

Series: **Exodus: Seeing God in the Journey**
Title: **Differences Make the Difference**
Text: **Exodus 11:1-32**

Story – road stop café – patron tells you of a beautiful site

“Great place to see ...just a drive away. You have to see his place!”

- Drive along the road....the journey was taking longer than I thought.
- Pot holes in the roads and the suspension was really getting worked.
- Cars alongside the road,
 - Broken down from the condition of the road, the heat, and many had run out of gas.
 - Even on the other side, cars were on the side of the road.
 - My own car was running out of gas and I could see no stop ahead and no signs that stated there was gas ahead.
- Then you come to a backup. Cars are backed up for a mile or two.
 - Cars are now coming from the opposite way. Having turned around.
 - You get out of your car along with others and you try and see what the holdup is.
- You wave someone down and ask what is going on.
 - They say that the road is out and there is a canyon that is uncrossable because there is no bridge.
- By some miracle you turn around and make your way back to the café.
 - You ask the guy why he sent you down that road.
 - He says, “That road?! No! You can’t take that road. That’s a dead end.”
 - You have to take this other road it has a bridge and a new paved road. You would get there in twenty minutes.
 - I say to the man, “Why didn’t you tell me about the road?”
 - “I did not think to tell you about the road.”
 - “I am a positive guy... only talk about positive things.”
- That is some very important information to be left out.

In today’s world, the church and the world look very much alike.

- The teaching of the church is to embrace the emotional and relational needs of the people and call for all churches to embrace everyone.
- The failing church has lost the millennials, who have first gone off to college and have not returned when they married and had children.
 - They are 40 now and they have kids and some have grandkids.
 - They have not raised their children in the ways of the Lord.
 - Their children and the “alpha” generation are the most godless and immoral generation in American history.
 - Church growth books are being written are trying to find ways to reach out this generation and the answers they are giving are threefold:
 - Embrace the LGTBQ.
 - Embrace the freedom of choice.
 - Do not talk about sin.
 - Speak the good stuff...all the love of God, all the grace of God, the riches and blessings of God...
 - But do not tell the other side of the story.
 - Abandon the Book.

In chapter 11 of Exodus we see God instructing Moses to speak to the people for them to be prepared for the final plague that would come and for them to be ready to leave at a moment's notice.

Exodus 11:7b

...‘the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.’

We have forgotten that “The Lord has put a difference”

Let’s identify this – DIFFERENCE

Difference One: Favored or Not Favored

Exodus 11:3

And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians.

- Moses instructs the people of what God is going to do
 - Bring one more plague
 - Long before this, God told Moses that He would plague Egypt with the death of the firstborn (Exodus 4:21-23). After this final plague, Pharaoh wouldn't merely allow Israel to leave; he would **compel** them to go.
 - Go to the people of Egypt and ask for silver and gold – they will give it.
 - They do so and are given riches – **God had given them favor.**
 - **They had his favor in all the other plagues as well.**
 - When Egypt experienced the plagues – Israel was spared
- God wants you and I to experience HIS favor as well

Psalm 90:17

Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!

Psalm 5:12

For you bless the righteous, O Lord; you cover him with favor as with a shield.

Luke 2:14 NIV

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

All of the people, including Egyptians saw Moses as very great.

- Moses instructs Pharaoh that the firstborn of all the land would die. – Pharaoh, slaves, cattle
 - They will die.
 - There will be a great cry.
 - But the word would not be spoken evil about Israel.
 - No dog will growl against them.
 - The Egyptians will see that it was their own fault.

- All would bow down and say – “Get out!”
- And then they would be able to leave.

At this point in our text

- Israel has been for 430 years in Egypt, much of the time held in slavery.
- God has heard and responded to the cry of his children and raised up Moses to go to Pharaoh with a very simple message, so simple that Pharaoh **COULD NOT MISINTERPRET ITS MEANING** –
- **LET MY PEOPLE GO!**
 - Pharaoh hardened his heart over and over.
 - **The land lay in ruins after 9 massive plagues** devastated everything and everyone except for the land of Goshen, where Israel was.
 - Still Pharaoh hardened his heart.

Difference Two: A soft heart or a hard heart

Exodus 11:10

Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land.

Exodus 12:27b

And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

- The thought of God our Creator should melt our hearts
 - But for some the devil has his way and they view God differently
 - They actually allow their heart to be hardened at the same
- Ever talk to someone about the Lord and they are ready to Cuss you Out?
 - Ever talk to someone about the Lord and they tell you don't bring that Mess to them?
 - Their heart has been hardened
- Imagine a Frozen River with Clay Banks
 - The same sun that melts the ice also hardens the clay
 - Because there is a “Difference”

The people listened and obeyed
Pharaoh did not

Psalms 51:10

Create in me a clean heart O Lord...
His laws are written on our hearts

Ezekiel 36:26

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

Jeremiah 24:7

I will give them a heart to know that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.

Philippians 4:7

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Difference Three: Death or Deliverance

ONE PLAGUE TO GO – a terrible plague, THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN.

Exodus 12:29

At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock.

- The number of verses given to this event are few.
- We seem to see the event as the major event in the text from chapters 1 – 20.
 - We see the trauma moments of our lives as pivotal – and they are
 - Yet how many chapters have been given to the command of God being avoided, refuted, rejected?
 - Do we listen to the warnings and see the signs?
 - Or do we continue to avoid them and when the hammer falls – then we cry fowl

Exodus 12: 23

For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you.

- God will show the plan of salvation in a beautiful picture painted in broad strokes of blood!
This was the Final Plague.
 - It was a spiritual illustration of the finality of death, if you've not been saved.

The New Testament says we are all under either the LOVE of God, or the WRATH of God, all are SAVED or LOST.

- There is no Gray area
- You are either Redeemed, or Doomed
- And all of us will one day face the final plague—death!

During this final plague the DEATH ANGEL would visit every household, from

- SMALLEST HUT TO GRANDEST OF PALACES
- POOREST OF THE POOR
- RICHEST OF THE RICH
- HIGHLY EDUCATED to UNEDUCATED.
- No one would escape this final plague.

HEBREWS 9:27

"...it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, "

None of us are getting out of this world alive. Despite all medical science has come up with, the DEATH RATE IS STILL ONE PER PERSON!

- Are you saved?

- You may have hardened your heart 9 times, but there's a final plague.
- A final test coming.
- This is where the Difference is really critical.

In this midst of this Final Plague – the Bible says that the “LORD PUT A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE EGYPTIANS AND THE ISRAELITES.”

What was the Difference? Protection

The death angel stopped at most of the homes, but not all - what made the difference?

Why were some spared? The difference was not that they were better

- Were they better people? -- No!
 - Israelites had some real issues along the way.
 - Crossed Red Sea and built gold calf
 - Sexual sins were now prevalent.
 - Ran out of food and water and cursed God.
 - It wasn't their morality that made the difference!
- You say, “I know, their priests did ceremonies and performed rituals!”
 - Empty, repetitive formalities bring nothing but drowsiness!

This is why we have so many problems in the Church today.

- We have a lot of SPIRITUAL DROWSINESS.
- We don't see a DIFFERENCE any more.
- God said He placed a difference between His children and those that are yet in the world.

We no longer know where the church ends and the world begins

- We no longer can tell a Gospel Song from a Rhythm and Blues Song.
- We no longer know where worship ends and entertainment begins.
- We no longer know the difference that exists between a saint and a sinner.
- We no longer know if the Pastor is a Preacher/Teacher or a Singer/Musician.
- We no longer know if Truth and God are all-powerful, or do we settle in court.
- We no longer know if pastors are to strive for holiness, or are they men and women just like everybody else.

No ritual - no morality could make the difference - only one thing could make the difference: THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB!

I don't know about you, but – I know it was the Blood!

In our text this was the “PASS OVER” it is where we understand the word PASSOVER.

- Here is the theme of the entire Bible:
- It is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world!

Why were some spared? The difference was in the blood

Remember with me how God told every family to take one lamb, sacrifice it, and apply its blood to the top of the doorpost and the sides - what were they forming? -- A CROSS!

At this point it was a lamb for each family –

Ex. 12:3

Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household.

LEVITICUS 16

God told the high priest to kill a lamb for the sins of the whole nation - this was done once a year for hundreds of years - A lamb for the whole land.

The Bible during Passover says that each man is to take a lamb for his own household.

- It couldn't be a bull or a dove, which were sometimes used in other Old Testament sacrifices
 - God was very particular
 - It was to be a lamb and only a lamb
 - Nothing else would do
- God was establishing the Difference

In the Old Testament, the DIFFERENCE was still a little cloudy.

- Oh, but we are able to see the difference in clear view in the New Testament.

John 1:29

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

All the other lambs were leading up to this - they were just pictures of the Difference – which would be found in the perfect Lamb to come.

- The Lamb to span all eternity
 - All four of the lambs identified in OT as required for sacrifice do have something in common:
 - All had to be spotless
- Can you see the Difference?

This final plague in Egypt as the Death Angel began to visit each house - We read there WAS A DEATH IN EVERY HOUSE. Listen, listen!

- If the death angel passed over and didn't take the firstborn, it was because there had ALREADY BEEN A DEATH THERE - death of the lamb!
- The blood of each sacrificed lamb had to be applied as directed!
- We see this same Difference in the New Testament –

Exodus 12:13

The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you.

Heb. 9:22

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

Lev. 17:11

For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.

Can't you imagine on Passover night, a little Jewish family in their Israeli slave hut, eating their roasted lamb and bitter herbs

- Their bags are packed
- Sandals are on their feet, they're ready to go
- One by one they can hear screams throughout the land of Egypt
- A painful sound

- Dad tries to explain what is happening to the firstborn
 - Little Jewish boy realizes he's the oldest and asks, "Daddy, am I gonna die tonight?"
 - "No son, you'll not die"

Tell your children the meaning of this for all generations

Exodus 12:26-27

"²⁶And when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' ²⁷you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.'"

- Why won't you die?

- Because (pointing at door) - the blood makes the difference!

RC Sproul – two books

- Yours, with sins
- Christ's – no sin

Difference Four: Consecrated or not?

Consecrated – set apart – to God

Set aside your work 12:16 – no work

Set aside your influences 12:19-20 – no leaven

Set aside your life – 12:48 –no foreigner or hired worker, only if sanctified by circumcision

Why?

Because there is a difference in those who are covered by the blood and those who are not

Is the door of your heart covered by the cross of Christ?

Are you living differently?