etc.).

In 1997, Pastor Les led the first contingent of Lifegate pastors and elders (and wives) to Pensacola. My wife, Cheryl, and I were among those first to go, and, like the others, we had no idea what we were about to experience!

Having waited in line for nearly twelve hours, our group was fortunate to be seated in the balcony of the main sanctuary. There was much hustle and bustle, and a tangible sense of excitement and anticipation as people continued to be seated. At

one point, the worship team entered, getting ready for the service to begin. In what would seemingly appear to be a simple nondescript act, the drummer hit his bass drum, and it happened: the glory of the Lord fell upon the room.

In the very same way that the priests could not continue to minister once God's glory fell in the temple (2 Chronicles 5:14), we could not even sit in our pews.

We got on our faces, underneath the pews, and stayed there until the "weight" lifted and we were finally able to get up again. The service hadn't even begun, and we already experienced the profound wonder of God's manifest presence.

Later, during the service, Les and I went out "to use the facilities", and it was their in the hallway, just outside the men's restroom, that we both fell down, laughing like hyenas, completely overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit. People respond to the presence of the Lord in many ways: some weep, some are "slain in the Spirit", as wave after wave of God's love flows over them. Others experience a deep peace and serenity that transcends all the cares of this world. These responses were happening all over the church, except for Les and me. Every time we tried to stand up, we would fall over and laugh even harder. People had to step over us in order to enter the restroom. While our stomach muscles were cramping, we begged God to let us go while, at the same time, we were experiencing indescribable joy. Our time on the floor continued for at least fifteen minutes!

I will always remember, and be grateful for God's impartation of joy (and the gift of laughter) that night in Florida! Being in the manifest presence of God changed all of our lives, reminding us that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is incredible freedom; and freedom was always God's plan.

WEEKLY QUESTIONS

- 1. Describe your first experience with the Holy Spirit? How did you feel before and after?
- 2. How are you partnering with the Holy Spirit in your everyday life?

PRAYER

Father, there is no greater joy than being in Your presence. I pray today, Holy Spirit, that You would come and fill me from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet. Will You guide my day and direct my steps? Show me if I should go to the right or to the left. As I spend time with You, teach me more about You, how You work and how You move, so that I can walk onward in Your truth until everything within me brings honor to Your name. In Jesus name, amen.

WEEK EIGHT: DAY ONE OLD TESTAMENT

Stepping Into God's Promises

By Emily Wagoner

Read Joshua 4:20-24

"And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan. He said to the Israelites, "In the future, when your descendants ask their parents, 'What do these stones mean?' tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.' For the Lord your God. did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God."

Can you imagine the anticipation? After centuries of slavery, decades of wandering, the revelation of their true and living God, and the death of their beloved deliverer, the time had finally come. God made good on His promises, barricading the waters of the Jordan River in another show of astounding power. In that crossing, God told Joshua to have one man from each of the twelve tribes pick up a stone and carry it to the other side. Why?

All of us have lived through unprecedented times. From 9/11 to a global pandemic, we have all been

marked by events that will be studied by future generations. We can scarcely fathom the long-term implications of our daily reality as it plays out. Only in retrospect do we see the bigger picture — the way certain historic events shaped society, economy, government, and humanity.

God knows we are limited by time and space. In His eternal perspective, He shows us how to mark significant moments that reveal His character for future generations. God brings order out of chaos—even the chaos of our human nature— and He is a poet. There is so much beauty in the bookends of Israel's exodus. What started with the parting of the Red Sea in a brilliant display of God's compassion and justice now ends with the parting of the Jordan in a show of unyielding faithfulness and love.

It's hard to imagine the impact of twelve stones at a campsite. Often we picture small-ish stones the size of a deflated volleyball. We might assume they were stacked one on top of the other. In fact, these stones, gathered from the bed of the Jordan River, would have been as big as the strongest man from each tribe could carry. Archaeological evidence from the 6th century suggests they were arranged in two rows of six, standing upright on their ends an obvious man-made structure as opposed to a geological phenomenon.

In Deuteronomy 27:1-5, God said to Moses and the elders

"When you have crossed the Jordan into the land the Lord your God is giving you, set up some large stones and coat them with plaster. Write on them all the words of this law. Build there an altar to the Lord your God, an altar of stones. Do not use any iron tool on them."

Moses didn't live to see the Land of the Promise, but his successor, Joshua, obeyed the instructions God gave him and Moses before him — first as a precursor in Gilgal (on the far side of the Jordan), and finally at Mount Ebal (Joshua 8:30-32).

We live in a world of unlimited news access and a staggering online historical archive, and yet monuments of stone still capture our attention. In a society built around oral history, visual landmarks were vital pieces of evidence attesting to the character of God — a God who fulfills His promises.

When we are waiting on God to fulfill His promises, what can we remind ourselves about who He is and what He's already done? Why is it so difficult for us to remember? We, with our time-limited short-sightedness, allow things to pass too quickly into myth. God didn't ask Joshua to build a monument to sate His divine ego. He wanted the children of Israel's sojourners to know Him the way Moses knew Him — face to face and heart to heart. Monuments like these are a sacred agreement between God and His people, a reminder that He is the God who keeps His covenant promises.

We need to mark these types of moments in our lives, so that when discouragement creeps in, we can point to them and say, "The hand of the Lord is powerful."

The truth is, we are His chosen people, grafted into the promise by the invitation of Jesus, and we will see His Kingdom come because freedom was always God's plan.



WEEK EIGHT: DAY TWO NEW TESTAMENT

Longing with Hope

By Shireen Eldridge

Have you ever hoped for something so intensely that your body physically reacts? Maybe it's the ache for healing that hasn't come, the grief of a dream that's died, or the slow, steady weariness that suffering brings. This is what Paul describes in Romans 8. A groaning that comes from a deep-rooted desire or hope for something more, something better.

The Israelites understood this longing. After centuries of slavery in Egypt, God delivered them in a dramatic exodus. He promised them a land flowing with milk and honey—a place of rest, belonging, and abundance. But what should have been a short journey stretched into forty long years of wilderness wandering. The Promised Land was real. It existed. But many of them never saw it with their own eyes. For them, the pain felt more real than the promise.

In Hebrews 11, we're told that the heroes of the faith—Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob—"all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar." They understood that the deepest promises of God were not ultimately about land, success, or even long life. They were "strangers and exiles on the earth," longing for a better country—a heavenly one.

This also describes what early followers of Jesus felt and longed for. They had a taste of Jesus, the true good life, and they longed for it again. They knew it was coming. It was a promise. Jesus talked about it and the early church longed for it. Surrounded by a Roman culture riddled with corruption and suffering, followers of Jesus needed a hope that kept them going. It was this hope that caused them to live differently, holding their suffering as an offering to God, knowing their reward was coming. Maybe not in this life, but for sure in the next.

This longing lives in us, too.

In Romans 8, Paul doesn't minimize suffering; he simply magnifies what's coming. He describes all of creation groaning as in the pains of childbirth as we wait eagerly for our full redemption.

This image of groaning is not passive; it's full of longing and movement. Like a woman in labor who endures pain with hope because she knows what's coming, we, too, hold onto hope as we suffer. We groan because we know this isn't the end of the story.

Sometimes we treat heaven like a vague, spiritual idea. A far-off place we talk about at funerals but don't often think about day to day. But scripture gives us a stunningly physical and personal picture of eternity with God.

Revelation 21 brings us to the edge of the promise: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them... He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain.'" This isn't abstract comfort. This is personal and intimate restoration. This is our home.

And then Revelation 22 paints the final scene—a garden-city with the river of life flowing from the throne of God. The tree of life, once guarded after Eden, now accessible and abundant, bearing fruit and healing the nations. The curse is gone. We will see God's face. And we will reign with Him forever.

This is the Promised Land our souls are truly longing for.

Just like the Israelites, we're somewhere between the rescue and the rest.

We've been freed from sin by the blood of Jesus, but we're not home yet. The wilderness of this world is real—there are battles, losses, and dry places—but the promise of God is surer than our circumstances.

We don't minimize the suffering we face. Cancer

diagnoses, chronic pain, mental illness, broken families, injustice, and disappointment—all of it is real. But in Christ, it's all temporary. Our groaning has a direction. Our pain has a purpose. And our hope is not wishful thinking—it is rooted in the resurrection of Jesus and the promise of eternity with Him.

So we keep walking. We keep going, not because the road is easy, but because the destination is sure.

We live this life differently because we are sure of this hope of glory. We remain tethered to the Vine, sharing the forgiveness and love we have received with others and showing the world that there is hope beyond this life, a hope that is more real and will never fade.

And when we pass into our Promise, we'll know it instantly. Not because it looks like anything we've seen, but because we'll finally be home with the One we were made for.

Until then, we wait in hope. We groan, we suffer, we trust—and we keep moving forward.

Because we're not home yet.

But we will be soon because freedom was always God's plan.

WEEK EIGHT: DAY THREE TESTIMONY

Carrying the Promise

By Haroon Idrees

We all carry promises—ones we've made and ones made to us. Some promises bring us comfort. Others give us something to look forward to. But the most powerful promises are the ones that carry us through the darkest valleys.

There are many kinds of promises in this life promises of love, success, healing, even justice. But one question remains for every soul: What promise are we clinging to for eternity? Do we walk in hope, confident in the promise of eternal life with God and reunion with those we love? Or do we quietly fear what lies beyond this life?

During the height of the global pandemic, I had an experience that reminded me how real and close eternity is. One evening, after grilling dinner, I unknowingly swallowed a thin metal bristle from a grill brush. At first, it felt like a minor irritation in my throat, but as time passed, the discomfort grew worse. We tried a few home remedies, hoping it would resolve on its own, but nothing helped. After much discussion and several failed attempts, Carla examined my throat and spotted what looked like a thin, hair-like object lodged deep inside. We began to suspect it was a wire from the grill brush.

At that point, we knew we had to go to the ER—but we did so with heavy hearts. The closest hospital

was the most practical choice, but it was also the same ER where our daughter had passed away. After enduring 7½ years filled with hospital visits, procedures, and painful goodbyes, that place held deep emotional weight for us. It was the last place we wanted to be. But with the situation worsening, we realized we had no other option.

At the ER, doctors initially couldn't locate the wire and sent us home. But when the pain persisted, we returned, and this time, they decided to put me under anesthesia to take a deeper look.

What happened next was no medical procedure. As I drifted off in that hospital bed, I opened my eyes in a place unlike any I'd seen before. I stood in a breathtaking field filled with yellow flowers, radiating warmth and peace. Then, in the distance, I saw a young girl walking toward me—her curly hair bouncing, dressed in a white and green floral dress, holding the finger of a man robed in white.

It was our daughter, Arayshel—the one we lost on September 3, 2019. She smiled with a joy I can't put into words. The man gently urged her toward me, and she ran into my arms. We didn't need to speak. The embrace said everything. Then she looked up at me and said, "Let's go deliver baskets of food." Suddenly, our entire family was with us, placing

baskets of food in every driveway along the street. When it was time to go, I hugged her once more. "It was so good to see you," I said. "I have to go back to Mom and Hadassah. But we'll see you again." I awoke to Carla beside me, asking who I'd been talking to. And I couldn't stop sharing what I'd just seen. That moment, that glimpse of eternity, reminded me of the greatest promise ever made: This life is not the end. God has made a way for us to be with Him forever. Through Jesus, we are offered forgiveness, healing, and an eternal home.

What promise are you living for? The promise of eternity is not just a comfort—it's an anchor.

It shapes how we love, how we grieve, how we serve, and how we hope. And when we live in that promise, we walk in true freedom. Because freedom was always God's plan.

WEEKLY QUESTIONS

- 1. How does the promise of eternity with God shift your perspective on present suffering?
- 2. Where have you seen a promise from the Lord fulfilled in your life? Where do you find yourself still waiting on a promise from the Lord?
- 3. How have those moments shaped your relationship with Him? What have you learned about yourself in the waiting for and in the fulfillment of promises?

PRAYER

Father, I don't want to become discouraged and quit because my wants, needs, and expectations aren't met as quickly as I prefer. Instead, I want to choose to keep my eyes focused on Your promises. You promise to love me unconditionally, and give me hope and a future and to one day join You in Heaven. I realize I will never be fully satisfied until Your Kingdom fully reigns on Earth. I thank You, Jesus, for all that You've done in my life and for all that You promise to do. In Jesus name, amen.

