

“Remember”
Exodus 12:1-14
Pollocksville Presbyterian Church
Sermon #69
14th Sunday After Pentecost
26th Sunday in the COVID-19 Pandemic
9.6.20

Exodus 12:1-14 CEB

12 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, **2** “This month will be the first month; it will be the first month of the year for you. **3** Tell the whole Israelite community: On the tenth day of this month they must take a lamb for each household, a lamb per house. **4** If a household is too small for a lamb, it should share one with a neighbor nearby. You should divide the lamb in proportion to the number of people who will be eating it. **5** Your lamb should be a flawless year-old male. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. **6** You should keep close watch over it until the fourteenth

day of this month. At twilight on that day, the whole assembled Israelite community should slaughter their lambs. **7** They should take some of the blood and smear it on the two doorposts and on the beam over the door of the houses in which they are eating. **8** That same night they should eat the meat roasted over the fire. They should eat it along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. **9** Don't eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over fire with its head, legs, and internal organs. **10** Don't let any of it remain until morning, and burn any of it left over in the morning. **11** This is how you should eat it. You should be dressed, with your sandals on your feet and your walking stick in your hand. You should eat the meal in a hurry. It is the Passover of the Lord. **12** I'll pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I'll strike down every oldest child in the land of Egypt, both humans and animals. I'll impose judgments on all the

gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. **13** The blood will be your sign on the houses where you live. Whenever I see the blood, I'll pass over you. No plague will destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

14 "This day will be a day of remembering for you. You will observe it as a festival to the Lord. You will observe it in every generation as a regulation for all time.

The Word of the LORD. **Thanks be to God!**

Let us pray: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O God, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Moses is back in Egypt. After his encounter with the LORD on Mt. Horeb at the burning bush, Moses has been commissioned to get the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt and into freedom in the Promised Land. The Promised Land flowing with milk and honey. One thing to note in this encounter at the burning bush is that God told Moses that Pharaoh would not let the people go so easily. In fact, it'll take dramatic displays of God's power to convince the king to allow the people to go.

Ten displays of power before today's scripture take place. Moses' staff turned to a snake, water turned to blood, frogs invaded the land, lice everywhere, insects covered everyone, animals died, blisters on every one of the Hebrews' adversaries, hail and thunder, locusts, and darkness.

Now, we are placed in the story after God had announced the final disaster of killing the firstborn in every household and animal that doesn't have the sign of blood smeared on their doorposts.

The LORD isn't giving the Hebrews much of a choice in how they can commemorate the first Passover. You heard the stipulations on what they were to prepare, how to prepare it, how to share it, how to consume it, and even what to wear. Plus, this takes about five days. From the picking out of the lamb to consuming it, this takes more time to do. This is not because the LORD is simply a control freak, but there is rhyme and reason to this. The Israelites need to be ready to flee Egypt at a moment's notice, hence the dress. There's no time to wait for the bread to rise because they

were enslaved. They are to eat bitter herbs to remind them of the bitterness of Pharaoh's cruelty. The sign for the LORD to pass over them will be the lamb's blood smeared on their doorposts. But, the most important thing for the Hebrews and for us to do is.....*remember* that the observance of the first Passover and thereafter is about remembrance.

This will be a day of remembering for you. You will observe it as a festival to the LORD. You will observe it in every generation as a regulation for all time.

Passover is the most important thing the Israelites can do because it is rooted in remembrance of God's mighty acts of deliverance that

is to be observed every year. The Hebrews are to remember where they came from. Remember that the Hebrews trace their lineage back to an elderly childless couple. Remember that they were immigrants in a foreign land. Remember that their ancestor, Joseph, helped save an entire civilization. Remember that the Hebrews were delivered by the hand of God from slavery and genocide into freedom and life. Remember that freedom and life take time, just like the process of finding the lamb to be slaughtered for Passover.

Remembrance is the point of Exodus. Shiphrah and Puah remembered who they were and whose they were. They were not Pharaoh's lieutenants, but servants of the LORD God. The two Hebrew midwives remembered their call to preserve life, to love the

LORD God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love their neighbors as themselves. Toward the end of Exodus chapter two, the cries of an oppressed people, God's chosen people, reached God's ears. And God remembered the covenant God had made all those years before with Sarah and Abraham and their descendants. The covenant would then continue on at this moment in Exodus 12 and beyond.

For our ancestors in exile in Babylon years after the first Passover, maybe we can imagine that this story is a bit of good news for them. Many people had forgotten their story. Maybe this moment from Exodus helps them to recover from their corporate amnesia. The prophets had begged them to turn from their ways, but they had forgotten they were God's chosen ones to be the envy of the

world. They had forgotten how to treat the immigrant among them when their own culture started as wandering nomads who eventually made their home in a foreign land and then were subjected to slavery. They had chased after other gods and were not faithful to the One who showed those same dramatic displays of power to Pharaoh and his subjects in Exodus chapters 7-12. The Israelites were drunk on power and had forgotten to seek the One who could quench their thirst.

But, it's not just our ancestors who had forgotten or were in danger of forgetting. We've done it and we're doing it right now. During the crises we are facing in our community, nation, and world, we are in danger of forgetting who and whose we are. We are in danger of thinking the more power we have, the safer we'll be. We

are in danger of thinking immigrants or refugees make us less safe when actually being immigrants and refugees is part of our ancestors' story AND the story of our Savior who, with Mary and Joseph, fled Herod and back to Egypt as refugees. We are in danger of losing our humanity when we erect barriers to keep "them" away from "us" when we all know too well we were once outsiders.

Remember. Remember that you were once slaves in Egypt.

Remember that you were wandering nomads in the desert.

Remember that you were once immigrants. Remember that you were once outsiders.

The Hebrews still have a ways to go until they reach the Land flowing with milk and honey. They'll have to be reminded in just a few chapters of where they came from even though many will want to go back. It's human nature. And I've said it before, but God will need to be reminded, too. This journey from captivity to freedom will take time and tempers will get hot.

May we remember, too, that the journey is a process. Times are tough right now. Despair and fear run amuck. Maybe our own tempers are running hot right now. But, praise God, because of the Promise made flesh in Christ Jesus, despair and fear have been defeated. Yes, they still pose a threat in the here and now, but they have been overcome. We've got a long journey ahead of us in the

days ahead, but let us remember that we are not alone. The Spirit is blazing the trail ahead.

Siblings in Christ, believe this Good News!

In the name of God the Creator, God the Redeemer, and God the Sustainer. Amen.