

Bad Blood

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[0 : 00] Hebrews chapter 11 and Exodus chapter 4. And Corey, would you please serve us this morning? He's going to read Hebrews chapter 11 and verse number 28, which is what we are up to this morning.

Verse number 28. By faith, he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood so that the destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. Father, we come before you again and ask that you would open your word to us. Help us to see those things that you have for us in your word. Help us to understand the things that are here by the power of the Holy Spirit and by the inspiration and the clarity and the illumination that the Holy Spirit offers. We ask that you would do that for us today in Jesus name. Amen. Life is not fair. Anybody heard that recently? Life is not fair. If your brother or your sister is splitting a cookie, you can just about guarantee that the side that is bigger will also be the side that has fewer chocolate chips. Life is not fair. Every call that can possibly go against your football team will go against your football team, especially at crucial moments in the game against your division rival. When you don't get the promotion at work, you might say in your heart, life is not fair. Life is not fair. And then you might find yourself in this spiral of comparison, trying to figure out why didn't I measure up? Why wasn't I good enough? Why wasn't I chosen? Life isn't fair.

When you have to deal with an employee at work that you don't want to deal with, or you have a situation at work that seems hard that seems hard, and it's not really your problem to deal with, but you know that you're going to have to step into that situation and somehow provide some meaningful wisdom and clarity to the situation, life isn't fair. Sometimes people really do get away with murder, don't they?

And there are some sad, very sad family situations that we hear about or that we encounter or that we're familiar with, and we shake our heads and we look at the situation, and perhaps like Matilda, we say, that's not right.

I read this week about a woman named Joan Ginter. She won \$20.4 million in the lottery. Now, on its own, that's not that interesting of a fact. Here's the part that made me say that's not fair. She won the lottery four times. Four times! That's not fair.

[3 : 23] In Romans chapter 9, Paul makes an interesting argument, and he arrives at a point where he asks this same question, and he makes this same statement. He doesn't use these exact words, but this is the idea that he's getting at. Look on the screen. Romans chapter 9, verse 13. As it is written, I have loved Jacob, but I have hated Esau. Now, we read that verse, and we might rightly say, that's not fair.

Paul anticipates that statement. He anticipates us saying, that's not fair, and he answers it for us in verse 14. Paul writes this. What should we say then? Is there injustice with God? Just flip those words around. This is what he's saying. Should we get to this point then where we say, life isn't fair? That's the point that Paul's, that's the idea that he's getting at here. And look at how he answers it. He says, absolutely not. There is not injustice with God. We should not think that God is unfair in choosing Jacob and not Esau. Why? Verse 15. For he tells Moses, I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then, it depends not on human will or effort, but on God who shows mercy. For the scripture tells Pharaoh, I raised you up for this reason, so that I may display my power in you, and that my name may be proclaimed in the whole earth.

So then, verse 18, he has mercy on whomever he wants to have mercy. And he hardens whomever he wants to harden.

Grace is rarely fair, but always glorious. How scripture handles the passing of time is a very interesting thing.

[5 : 50] In the gospels, there are 89 chapters. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, 89 chapters of writing. Writing about the earthly ministry of Jesus.

And 29 of those chapters, one-third of those books, 29 of the chapters, are devoted to the last week or so of Jesus' life.

How scripture handles the passage of time is very interesting. Moses is drawn out of the water in Exodus chapter 2 and verse 10.

And by chapter 2 and verse 11, 40 years have passed. And we fast forward just a couple of verses. We get to chapter 3 and verse 1. You'll recall from last week, there is the word meanwhile.

And that also accounts for another 40 years of time. So 80 years have passed in a matter of just a few verses. And then we get to this story about the deliverance, the rescue of God's people from Egypt.

[6 : 55] And the whole timeline just comes to a slow crawl. Like that person driving ahead of you when you are late. Chapters 5 through 15 of the book of Exodus, which we will look at today, take up several months, maybe up to a year of time.

Which is pretty interesting considering that we work through 80 years of time in just a handful of verses. And then we come to chapter 5 and the whole thing just scrolls, comes to a crawl.

We won't have time today to explore the plagues or the Exodus in detail. But I also don't think it would be helpful for us to just jump into the 10th plague, which is the one that Corey read to us about.

The one that's mentioned in our text from Hebrews chapter 11. Without some context. I want to know how we got to that. So let's walk together through these chapters, these important chapters in the book of Exodus that tell the story of how God freed his people from their slavery in Egypt. Let's start in Exodus chapter 4 and verse 21. We're going to jump around a bit, so just keep your Bible handy there or your app or whatever. Exodus chapter 4 verse 21.

[8 : 17] The Lord instructed Moses. Remember? Moses has seen the burning bush. He has met with God. God has revealed his name to him. God has commissioned him to go back to Egypt.

Chapter 4 verse 21. The Lord instructed Moses. When you go back to Egypt, make sure you do before Pharaoh all the wonders that I have put within your power.

Notice. But I will harden his heart so that he won't let the people go. And you will say to Pharaoh, this is what the Lord says.

Israel is my firstborn son. I told you. Let him go so that he may worship me. But you refuse to let him go.

Look, God, the Lord, Yahweh is speaking. I am about to kill your firstborn son. Don't miss this connection here because it's going to be important when we get to the 10th plague.

[9 : 22] The Lord refers to his people Israel as his firstborn son. And then the Lord warns Pharaoh through Moses and says, I am going to slay.

I am going to kill your firstborn son. Chapter 5 and verse number 1. Later, Moses and Aaron went in and said to Pharaoh, This is what the Lord, the God of Israel says.

I love this. I love how they say to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, This is what the Lord says. And I want you to notice that Moses is not asking.

He is not negotiating. He is playing no games here. He gives Pharaoh a command in the Lord's name. And this is like when we say mom said or dad said.

Moses says, This is what the Lord, the God of Israel says. Let my people go. That they may hold a festival for me in the wilderness.

[10 : 33] Notice verse 2. But Pharaoh responded, Who is the Lord? That I should obey him by letting Israel go. I don't know the Lord.

And besides, I will not let Israel go. Do you see that there? I don't know the Lord. This is where every person starts out.

Not knowing the Lord. Unwilling to submit to the Lord's clear command. Not inclined to accept God's truth.

Or his revelation about himself. The purpose of the plagues then. Is not an opportunity for God to flex on Pharaoh.

Although God is going to flex on Pharaoh. But the purpose of the plagues is not for God to show off. The purpose of the plagues. The plagues is so that Pharaoh will know the Lord.

[11 : 41] The purpose of the plagues is a revelation of God as himself. And a revelation of his glory to Pharaoh. So that he can no longer say, I don't know the Lord.

And I won't listen to him. Do you ever have a situation that gets worse before it gets better? This is common in our experience, isn't it?

This is why we say life isn't fair. When the situation gets worse. That's what happens here. Moses goes in, tells Pharaoh, gives him this command. God says, let my people go.

Pharaoh says no. And then Pharaoh makes the situation for God's people worse. And says, you now have to make your bricks with no straw, no binder. Go find your own raw materials.

But the quota of bricks doesn't decrease. This is not good. Chapter 6, verse 1. The Lord replied to Moses, Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh.

[12 : 42] Because of a strong hand, he will let them go. And because of a strong hand, he will drive them out of his hand.

God will not be defeated. God will not be thwarted. Chapter 7, and verse 3. But I will harden Pharaoh's heart.

And multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh will not listen to you. But I will put my hand into Egypt.

And bring the military divisions of my people, the Israelites, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. Verse 5. The Egyptians will know.

That I am the Lord when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the Israelites from among them. Verse 14.

[13 : 43] Then the Lord said to Moses, Pharaoh's heart is hard. He refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning. When you see him walking out to the water, stand ready to meet him by the bank of the Nile.

Take in your hand the staff that turned into a snake. And tell him, The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to tell you, let my people go, so that they may worship me in the wilderness. But so far, you have not listened. This is what the Lord says. Here is how you will know that I am the Lord.

Watch. I am about to strike the water in the Nile with the staff in my hand and it will turn into blood. This is plague number one.

Here is how you will know. This Nile River that you think of as a god and also as a gift of the gods and also controlled by the Pharaoh and also the place of death where you have thrown the Hebrew babies.

[14 : 55] I will turn that into a place of death for you. Verse 22. But the magicians of Egypt did the same thing by their occult practices.

So Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not listen to them as the Lord had said. Pharaoh turned around, went into his palace and didn't take even this to heart.

Chapter 8 and verse 10. The plague of frogs has come and Pharaoh wants to be delivered from these frogs and Moses said, fine, you can decide when do you want the frogs to be removed.

And Pharaoh says, verse number 10, tomorrow, Moses replied, as you have said, notice, so that you may know there is no one like the Lord, our God.

Chapter 8 again and verse number 22. We are now up to the fourth plague, the plague of flies. But on that day, verse 22, I will give special treatment to the land of Goshen where my people are living.

[16 : 19] No flies will be there. This way, you will know that I, the Lord, am in the land. How will you know? Because I will, verse 23, make a distinction between my people and your people.

This sign will take place tomorrow. Now you're going to know, Pharaoh, that I can control flies and I can have flies be swarming all over Egypt and protect my people from those same flies.

I can make this kind of a distinction. I can make this kind of a choice. chapter 9 and verse 13.

The seventh plague. Then the Lord said to Moses, get up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh and tell him, this is what the Lord, the God of the Hebrews says, let my people go so that they may worship me.

And notice these words of warning. Verse 14. For this time, I am about to send all my plagues against you, your officials and your people and then you will know there is no one like me on the whole earth.

[17 : 53] I love this. Verse 15. By now, I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague and you would have been obliterated from the earth.

However, I have let you live for this purpose to show you my power and to make my name notice known on the whole earth.

you are still acting arrogantly against me by not letting my people go. Verse 29.

Moses said to him, when I have left the city, I will spread out my hands to the Lord. The thunder will cease and there will be no more hail so that you may know the earth belongs to the Lord.

Chapter 11 and verse 1. The 10th plague. The Lord said to Moses, I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt and after that he will let you go from here and when he lets you go he will drive you out of here.

[19 : 22] Verse 4. So Moses said, this is what the Lord says. About midnight I will go throughout Egypt and every firstborn male in the land of Egypt will die.

From the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne to the firstborn of the servant girl who is at the grindstones as well as every firstborn of the livestock there will be a great cry of anguish throughout all the land of Egypt such as never was before or ever will be again but against all the Israelites whether people or animals not even a dog will snarl so that you may know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel all these officials of yours will come to me and bow down before me saying get out you and all the people who follow you and after that you will get out think about these instructions instructions this is the instructions for the plague you need to select a lamb or a goat and you need to hold it and watch it and observe it and then you need to kill it and you need to collect its blood and then you need to paint the outside door frame with the blood of the lamb and then you need to stay inside that house why why verse chapter 12 and verse number 12 I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night and strike every firstborn male in the land of Egypt both people and animals I am the Lord I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt the blood on the houses where you are staying will be a distinguishing mark for you and when I see the blood I will pass over you no plague will be among you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt do you see this how God is making this distinction God is making a choice between Egypt and between his people what is the distinguishing mark mark when I see the blood when I see the blood chapter 21 we get these instructions sorry verse 21 we get these instructions in detail Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them go select an animal from the flock according to your families and slaughter the Passover animal take a cluster of hyssop dip it in the blood that is in the basin and brush the lintel and the two door posts with some of the blood in the basin none of you may go out the door of his house until morning when the Lord passes through to strike Egypt and sees the blood on the lintel and the two door posts he will pass over you he will pass over the door and not let the destroyer enter your houses to strike you keep this command permanently as a statute for you and your descendants when you enter the land that the Lord will give you as he promised you are to observe this ceremony and when your children ask you what does this ceremony mean to you you are to reply it is the Lord's it is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord when he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when he struck the Egyptians and he spared our homes do you see this that Moses is going to great lengths to make this distinction so clear and that it is about the blood chapter 12 and verse 29 now at midnight the Lord struck every firstborn male in the land of Egypt from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon and every firstborn of the livestock during the night Pharaoh got up he along with all his officials and all the Egyptians and there was a loud wailing throughout Egypt because there wasn't a house without someone dead he summoned Moses and Aaron during the night and he said get out immediately from among my people both you and the Israelites and go worship the Lord as you have said now on the one hand we celebrate God's glorious deliverance of his people and on the other hand we should be shocked at the severity of the judgment can you imagine just in your neighborhood wherever you live in your neighborhood if on the same night every firstborn child or every firstborn pet that happened to be in the house died on the same night can you imagine the shock and horror just in your neighborhood and then compound that to a city and compound that to the land of Egypt we celebrate

[25 : 42] God's glorious deliverance and yet we ought to be shocked at the severity of God's judgment why did God strike the Egyptians and spare his people why we need to be mindful of this because it is not because the Israelites were slaves and the Egyptians were oppressors as bad as that is that is not why God struck the Egyptians and spared his people it is not even because the Israelites the Hebrew people were better than the Egyptians in fact if we were to look at Leviticus chapter 17 as God is giving Moses the law and telling Moses what his people need to do now that

they have been delivered from Egypt Leviticus 17 God tells Moses you need to tell those people to stop worshipping the demon goats the Hebrews are idolaters they're worshipping goat demons

God says that has to stop it's not because they were better it's not because they cried out to God we read about that last week in Exodus chapter 2 they cry out but did you remember this it doesn't even say that they cried out to the Lord and they do seem to have in chapter 4 some initial sense of belief in God but then we find in chapter 5 right away they're complaining again and when we finally get to chapter 6 just before the plagues are going to begin we read this in verse 9 Moses told this to the Israelites but they did not listen to him God didn't spare his people because they believed in him sometimes life isn't fair and grace can sometimes look to us unfair if both the Hebrews and the Egyptians are filthy sinful idolaters then why why do God's people get spared the judgment of this last plague and the great difference between them is not the absence of sin the great difference between them is the presence of grace and while we may rightfully say that doesn't seem fair we should also say but that grace is glorious!

how is it so glorious? because God provides the safety for the judgment that he rightly righteously brings God provides the means of safety to protect yourself from the judgment that he righteously brings the author of Hebrews says it like this by faith he Moses instituted the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood so that the destroyer of the firstborn might not touch the Israelites what did God command what would have happened if you would have offered oh I don't know a camel no go no go not a camel what if you selected a lamb but you just kept the lamb tied up outside of your house nope what if you selected a lamb watched the lamb and you killed the lamb but you're like you know

I don't know blood that's gross we all might faint I don't think so we're gonna make the sacrifice that'll be good enough would you expect to be safe inside of that house well you should not what if you selected the lamb collected the blood but you're like I don't know I don't know if I want to paint my doorpost with blood that's kind of gross I think I might just leave the blood here in a bowl on the step coming into our home surely that would you expect to be safe inside of that home well you should not what if you kill the!

[31 : 00] collect the blood! the door outside of the door with the blood but then you and your dad are outside playing catch with a football in the middle of the night would you expect to be saved from this plague well you should not it's about the blood but if you listen to God's warning and you believe what God says about the coming judgment and you respond to God's command with belief and obedience then let me tell you this there is no safer place in all of Egypt than inside a home where the lamb has been selected and the blood has been collected and the doorposts have been painted and they are inside that home there is no safer place for you to be in all of Egypt it doesn't matter what is happening outside it doesn't matter the wailing and the weeping and the gnashing of teeth that is happening in all of

Egypt anyone inside of that home could not be more safe why because God made a promise when I see the blood I will pass over you God provides the safety for the judgment that he righteously brings and this brings us back to Romans chapter 9 Romans chapter 9 and verse 18 so then he has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy and he hardens whom he wants to harden we feel it rising inside of us again don't we that's not fair Paul anticipates this a second time you will say to me therefore why then does he still find fault for who can resist his will on the contrary who are you a human being to talk back to

God well what is formed say to the one who formed it why did you make me like this or has the potter no right over the clay to make from the same lump one piece of pottery for honor and another for dishonor and what if God wanting to display his wrath and to make his power known endured with much patience objects of wrath like Pharaoh prepared for destruction and what if he did this brothers and sisters what if he did this to make known the riches of his glory on objects of mercy that he prepared beforehand for glory the great difference between an

Egyptian and a Hebrew slave the great difference between a Christian and a non Christian the great difference between a believer and an unbeliever the great difference between a follower of Jesus and one who is just religious it is not the absence of sin is the presence of God's grace follower of Jesus the difference between you and your unbelieving neighbor your unbelieving co-worker your unbelieving family or friend it is not because you are smarter it is not because you're a better Bible student it is not because you're wiser you know and you pieced all of these things together and you're like oh I get it now I need to believe in Jesus and I am I figured this out it is not

because you are less sinful it is not because you are more better that you somehow cleaned up your act and got yourself right with God the difference between you and your unbelieving!

God's grace grace that is greater than all of our sin and so I ask you who do you know who needs to hear about grace this story about the God who shows mercy to whoever he chooses to show mercy to will you tell them will you tell them about this God will your heart be moved with compassion will you be so mindful of the coming judgment that you say I can't bear for you not to know the story of grace of how God has saved me and changed me and it's all about grace it's not about me grace is rarely fair but always glorious it is always glorious because no human being can take credit for it no [36 : 42] Hebrew slave in Egypt would have come up with the idea of the Passover are you kidding me how bizarre how weird what a freakishly gross thing to do with blood nobody would have come up with that but how glorious that God would say when I see the blood I will pass over you and similarly no human no sinner would have dreamed up God's plan of salvation no sinner would have ever come up with this plan where God sends his one and only son Jesus never in our wildest dreams can we imagine that God would take on flesh and become a man and humble himself to the point of death even death on a cross oh dear friend because of your sin there was bad blood between you and God but through the precious blood of the lamb you are delivered from your bondage to sin and death you are as safe and secure as any person behind a bloody door in Egypt that night and you are free to follow Jesus by grace through faith and you are sustained by this glorious grace if you still have bad blood with God then I invite you to come to Jesus we sang that song to start our time together Jesus I come Jesus I come stop trying to mend a relationship with your good works your better behavior you're doing more trying harder being better stop trying to mend that relationship this is a relationship that God will give you he will do it Jesus is all you need humbly accept God's protection from the judgment that your sin rightly deserves grace is rarely fair but always glorious let's pray good father we are so humbled and so grateful to be recipients of grace please help us as we encounter these truths that remind us of your goodness to us father help that these truths do not do not pump us up with our own pride but rather humble us with the reality that you show mercy to whoever you will show mercy remind!

us again again and again of our great need of forgiveness press upon us again the reconciliation and the safety and the security that we enjoy because of your glorious grace and father would you move our hearts with compassion to those who do not yet know Jesus may the shocking reality of that night in Egypt stir us for evangelism and testifying of your grace father thank you for your goodness and your kindness to us in Jesus we love you and we are grateful to be your people in Jesus name amen amen