

That You May Know

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[0 : 0 0] You may be seated for our kiddos. You can make your way out to children's ministry. And for this morning's sermon, our text is going to be from Exodus 7, 1 to 13.

Exodus 7, 1 to 13. The title of today's message is, That You May Know. That You May Know. Now, we're just a few days removed from celebrating our nation's birthday on July 4th.

And in the midst of barbecue and time with friends, just a beautiful night. There were fireworks. I have no doubt that wherever you were in the Kansas City region, you were either lighting off fireworks or you heard fireworks get lit off.

And that was a lot of fun. And if you had a chance to see fireworks before they're set off, sitting in a garage somewhere or out on a table, the collections can be impressive.

And they represent collective anticipation of colors and light and explosion. Well, today, I feel like I drove up to church this morning with a sermon full of grace as a garage full of fireworks.

[1 : 1 3] And I'm just excited for the Spirit, by God's grace, to light off some fireworks of grace in your minds and hearts, empowering grace, strengthening grace, challenging grace, and ultimately grace that will help us to know God and make him known better and more.

So, that being said, to start out today's sermon, and in line with thinking about our country, there's a memorable line in the musical Hamilton.

Hamilton that goes, and the world's going to know your name. So, in 2015, Lin-Manuel Miranda released the hit musical Hamilton, chronicling the rise, fall, and legacy of the savvy political and economic figure, founding father, and intellectual heavyweight, Alexander Hamilton.

For memorable music and treating characters in a complex storyline, Miranda captured the life of a man who, though possibly a Christian, he was portrayed as being strongly driven, at least for a time, to make his mark on history, and ultimately his name known.

And there's a little chorus, a refrain that goes in one of the songs. It goes, Alexander Hamilton, my name is Alexander Hamilton, and there's a million things I haven't done, but just you wait, just you wait.

[2 : 3 5] So, this drive, this desire for fame, a name that reverberates through geography and history, has captured the imagination of many historical figures, Hamilton, Napoleon, Alexander the Great, and can be a temptation in large and small arenas.

So, it can be striking when we hear and acknowledge and even worship the Lord for the fact that God is 100% passionately, zealously dedicated to spreading the fame of his name through all time, all places, all generations, into eternity.

Yet, as potentially counterintuitive as it may seem that God is wholly ambitious for the fame of his name, truly, is there anything more righteous for God than to pursue his own exaltation?

Surely, God is the greatest, purest, most glorious being in all creation and beyond creation.

So, when we read in Exodus 3 that he commissions Moses and Aaron as witnesses on his behalf, then later he raises up and hardens Pharaoh's heart, sends great signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, and rescues his people.

[4 : 15] From Egypt, for the sake of making his sure position as God known to the Egyptians, is there anything more right for us to do than exalt and worship him?

Now, this morning, in today's passage, we're going to see a number of themes, all pointing to God's utter determination to exalt himself, to make himself known as God to Moses and Aaron, to the Israelites, and even especially to the Egyptians.

So, we're going to see three major themes. We're going to see God's sending authority over Moses and Aaron. We're going to see God's sovereignty in salvation.

And we're going to see God's supremacy over all things. In particular, Pharaoh and his magicians, Egypt's false gods, and ultimately over, Satan himself.

And again, we'll see that all of this, sending authority, sovereignty, and supremacy, is aimed to reveal himself as God.

[5 : 29] My prayer for us this morning is that we would see, celebrate, and live in the good of God's sending authority, sovereignty, supremacy, in a greater way.

And in such a way that we would walk more obediently to his call on our lives. More grateful for his salvation. And with increasing boldness in our witness.

Before we get too deep, though, let's first read the passage. Exodus 7, 1-13. Exodus 7, 1-13. And the Lord said to Moses, See, I made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet.

You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land. But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh will not listen to you.

Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.

[6 : 55] When I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them. Moses and Aaron did so.

They did just as the Lord commanded them. Now Moses was 80 years old and Aaron 83 years old when they spoke to Pharaoh. Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, When Pharaoh says to you, prove yourselves by working a miracle, then you shall say to Aaron, take your staff and cast it down before Pharaoh that it may become a serpent.

So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord commanded. Aaron cast down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants and it became a serpent.

Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers and they, the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts. For each man cast down his staff and they became serpents.

But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. Still Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he would not listen to them as the Lord had said.

[8 : 07] May God bless the preaching of his word. All right, to start off this morning, let's briefly recount where we've been so far in the book of Exodus.

We've been here for a couple months at this point. Brief recounting. First, we've seen the unlikely birth of Moses, born out of the courage of the Egyptian midwives, or the Israelite midwives, sorry, as well as his parents and the kindness of Pharaoh's daughter.

Second, we've seen Moses in Egypt as a younger man, identifying with his people, killing an Egyptian taskmaster and then fleeing to Midian. We've seen Moses in Midian, getting married and becoming a shepherd.

We've seen God's call to Moses, summoning him at the burning bush to serve as Israel's deliverer. We've seen Moses back in Egypt, telling the Israelites of his encounter with the Lord, confronting Pharaoh and causing Israel to work even harder than before, bricks without straw.

And recently, we've heard God's great assurance and promise to Moses that just as things seem bleak, getting worse and without hope, now God will intervene.

[9 : 26] Now God will deliver them with great acts of judgment against Egypt. And now God, I know Israel, will see and know that he is the Lord.

So that's where we pick up this story. Now in a passage that reveals God's sending authority, sovereignty and supremacy, ultimately aimed to make himself known.

So first, let's examine God's sending authority over Moses and Aaron. So Exodus 7 starts out with a statement, a command and a promise from the Lord. Let's look at the text.

And the Lord said to Moses, See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh. And your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you.

And your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land. But I will harden Pharaoh's heart and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh will not listen to you.

[10 : 29] Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my host, my people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them.

Notice the first statement and command. God's sending authority over Moses and Aaron is featured in it. See, I made you like God to Pharaoh and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet.

You shall speak all that I command. In saying this, God is reiterating his call to Moses and Aaron to go to Pharaoh and speak with him.

To reveal to Pharaoh the existence of a God over all. And God's call and his people to go from Egypt and to worship him and serve him. And while Moses, he hadn't been as faithful and courageous as one would hope up to this point in the book of Exodus, notice that now Moses and Aaron, the momentum of their obedience is starting to pick up.

Consider verse 6. And Moses and Aaron did so. They did just as the Lord commanded them. And then verse 10. So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord commanded.

[11 : 59] So Moses and Aaron, they are becoming faithful servants of the Lord. Obedient to his call on their lives. And ultimately faithful witnesses to Pharaoh.

Now from this, I want to draw out briefly what obedience to God's sending authority looks like. From the beginning of God's call to Moses to go to Pharaoh, God stated that he would harden Pharaoh's heart and that Pharaoh would not listen to Moses.

Whoever Moses, getting past his protests as we saw earlier with the help of Aaron, he still went. And as we've seen, at least recently, he's been doing as the Lord commanded.

He's been turning into a faithful witness. So, what is faithfulness and witness? In essence, it's doing all the Lord commands us to do.

Moses and Aaron, as we noted in this passage, they spoke the truth to Pharaoh. They told Pharaoh to let God's people go. Later in this passage, they will demonstrate to Pharaoh a miraculous sign.

- [13 : 08] And then later in chapters 7 to 12, Moses will introduce even greater signs that point to God's power and greatness. Ultimately, Moses and Aaron will do as God commands.
- In the same way, I don't want us to miss God's call on us to be faithful witnesses. Through his sending authority in our lives to our friends and family and neighbors.
- While God called Pharaoh through Moses and Aaron to let his people go, he calls us to tell our loved ones of his great salvation through Jesus Christ.
- As Philip Reichen writes in his commentary on Exodus, God communicates his divine message through human messengers. Today, God's message is communicated through the church.
- Therefore, we are Christ to them in the same way that Moses was God to Pharaoh. And, as God communicates through Paul in 2 Corinthians 5, all this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.
- [14 : 30] That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.
- Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. So, like Moses and Aaron, maybe we won't always see the conversion that we so desire for our friends, family, and neighbors.
- But again, like Moses and Aaron, God has sent us to tell those whom he has placed in our lives about him and do all that he has commanded.
- Now, God, he did also back up his call to Moses and Aaron through Pharaoh in word and with great signs and wonders.
- Verse 3, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in land of Egypt, God will send signs and wonders to Egypt to back up Moses and Aaron's word. So, Pharaoh and Egypt, they're going to witness firsthand the power of God.
- [15 : 44] They're going to see the Nile turn to blood, frogs everywhere, gnats infesting, flies swarming, livestock dying, boils infecting, hail pummeling, locusts devastating, darkness, enveloping, and finally, death striking.
- And for us, sometimes, don't we wish that God, along with his sending authority, would send signs to those whom we are witnessing to?
- And yes, in our witness, we can point to changed lives and acts of mercy and maybe even a miraculous healing, but take heart, take heart.
- Ultimately, we have everything we need to witness about God because we have the gospel. We have the amazing news that God is the great, good, and glorious authority over the universe, that we have all disobeyed God because of our sin and are liable to his judgment, but that God, as we all know, in his mercy, sent Jesus to die for the forgiveness of our sins if we repent and believe in him.
- Do we need blood and frogs and hail to come to our unbelieving loved ones? Maybe those will soften hearts, but for conversion, we need the gospel, which is truly the power of God unto salvation.
- [17 : 26] So, point number one, the Lord exercised his sending authority over Moses so that Moses, Pharaoh, and the Egyptians might know that God is the Lord.
- And he sends us in the same way he directs us in his sending authority to witness to our friends, our family, to our neighbors the fact that he is Savior and Lord.
- Now, God's sending authority for his not all that he exercised in this passage out of his passion to exalt himself and show that he is God. God also exercised his sovereignty over salvation.

Now, for this discussion, we're going to go for a little swim in the deep end of the theological pool. So, let's dive right in. Check out verses three and four.

But I will harden Pharaoh's heart and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh will not listen to you. Now, you may say, is that really Pharaoh of God to harden Pharaoh's heart and cause him not to listen to his voice?

[18 : 40] tough question. But this is addressed and more is addressed than this by Paul in Romans 9. So, let's turn there.

In Romans 9, Paul, in discussing the salvation of Israel, is explaining how salvation is not through family lineage, not through blood, not through human exertion, but rather through the promise and sovereign choice of God.

And in verses 14 to 18, Paul addresses our questions as regards to Pharaoh. It's Romans 9, 14 to 18. What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part?

By no means. For he says to Pharaoh, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy. And I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.

So then, it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who has mercy. For the scripture says to Pharaoh, for this purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.

[20 : 01] So then, he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. Now there are some clear truths coming out of this passage that we as biblical Christians must affirm, uphold, tremble before, and celebrate.

First, as stated earlier, God is sovereign over salvation. Verse 15, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.

Again, salvation is not by man's efforts or strivings, but instead, rests solely on the sovereign will of God. All right, second, God has the prerogative as God to harden or soften as he chooses.

Verse 18, so then, he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. God is totally, absolutely, unreservedly free in saving whomever he chooses.

And third, God does all this with the aim of exalting himself, of revealing his power and glory. Verse 17, for this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.

[21 : 39] Why did God lift up Pharaoh, witness the Pharaoh, and harden Pharaoh? Ultimately, it was to show to all the earth that God is God, and that his name might be proclaimed in all the earth.

Think about it. God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart led to great signs and wonders being done in the land of Egypt. It led to Israel being delivered. It led to Rahab, the prostitute, remember Rahab, in Jericho, hearing about this God, believing in him, and so helping the Israelites to conquer Jericho.

It even led to the Gibeonites in Joshua 9, cowering in fear before Israel and seeking to make a covenant with Israel through deception because they had heard of all that God had done in Egypt.

God? God moves in a mysterious way. It's not always clear or easy to understand what he's doing, and the story of Pharaoh's hard heart is no exception.

However, we can trust that whatever God is doing, he is always up to something good. ultimately to exalt himself, make himself known, and care for his people.

[23 : 07] The scripture is clear. God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Yes, Pharaoh also chose not to listen. He was responsible for his disobedience.

But the ultimate choice of whether Pharaoh would listen to the witness of Moses and Aaron was held in the hand of the Lord. That's before this truth that we must bow.

And for us as believers, draw much gratitude to the Lord. Apart from God's effective call, his wakening, life-giving grace, again, we would all be dead in our sins and transgressions.

The sovereign God of the universe has every right to heart him whoever he wills, so let us sit here this morning and be overwhelmed with gratitude that he called us, that he gave us ears to hear, that he gave us eyes to see, that he gave us the faith to repent and believe.

Faith is a gracious gift from God. And for anyone here that has not yet followed the Lord, a word of caution.

[24 : 22] Just because salvation rests ultimately with the Lord, do not fall into a trap of fatalism. Do not say, I'll believe if God converts me, gives me belief, gives me faith.

Don't hide behind God's sovereignty as an excuse not to seek him. Rather, if you hear his voice today, speaking, tugging at your heart, calling out to you, or even if you don't, seek him.

Tremble before the God, sovereign over the salvation of Pharaoh, sovereign over the forces of nature, sovereign over all of Egypt, Israel, and the entire world.

Seek him. Read his word, pray to him, ask him to give you faith, a new heart, a new spirit. Ultimately, yes, it is God who will give this to you, but know that you are and will be held responsible for your choices.

The Bible is clear of that in the final judgment. So, seek the Lord, while he may be found. Repent and believe, and may God give you faith to turn from your sin and unbelief, and walk with him.

[25 : 39] All to be said, let's remember why God hardened Pharaoh's heart and exalted himself in Egypt, that the Egyptians shall know that he is the Lord.

Again, point number two, God exercised sovereignty over salvation in the life of Pharaoh, ultimately that Egypt would know that he is God. All right, finally, this passage ends with God exercising his supremacy over Pharaoh, Egypt's false gods, and ultimately Satan, in the aim of making himself known to Egypt.

And this is quite a story. Check out verses 8 to 13. Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, when Pharaoh says to you, prove yourselves by working a miracle, then you shall say to Aaron, take your staff and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.

So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord commanded. Aaron cast down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers and they the magicians of Egypt also did the same by their secret arts.

For each man cast down a staff and they became serpents. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs. Still, Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he would not listen to them as the Lord had said.

[27 : 18] And notice, God sends Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh to give him a sign that Pharaoh should listen to them. Moses and Aaron, they obey. They go to Pharaoh, cast their staff down before Pharaoh and it turned into a serpent.

Now just imagine a wooden staff turning into a slithering snake right before Pharaoh's eyes. I'm not going to impersonate that right now. But just imagine, you would think Pharaoh would be afraid or at least impressed.

Rather, Pharaoh, he's stubborn. He summons his magicians and they do the same thing. Now what power or powers, should I say, were at work here?

Despite the magicians seemingly being able to match Mosin Aaron's sign, Mosin Aaron's snake then swallows up the snakes of the Egyptian magicians.

Quite a scene. Now what's going on here? Well first, the sign of gods is like a shot across the bow to Pharaoh.

[28 : 34] It's a warning shot, giving Pharaoh in his court a small taste of God's power. And it serves as a preview of the ten plagues that we spoke about earlier yet to come.

Second, it's a sign of God's supremacy over Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt. Pharaoh himself, as the Pharaoh, claimed to be a form of deity, the son of the god Ra.

And the serpent was known in Egypt as a symbol of Pharaoh's authority. But Pharaoh and his magicians, they commanded some power. They had some power.

They were able to turn their staffs into snakes. But clearly, were their staffs supreme? Were their snakes supreme? No. Moses and Aaron's staff swallowed up the magician's staffs.

God was, is, and forever will be supreme. Third, and ultimately, this is a sign of God's supremacy over Satan.

[29 : 47] Pharaoh, in exalting himself, enslaving God's people, and defying God, he was simply a stand-in for Satan. Is it any mystery that God would choose to swallow up the snakes of Egypt with his own, that snake hearkening back to Adam and Eve's encounter with Satan in Genesis 3?

The exodus, at its core, is a continuation, an unfolding of God's war against Satan, to create and free people to worship and serve him.

Satan's power surely is real. However, it is clearly not supreme. Rather, God is the Lord.

And glorious above all other gods, God's glory will certainly swallow up all false rulers, all false gods, and ultimately the false one himself, Satan.

This episode with the snakes, yes, it's a warning shot to Pharaoh. But at a deeper level, it's a revealing of God's great supremacy over Satan and his ultimate victory over the evil one as he aims to make himself known throughout all the earth.

[31 : 11] So in application, how does this apply to us? In application, where has God called you to demonstrate his power and testify to his supremacy?

Who are you thinking about witnessing to or are already actively witnessing to? Have confidence God's truth is supreme.

It will swallow up all the other supposed truths of this world. Does someone present an argument against the Lord? God's truth reigns over it.

Does someone have an objection against the Lord? God's word will swallow it up. Is someone resisting the Lord? God's spirit can overcome any and all resistance.

Yes, as we've seen with Pharaoh, God's truth softens and hardens. But in witnessing faithfully, we simply must tell the truth and know that in sharing the gospel with people, we're simply handing out lightning rods to place in people's hands.

[32 : 31] That God may strike at any moment and conquer all resistance, conquer all unbelief, overcome all objections, and grant repentance and faith.

God's God. So, may we go out into this world so confident that God is supreme, that our God is the God over all, over all rulers, over all false gods, and over Satan himself.

And may we confidently testify to his sending authority, his sovereignty, and his supremacy. So, point number three.

God exercised his supremacy over Pharaoh, Egypt's false gods, and Satan himself, that Egypt would know that he is God.

So, in conclusion, we've covered a lot of ground this morning. We've covered a lot of ground. We've seen God sending authority over Moses and Aaron to command Pharaoh to acknowledge and obey the Lord.

[33 : 36] We've seen God's sovereignty over salvation, that he has the right and does harden and soften as he pleases. And we've seen God's supremacy over Pharaoh, over all false gods, and over Satan himself.

So, may we walk out of this service this morning just that much more confident in our God, more desirous to obey him in his call on our lives as witnesses.

more grateful for his salvation, which is truly a gift. And, we're confident to speak of his truth, knowing that it is the truth, and knowing that his truth, his truth will swallow up all other false truths.

And ultimately, God wins. for those historical figures people like Hamilton and Napoleon and Alexander the Great, their efforts to make a name for themselves betrayed their rebellious hearts against God, the God of the universe.

Betrayed that at least for a time. But this is a God who deserves for us to make his name great, and a God whose name will be made great for all eternity.

[35 : 01] As they say in Hamilton, just you wait. Just you wait. Unfortunate for Pharaoh, he didn't recognize this.

He was hardened and did harden his heart. He did not obey the Lord. Thank God, thank God this morning that he softened our hearts.

He's inclined us to bow before him to worship him, to obey him, and ultimately to testify to his salvation. Just as God himself testified to his sending authority, his sovereignty, and his supremacy so many years ago in Egypt, to show to Egypt, to Israel, and to the ends of the earth that he is the Lord.

Let's pray. God, we praise you because you are the Lord.

We praise you because you are the authority in our lives. You've shown mercy towards us, and you are supreme. supreme. We thank you that we serve a God who is supreme, and we know a God who is supreme through what Jesus did for us on the cross.

[36 : 24] So I pray that the seeds of this message would go deep into our souls, and help us to obey them. Help us to testify to your mercy and kindness through Jesus Christ.

Help us to be grateful more and more for your salvation. Help us simply to trust that you are the supreme one. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

All right. Now for communion this morning, I want to draw our attention to an even greater witness than Moses and Aaron, an even greater sign than a staff turning into a snake.

God, in sovereignly ordaining for Jesus to be crucified, he has given us a sign of his sending authority his sovereignty, his supremacy, and an accomplishment like the snake in Egypt, has swallowed up sin and death forever.

And for those who would bow their knees to Jesus, repent and believe on his salvation. Jesus was pierced for our transgressions.

[37 : 39] He was crushed. for our iniquities. Upon him was a chastisement that brought us peace. And with his wounds we are healed.

Ultimately, that God would deliver a people from slavery, not in Egypt, but as we saw last week, deliver us from slavery to sin. And free us to worship and serve him wherever we are.

a sight of his suffering can soften the hardest of hearts. A sight of his cross can bend the stiffest of knees.

And a celebration of his resurrection can give hope to the far of the people. May we see the sign today, his cross, and celebrate a God who is witness to us of his great justice and love, knowing that because of this, Satan has been defeated.

The power of sin, broken, and our acceptance with God as our Father, God as our Father secured. And ultimately, our ability empowered to testify, to proclaim, and to declare that the Lord is God to the ends of Johnson County and the ends of the earth.

[39 : 13] 1 Corinthians 11, 23-26. I receive from the Lord, but I also deliver it to you. That the Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread. And when he gave it thanks, he broke it, and said, this is my body, which is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, also, he took the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. come, let us together proclaim the Lord's death, a death that purchased us salvation, that all may know that he is the Lord.

Nabal Nabal Nabal Nabal