

Sunday Sermon      091017    Exodus 312:1-14, Matthew 18:15-20

### “I Will Pass Over You When I See the Blood”

We have recently experienced the horrors and damage of Hurricane Hillary in Southern California. However, Hurricane Idalia displayed terrifying destructive power as it moved north from northern Florida to South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia at tremendous speed. Residents living in this area had to face a crisis of survival due to a lack of supplies of food, water, batteries, electricity, and gas.

You would imagine that such disasters would be conquerable by a modern society that has unrivaled technology that could manage any situation. The people of this modern generation boast about the power of human beings and their ability to control things in their lives. However, through these recent natural disasters, we are reminded of the frailty and weakness of mankind. During these crises, we are once again thankful that we have received God as our Father, who wants to protect and save us in all circumstances.

At times like this, we must humbly accept the limitations of what our earthly abilities can do. Also, we ask that the creator, God Almighty, help disaster victims with the comfort, peace, courage, and hope that only He can give.

But how could mankind have continued to build while experiencing the destruction of such continuous natural disasters? To this question, I would like to answer that it is because human beings have a special passion to help each other. I believe that the human mind's ability to save someone in trouble is a gift received from the Creator's providence of salvation.

Now let's get into the story of the Bible. The exodus of the Israelites from Egypt occurred around 1,450 B.C. The day they left Egypt marked the end of exactly 430 years of slavery. How did such a long oppression end in an instant? Because God killed every firstborn male in Egypt, both human and animal, in order to save the Israelites. Both scriptures from the Old and New Testaments today reference the providence of God's salvation. The two scriptures have a 1,500-year gap between them.

However, the salvation of Israel from Egypt symbolizes being released from the bondage of sins, which is all too relevant in this current time period. God applies His principle of salvation consistently throughout all time periods.

Let's look more deeply at the scriptures to understand the principle of God's salvation.

## I. Salvation is given by the price of the blood.

God ordered the Israelites through Moses to put lamb's blood on the doorposts and lintels of their houses. And the angel of death passed over the houses with the blood while it killed the firstborn males of the Egyptian households that didn't have the blood. Why did God's angel of death pass over the bloodied houses? It was not because of the reddish color of the blood or the smell, but because the people in that house paid the price of death with the life of the lamb.

The book of Hebrews 9:22 says, "Sins are forgiven only if blood is poured out." Jesus atoned for our sins on the cross, just as the lamb did during Passover. When Jesus died, we were released from the bondage of our sins, just as the Israelites were released and freed from their bonds of slavery.

Do you believe in Jesus, who protects you with the price of His life and leads you with His power? His sacrifice revived us through His salvation and is effective for us even today. Unlike a lamb sacrifice that needed to be made repeatedly, Jesus was a single sacrifice for our sins that is effective forever (Heb. 10:12). This was the ransom of Jesus, the savior, who had no sin.

I remember years ago when the Super Lotto jackpot prize money went up to seven hundred million dollars. I can't wrap my head around such an extravagant amount of money. But can you imagine the price and worth of Jesus' sacrifice and salvation for you? There isn't a lotto jackpot that can even compare. Your salvation came through the price of the blood and the power of Jesus.

The apostle Paul said in Romans 8:32, "Certainly not God, who did not even keep back his own Son but offered him for us all! He gave us his Son; will he not also freely give us all things?" If we have blood circulating in our bodies, we do not die. The blood of Jesus' salvation is circulating within us; thus, we are always alive with our Lord.

## II. Salvation is given by faith.

On the night of Passover, every Egyptian house was filled with immense grief over the loss of the firstborn male. However, none of the Israelites lost their sons because they put blood on their doorposts. Who were those who put the blood on their doorposts? They were those who had faith in God's promise, as Moses told them.

Did the blood of a lamb really block the power of death? What sort of power could the dried-up blood of a lamb on a doorpost really have? On that night, the power of the angel of death was so potent that even the Pharaoh's eldest son was dead. In stark contrast to the cries of despair, laughter filled the houses of the Israelite slaves. This was the tangible result of faith.

The promise spoken by the creator, God, was accomplished exactly as He said. God kept His promise on the first Passover of Israel, and He keeps His promises to us today in the twenty-first century. The angel of death not only saw the blood of the lamb on the doorposts but also the obedience of faith by the people of Israel.

Do you believe in God's promise today? None of us here experienced the ten disasters that God sent to Egypt. None of us witnessed Jesus on the cross or touched His blood. However, we believe in God's word of promise today. We also believe that those living words revive our body, life, and soul. Therefore, no worldly threats can affect those of us who rely faithfully on the word of God.

III. The work of salvation transcends the limitations of time and space.

God's work of salvation is not limited by time and space because the creator God is almighty. The life of slavery for the Israelites in Egypt lasted for 430 years, as God had foretold to Abraham.

However, who remembered and relied on the promise of God during the period of slavery in Egypt other than God himself? While the Israelites could not see any hope, God remembered and kept His promise. And it was on the last day of the 430<sup>th</sup> year that their slavery ended and they escaped Egypt (Exodus 12:41).

Parallel events have occurred in modern history, such as the Korean liberation from Japan. On August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1945, towards the end of World War II, Korea was unexpectedly liberated after having been colonized by the Japanese for 36 years. The description of Jesus' second coming in the gospel of Matthew 24:27 and 30 says, "For the Son of Man will come like

the lightning that flashes across the whole sky from the east to the west. We will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven."

The Bible emphasizes that the hand of God that protects and helps us is always fast, and His works are not limited by any physical disturbances that we constantly worry about. Instead, we need to obey His commands. And we need to be sensitive and quick to do so.

On that Passover night, the Israelites ate quickly but had their loins girded, fully dressed, sandals on their feet, and walking sticks in hand. The description of the Passover night does not describe any urgency in the progress of God's work of salvation but rather emphasizes the need for obedience and cooperation to his instructions properly and wholeheartedly. I pray that we do not make any spiritual missteps where we might not faithfully participate in the work of God's salvation due to the fear of the problems and circumstances we face in our daily lives.

#### IV. Salvation demands communal ministry.

The Bible specifies that God's salvation is an individual experience. However, we must remember that God requires the ministry of saving souls to be accomplished through communal work and cooperation with each other. Going back to the night of Passover, every household prepared a lamb for Passover.

If a family was too small to eat a whole lamb, it would invite its closest neighbor to share one. Conversely, if a family is too big to eat a whole lamb, it will join its closest neighbor to share in the neighbor's lamb. In other words, the preparation for Passover and the exodus needed to be performed at the communal level.

With respect to communal ministry, let's refer to the scripture from Matthew. In this passage, Jesus deals with the issue of forgiveness. ~~Specifically, with me?~~ Jesus taught us this way: go and discuss the fault privately. If that does not work, take one or two other people with you. If he does not listen to you, consult the church. If he still does not listen again, treat him as though he were a pagan or a tax collector.

We see here someone who has lost faith, but Jesus wants to care for him so earnestly and considerately to save him. We need to take these steps of spiritual labor in order to win back the lost soul. Jesus instructs us to offer as many opportunities for repentance and self-reflection as possible.

Why does Jesus entrust such decision-making to our hands? Because God the Father listens and answers when two of us ask and pray together. And Jesus is also with us when two or three come together in His name.

In other words, I interpret that passage as Jesus saying, "If you work together to save a lost soul in my name, he will surely be saved. I swear to guarantee this." Heaven is the country where all people rejoice together. Cherishing your neighbors and treating them as precious individuals is the path to becoming cherished and precious yourself.

We will experience the joy and power of salvation to the extent that we understand the principle of God's salvation. Therefore, we need to know three things well in order to live successful lives. First, it is God who gives us salvation. Second, I am the one who receives the benefit of salvation.

And third, we are the community that enjoys salvation together. When we know these three concepts well, we experience what it is to be truly free. Free to serve the master of salvation, free to enjoy the benefits of salvation, and free to share the joy of salvation together. Amen.

**\*\*Reflection and Apply for Today's Sermon:**

- 1) When do you confirm your salvation in your daily life? What spiritual influence do you experience when it is confirmed?
- 2) You are saved through faith. How does this spiritual principle operate in understanding and embracing others in human relationships?
- 3) How do you estimate the value of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ shed for you? What significance does that value hold for the rest of your life?