

Lenten Devotional 2020

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

Day 13, Exodus 13

You Were Bought With A Price

When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord killed the firstborn of both people and animals in Egypt. This is why I sacrifice to the Lord the first male offspring of every womb and redeem each of my firstborn sons. (Exodus 13:15)

I believe we often think about God in our terms, which does not reflect the biblical witness. One of the ways we do this is we think about God mainly as separate and distant from us. When we need help we call to him (like one might call for mighty mouse), he swoops in (ideally), fixes our problem, and then returns to his waiting position for the next emergency.

That is not what is happening in Exodus. Rather, God made for himself a people—Israel. Yes, he hears their cry and responds. But, there is no leaving again. Rather, he has claimed them as his people. That is what this event has been all about. We think with the terms: they were slaves, they are now free. But, Scripture reads: they were slaves to the Egyptians, now they are slaves to YHWH. This is why they must redeem all the firstborns. By consecrating a part to God the whole is consecrated to God.

This is an important distinction for Christians to know well. We often think that salvation by Christ means I am now free. And, in our culture, freedom is defined by doing whatever I want. This is not biblical. Rather, we have been rescued from slavery to Sin, in order to begin our slavery to God (as the apostle Paul says in Romans, these of course are human terms). The freedom given to us through Christ is freedom to obey God (finally!), not freedom to do anything we want.

God bought us, so God owns us. Contrary to the way the world thinks (all slavery is bad), to belong to God and obey God is to be truly free. We can finally be what we are meant to be. Of course, the old life, the old self continues to try to live according to the old slavery. This is also why we must consecrate ourselves to God. We need the ongoing memory that we no longer belong to the powers of Sin and Death and nor do we belong to ourselves.

Prayer

Our redeemer, thank you for purchasing us with the precious blood of Jesus and making us yours. Forgive us for the times when we want to belong to ourselves alone and for the times when we want to be back in bondage to Sin. Help us to continue to die to ourselves and the powers, so we can be consecrated to you. Amen.