

Pharaoh & the Problem of False Repentance

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[0 : 0 0] Have fun. As Jared mentioned, we are going to discuss repentance this morning. In his book that I think is one of the better books on the subject, John Owen Roberts writes, The first word of the gospel is not love.

It is not even grace. The first word of the gospel is repent. From Matthew through the Revelation, repentance is an urgent and indispensable theme.

That is kept at the very forefront of the gospel ministry. He then goes on to talk about how repent was the first word of John the Baptist's ministry.

In Matthew 3, 1 through 3, we see John the Baptist saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And then he says, The voice of one crying out in the wilderness, Make ready the way of the Lord and make his path straight.

And Roberts says, not only does the word repent, show up as a dominant note in John's message, but the concept of repentance is found in this idea of making straight the path to the Lord.

[1 : 1 1] Repentance is, in Roberts' discussion, essentially like clearing out a highway that is full of a bunch of clutter and obstacles, keeping you from good fellowship with God.

Roberts goes on to talk about how repentance is the first message in Jesus's ministry. And that's found in Matthew 4, 17, where he says, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Unless we are tempted to de-emphasize repentance, we should also see that the very last thing Jesus told his disciples in Luke 24 is the following.

Luke 24, 45, it says, Then he opened their mouths to understand the scriptures and said to them, Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem.

So here's one thing I just would point out to you as you're evaluating what makes a church a good church, what makes a home a good home. One of the things that you would be tempted to look at is the programming and the worship and so on and so forth.

[2 : 2 2] And I think that you really need to understand that one of the most effective ways to evaluate whether a church is close to God's word or not is the role repentance plays in the preaching.

Because it is a central role in the preaching of the New Testament preachers. It's a central role in John's preaching. It's a central role in Jesus' preaching. And as the apostles are sent forth, it's a central theme for them as well.

So I think it's important to evaluate things as they are meant to be evaluated. And one of the things I'd say is, is like if you're trying to figure out what a good church is or whether a home is healthy or so on and so forth, we throw around phrases like gospel center or Christ center.

It's like, well, what does that mean? Well, at the very center of that centeredness is this call to repent. To repent of your sins and trust in Christ.

Now, what we want to do today is to just understand what repentance really is. The nature of true repentance. And as Jared mentioned, we're going to do that in part by analyzing Pharaoh's false repentance.

[3 : 31] And, oh, there's a practice after a plane crash or some kind of, you know, some kind of train crash or something like that where the NTSA, I think it is National Transportation Safety, yes.

NTSA does a sort of postmortem and they evaluate what went wrong. Why did this plane crash? Why did this train derail? Well, in the same way, you can take some of these negative examples in scripture, for instance, Pharaoh's false repentance, and you can sort of reconstruct the scene of the accident and figure out how did it go wrong?

How did Pharaoh go off the rails? So that's what we're going to try to do today. And I think this will be a relatively short message, perhaps a heavy message, but a relatively short one. So when we're talking about repentance, lots of different authors have various ways of sort of delineating what repentance really is.

In probably the greatest book written on repentance outside of the Bible, Thomas Watson says that repentance is a spiritual medicine that is made of six special ingredients.

He says repentance is a medicine that is made of six special ingredients. And he lists those as the sight of sin. I can see my sin. Sorrow for sin. I am sorry I sinned.

[4 : 47] Confession of sin. I acknowledge I've sinned. Shame for sin. A feeling as if I have really, really done wrong. Hatred for sin. And then finally turning from sin.

And Watson says that you need all six of these ingredients in order for this medicine to actually work. If you remove any one of these ingredients, you don't have true repentance.

And like I said, the reason that we're going to talk about this is because we see in the life of Pharaoh from chapters 7 through 14, a lot of evidences of false repentance.

Have you guys ever, I don't know, some of you are as neurotic as I am, have you guys ever found out about a new disease you didn't even know existed like a minute before and then immediately wonder if you have that disease?

Have you ever found out about some extraordinarily rare thing and thought, well, I kind of have some of those symptoms? Or you went from not even knowing about the thing to suddenly being preoccupied about not getting the thing.

[5 : 48] Well, I think one of the useful aspects of these seven chapters is that we are put on to the idea that there is a disease called false repentance.

And you wouldn't necessarily be told that without stories in the Bible where someone appears to have repented, but then in turn, we find out, did not indeed repent.

And that's what I want to walk you through today, this idea that Pharaoh has engaged in a series of missteps in which he was repenting, but not with true repentance.

So I thought I would just kind of tell you, like, here's some of the markers. And as I said, I think this will be a relatively short message. Here's some of the markers. Here's some of the things to think about related to repentance as we analyze the life of Pharaoh.

First thing I would strongly advise you in your own repentance is to repent well before the repercussions come. Another way to say this is don't wait for your sin to go to seed before repenting.

[7 : 03] In the early stages of any sin, the seed may have been planted, but the consequences and repercussions of that sin have not yet emerged into real life.

You're sinning, but they just haven't gone to seed in the way that they will if you continue to sin. And one of the things I would encourage you to do is to repent before your sin goes to seed.

Repent before the repercussions come. Why is that? Well, man, if you wait until the consequences appear, you're going to have a harder time sorting out the sincerity of your repentance.

Does that make sense? If you wait for the consequences to appear, it's going to be easier to fool yourself into thinking that you're really sorry when indeed you're really just sorry you get caught.

Or you're really just sorry that the consequences have emerged. This is kind of the situation we see with Pharaoh in chapter 9. He does display, as we'll see in a moment, some signs of actual repentance, but only after a terrible storm has fallen on the land and he's watching his whole land get beat down into nothing by massive hail.

[8 : 18] If you've got your Bibles, open to Exodus early in verse 13. Then the Lord said to Moses, rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, let my people go that they may serve me.

For this time I will send all my plagues on you, yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know there is none like me in all the earth.

For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth.

But for this purpose I have raised you up to show you my power so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth. You are still exalting yourself against my people and will not let them go.

Behold, about this time tomorrow I will cause a very heavy hail to fall, such as never been seen in Egypt from the day it was founded until now.

[9 : 27] Now therefore send, get your livestock and all that you have in the field into safe shelter. For every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home will die when the hail falls on them.

Indeed, we see in verse 22, skip ahead to 22 with me in Exodus chapter 9, this very thing happened as God said it would. Then the Lord said to Moses, stretch out your hand toward heaven, so that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, on man and beast, and every plant of the field in the land of Egypt.

Then Moses stretched out his staff toward heaven, and the Lord sent thunder and hail and fire down to the earth. And the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt.

There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been seen in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the hail struck down every plant in the field and broke every tree of the field.

[10 : 37] Only in the land of Goshen, which is where the Hebrews were living, where the people of Israel were, there was no hail. So it was in these very desperate circumstances of a literally never seen before kind of cataclysm that Pharaoh says the following to Moses.

Look at verse 27. Then Pharaoh sent and called Moses and Aaron and said to them, This time I have sinned. The Lord is in the right, and my people are in the wrong.

Well, that looks like real repentance. There's nothing obviously problematic with what Pharaoh says. In fact, Matthew Henry writes, Pharaoh humbled himself to Moses.

No man could have spoken better. He owns himself wrong, and he owns that the Lord is righteous, and that God must be justified when he speaks, though he speaks in thunder and lightning.

And yet we know, as we continue through the story, this repentance was false. It didn't appear so to Pharaoh, though. He really had entered a particular moment because he was dealing with the consequences of his sin, where his own motivations were more complicated than they would have been had he repented before the repercussions set in.

[12 : 00] So as we analyze this train wreck of Pharaoh's false repentance, one of the things I want to tell you is, boy, it should be good. If you have a sin in your life you need to repent of, to repent of that sin before the consequences set in.

You're just muddying the waters otherwise, and you'll find yourself in a position where you're not sure whether you really are sorry, as if I've offended God sorry, or simply sorry that life has gotten harder as a result of your choices.

Guys, this is one of the really important reasons why we want to teach our kids the knowledge of God's law. This is really a key insight into parenting.

What we want to do is we want to instruct their little consciences and raise them up to be as straight as possible, as reflective of God's law as possible, so that when they sin, a little storm settles in on their conscience, and they repent of that sin well before the consequences, well before you discover the chocolate chip cookies missing and a little bit of chocolate on the edge of the lip, well before the sibling tells on the other, and so on and so forth, you will have a child who comes to you, ideally, and says, I've got a storm in my conscience, and I've got to repent of this thing even before I've been found out.

You know, suppose someone is struggling with the sin of worry, and they are just consistently finding their minds going to a place of worry. Well, if you don't figure that out, eventually you're going to be dealing with anxiety attacks and bad health and lack of sleep and so on and so forth.

[13 : 47] The consequences of that sin will come to you, but man, it just gets so much more complicated. As someone who's walked with people through that stage of life, it just becomes so much more complicated to help that person sort out what's really going on in their hearts when they've got this circumstantial hail falling down on their heads.

So we see that Pharaoh is obviously really motivated by the end of the hail. We see that in verse 28. He says, after he says that he has sinned, the next thing he says to Moses is, Plead with the Lord.

There has been enough of God's thunder and hail. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer. We're starting to get little hints of why his repentance, which appeared so sound in the previous verse, is actually not so sound.

And one of them is that he is in a hurry to get the consequences of his sin lifted off of him. So first advice I would give you in your own repentance is try to get there before the consequences do.

It'll be a much simpler thing to sort out. A second one is simply, what do you do when you've waited too long and you are suffering the consequences? What do you do then?

[15 : 02] Well, here's what not to do. Don't do what Pharaoh did and plead with the Lord for those consequences to be removed. And here's why. Those consequences have worked somewhat to teach you that what you're doing is wrong.

And if the hail had continued, Pharaoh would have been continued to be humbled. The interesting thing about Pharaoh, and this is probably true of all of us to some degree, is that when hardship comes, he's humbled.

But then when peace comes, he's puffed up. And this is a challenge we all have with our own repentance. And so what you don't want to do, if the consequences have already happened or already happening, what you don't want to do is to get those out of there as quickly as possible.

No, make good use of them. If they've fallen, let them teach you. What you ought to be praying in situations where you've allowed your sin to go to seed and the consequences are hurting you, what you ought to pray to the Lord is simply, don't fix this until you fix me.

Let this hardship, let this discipline have its full effect on my soul so that in due time, I'm not simply going to return back to a puffed up state as soon as you bring peace back into my life.

[16 : 21] You ought to know enough. I think one of the key kind of fundamentals to true repentance is a lack of self-trust. It's a lack of trust in self. It's a suspicion toward our own motives.

And Pharaoh had enough evidence at this stage where he could have known, you know, I really actually need the hail to keep up until I make this final, until I actually obey.

It would be safer for me in the long run. It would be safer for Egypt in the long run if this hail continued until I actually obey the Lord. So again, I would love for you to repent before the consequences come.

But if you've waited and they're here, well, you might as well let them continue to teach you and say to the Lord, don't fix this situation until you've fixed me.

There's a third evidence of Pharaoh's false repentance. And that is just that throughout the whole saga, beginning in chapter 7, going all the way to 14, Pharaoh is constantly trying to negotiate his obedience.

[17 : 24] He's trying to negotiate the terms of his obedience. He's trying to negotiate a partial surrender. Guys, have you ever done that with the Lord?

Have you ever known, like, this is what he wants? And I'm going to cut some slices off here and there. I'm going to create a situation that looks close to what God's asking me to do, but I'm still going to hold this or that attitude, this or that secret practice, or so on and so forth.

I'm going to hold on to some of it, but I'm going to obey God with as much of it as I dare. Pharaoh does this repeatedly. In the fourth plague, when the flies come, Pharaoh starts trying to bargain with God.

Now, if you want to know if you know who God is, if you're bargaining with him, you don't know who he is. If you're trying to shark tank God, he's like, I'll give you 20% for, you know.

If that's the vision you have, that you can negotiate the terms of your surrender, this is a good evidence that you don't know God like you ought to know God.

[18 : 32] And so we see that in spite of Pharaoh using the right words and talking, I've sinned against God, he is in the right, I am in the wrong, the fact that he was so regularly trying to negotiate with God shows us that he doesn't really know that God is who he really is.

So with the flies, Pharaoh says this to Moses, you can leave, just don't go very far away. Negotiated terms of surrender. And Moses is like, no, no, no, we're going to do what we want to do.

In the eighth plague, Pharaoh makes another attempt at negotiating. He's willing to let some of the people go, but not all of the people go. And then in the ninth plague, the darkness strikes the whole land.

You can't see your hand in front of your face. And Pharaoh says to Moses, okay, okay, you can go, but you have to leave your livestock here. You see, he's constantly trying to negotiate what has to be, by the very nature of the situation, a total and complete surrender.

So you might look at that whenever you sense that God's calling you to change, to repent. Don't go halfway. This is a recipe for disaster. Don't go halfway.

[19 : 48] Insist on immediate and complete obedience. It's really the safest way forward. And the final thing we can say as we analyze Pharaoh's train wreck is that, well, you don't want to get addicted to the benefits that your sin provides.

You don't want to get addicted to the fruit of your sin. Now, what I mean by that is that Pharaoh had become dependent on a lifestyle that was made possible by his sin.

What was his sin? He was enslaving the people of Israel. He would not let them go. And we find, as we work through the story, that one of the reasons through this is that he was benefiting from their free labor.

He had built a whole system. Friends, I hope this strikes you. Just be careful here. He'd built a whole system, a whole lifestyle, around one benefit of a sin he needed to repent of.

His whole Egyptian economy, his whole manner of ruling, his whole governmental approach was dependent on a free labor force.

[20 : 54] And so he had grown addicted to one of the things his sin was bringing him. And in growing addicted to that benefit, it just becomes that much more difficult to finally, completely, and totally let go.

So, at the end of the killing of the firstborn, at the end of the tenth plague, Pharaoh seems to have been utterly done. He calls Moses and Aaron together and says, get out now.

All of you, get out now. His resolve seems impenetrable. He's like, we want you gone. He seems broken. So, Israel moves out of Egypt, going all the way up to the Red Sea.

And while they're in the Red Sea area, we read the following in chapter 14. Chapter 14, verse 5. When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people.

And they said, what is this we have done that we have let Israel go from serving us? And so, he and his armies chased the Hebrews all the way to the Red Sea.

[22 : 09] And there, of course, we know he met his maker. And that's, just as an aside, one of the important lessons from the life of Pharaoh is that false repentance is burning the clock.

And you will eventually run out of time and meet your end, having never actually exercised true repentance.

That was the fate of Pharaoh. In chapter 9, Moses says to Pharaoh, you do not yet fear the Lord. And I thought about that word, yet. You do not yet fear the Lord.

That's similar to what Paul writes in Philippians when he says that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. Every single person will eventually realize the error of their ways. It's just a question of do you realize it while the time of repenting is still here?

Or do you come to realize that God was worthy of your fear and total obedience after the time for repentance has passed? Pharaoh came to realize that God was God of all the earth.

[23 : 10] As he looked up and saw a wall of water coming crashing down on him, he felt his first real fear of the Lord. But the time for repenting was up.

Now, what could Pharaoh have done differently? What he needed to understand is that he had built his lifestyle around this particular sin. And there was no way of repenting of this particular sin without dramatically affecting and rearranging his lifestyle.

You see, if Pharaoh had let the people go, he would have to have essentially halted most of his building projects at the time. A wage inflation would have taken place with all of that free labor exiting the market.

He would have had to pay the lowliest of the Egyptians, you know, \$20 an hour to work at McDonald's or whatever. You know, his whole life would have had to be rearranged if he was going to obey God.

And friends, this is just an unfortunate part of what sin does to us. Over time, it not only nestles into our heart and burrows in there, but we get to a point where we recognize, in order for me to obey God, now my whole life has to be rearranged.

[24 : 25] I've got to go through what Pharaoh would have to go through, which is kind of a withdrawal, kind of a national withdrawal, in a sense, of free labor. And if we let sin sit around for long enough, Hebrews says it easily entangles, and if we let sin sit around for long enough, it becomes a part not only of our lives, but of our lifestyle.

And suddenly we have this sense, the flesh is sure to remind us, that it is essentially impossible for us to get rid of this or that sin because it is such a central part of our life.

This is particularly true of certain sins. For instance, the sin of lying creates, over time, this sort of reality distortion tool where you get used to being able to tell lies and you get used to being able to navigate your own incompetence or your own problems with a lie placed here or there.

And what if the Lord were to tell you, you've got to stop lying today? You know, your whole life would be harder than it was under that previous administration where you had this sort of ability to print money, as it were.

You had an ability to sort of fake your way through things. Think about this with all the various dopamine-seeking behaviors that people become enslaved to. There's all sorts of them.

[25 : 46] I won't list them now, but lots of people have particular sins they need to repent of. But in order to repent of those sins, they're going to have to go through a kind of dopamine withdrawal. They're going to have to go through some really hard and austere experiences.

There's a great example of this kind of thing in the book of Ephesians. In Ephesians 4, verse 28, Paul says, Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

So the thief's life is going to get a lot harder when he stops his stealing vocation and starts to try to get a real job. He used to get what he needed easily enough.

He didn't have to spill his own blood, sweat, and tears to the acquisition of his own needs. He could simply steal from the fruits of other people's labor. And in order to repent, he has to do honest work with his own hands, something he's probably not used to doing.

And he has to wait through. He'll probably get a bad boss, too. So he'll be physically exhausted. He'll have a terrible boss, and he'll have blisters on his little witty thief hands. In order for him to leave his old lifestyle, he has got to have some theological transformation happen in his heart.

[27 : 11] And here's the key thing about repentance. And if you're wondering, gosh, I don't know if I'm truly repentant or falsely repentant, here's what I would tell you. True repentance is born of a faith that sees not only the sin as terrible, but God as good and sufficient and willing to support you as you go through whatever withdrawal it is, as you go through whatever rearranging is necessary in your life.

The same God who convicts you of your sin, the same God who will discipline you for your sin, is also happy, happy to walk with you through the wilderness as you rebuild a new life based on righteousness and not on the indulgence of your own flesh.

This thief, if he's going to obey Paul's words, has to make a pretty austere shift. And for some of you, getting rid of something, acknowledging a sin, confessing a sin, getting to the root of something, not only dealing with it when the circumstances emerge, for some of you, handling things at this level will mean your lifestyle will at least temporarily not be like you like it to be.

But here's the thing about this thief in our imagination. His hands hurt. He's building calluses he should have built a long time ago. He's paying dues that he should have paid a long time ago.

He's not having a fun day. But his heart is no longer the heart of a thief. There's an internal joy, an internal reward that emerges as the consequence of this repentance.

[28 : 43] So your flesh is going to try to scare you and say you can't possibly make this change or confess that sin or just completely obey. Your life is too integrated into this. Your lifestyle pivots around this particular sin.

And I'd say, yeah, it's not going to be hard or it's not going to be easy. But if you don't believe God is a good God, then why do you want to repent anyway?

And it's like, well, this is causing problems in my life. No, no, no, no. You know, there's another king in the Bible who has a lot of things in common with Pharaoh.

They're both kings. They've both sinned. They're both confronted by a prophet. This other king I'm talking about is King David. And King David is ready to rearrange everything because he knows that the God who has convicted of his sin will also carry him through the real work of repentance that needs to take place over time.

So, friends, I think one of the things to just remember is that when you are engaged in an ongoing sin, your faith isn't, by definition, your faith isn't really that great.

[30 : 02] You're tired. You're not tired because of God. You're tired because you're playing God. You're tired. You're weary. You have a little spirit, little courage. And it's so easy for the flesh to just put a fingertip and tilt the scales to you delaying and deferring and negotiating because you look at the realities that you would have to face if you just fully repented and think, I can't do it.

That's what Augustine went through. Augustine went through this experience where he was extremely, what's the word, promiscuous in his youth, gets saved and knows that that is no longer for him.

That world is no longer for him. But you talk about a dopamine addiction, living in a culture where that was the norm, Augustine really struggled with this idea that now that he had given his life to the Lord, he had to trust the Lord to take care of him as he figured out how to live this new way.

And Augustine's famous, and this is in his confessions, he's famous for saying something like, command what you will, but enable what you command. You can tell me what to do only if I trust that you'll do what you're telling me to do in me.

I don't have the power to do this. I can't do it on my own. But the very reason I want to repent is because God is good. He is the ruler of all the earth.

[31 : 35] And so I can trust him. Pharaoh should have simply come out one day and said, friends, I've screwed up. We've built our whole national economy on free labor. We've built our whole national economy on sinning against these people.

We've got to stop. And in stopping, our lives aren't going to be as good. But we can trust that the same Lord who's convicted us, who's brought these mighty plagues on us, the same Lord who has done that will also bring mighty blessings on us as we endeavor to obey.

So that's a brief rundown of Pharaoh's train wreck. The basic things I would want you to just hear is, first of all, try your best to repent before the repercussions come.

If there's a storm in your conscience now over this or that thing, let that storm be the storm that drives you to repentance. Don't wait until your motives, by definition, get all muddled as you navigate a harder life as a consequence of your sins.

But if you've waited too long and the consequences are already upon you, listen, I know it's not going to be fun, but let them have their full work. Look, tell the Lord, do not fix these things until you've fixed me.

- [32 : 48] Don't try to negotiate with God. That's just such a low faith move. You don't know who you're dealing with. If you're trying to negotiate with God, give him your full obedience. Go above and beyond what he's even asking you to do.

And finally, do your best not to get addicted to the fruit of your sin. It will make repentance so much more difficult. But if you're already in the situation where you sort of built your lifestyle around this or that fruit that comes from your sin, then you need to trust the Lord.

You need to trust that the Lord will be with you. The same one who has convicted you and commanded you will enable you to obey. Now, let's wrap this up.

For the past few months, we've been talking a lot about Pharaoh, and for whatever reason, that is an incredibly difficult word for me to spell when I type it. And so I am so done with spell-checking Pharaoh.

I promise you it's been a thousand times in the past few months. I just can't seem to type this word right. Well, thankfully for me, and that lame annoyance, we're done talking about Pharaoh.

- [34 : 02] And do you know why? Because Pharaoh didn't repent. And now he's just a byword in history, and he doesn't make it out of chapter 14 in the book of Exodus, which we'll continue in.

I'm kind of done with Pharaoh in general. But before we move on, let's just make sure we understand his purpose in God's story. Firstly, God is showing us two things in the life of Pharaoh.

The first one is who we can be without Christ. Who we can be without the Holy Spirit. What we can be at our worst. When we look at Pharaoh, we see answers to that.

And we're also being shown something else. Not about us, but about God. Over and over again throughout the plagues, God is clear about why he's doing what he's doing.

And it's to show himself in a particular way. Exodus 7, 5. The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord. Exodus 17. By this you shall know that I am the Lord.

- [35 : 04] Exodus 8, 10. So that you may know that I am the Lord. And there is no one like our God. Exodus 22. That you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth.

Exodus 9, 14. So that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. Exodus 9, 29. So that you may know the earth is the Lord's. Exodus 10, 2. That you may know that I am the Lord.

Exodus 14, 4. I will get glory over Pharaoh. That the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord. Exodus 14, 18. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.

He is Lord. One of the things we've been taught through this season and going through Pharaoh's life is that God is God. There is none like him in all the earth.

He is Lord over all the earth. What do we do with this knowledge? Well, this knowledge tells us why we should repent. He sees us. He cares what we do and don't do.

- [36 : 05] He is our creator and king and has the right to expect our obedience. And this great God over all the earth cannot be hidden from.

As Psalm 139 says, where can I go to flee your spirit? Nowhere. And so one of the reasons we ought to repent is because the God of the universe is holy.

He is concerned about our lives. And he calls us to obedience. But the other thing we should see when we understand that this big God is over all of this.

Is that the same God who expects our obedience also empowers our obedience. The same God who expects our obedience also empowers our obedience.

As Augustine said, command what you will, only grant what you command. Let me leave you with this word from the end of 1 Thessalonians where Paul says, Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely.

[37 : 09] And may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who called you is faithful.

He who called you to obedience is faithful. He who called you to be kept blameless, spirit, soul, and body is faithful.

He will surely do it. He will surely do it. Let's pray. Well, Father God, I just lift up these saints to you right now.

We've held the word to them and shown them what the word says. We've seen the tragic example of Pharaoh's false repentance. And Lord, as I genuinely love these people, I pray you would spare them from that or deliver them from that.

And help them to experience the true repentance that is possible through Jesus Christ. He who calls us to this repentance is faithful. And he will surely do it.

[38 : 15] Father God, I pray that we would not have any Pharaohs in our midst. None that have some moments of momentary repentance, momentary sorrow, but then in the end return to their sin like a dog returns to its vomit.

Lord, instead, give us through your grace, through your Holy Spirit, the power to see our sin as it really is. And to see, God, that you are worthy of our obedience. Help us, Lord, not to negotiate with you.

Help us, Lord, not to look at the life changes that would need to happen if we obeyed you and shrink back. God, you are worthy of our obedience. And you are more than able to keep us and to help us, Lord, learn to live the way that you have us live.

So we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Now, this Lord's table is for anyone who sees that their need for Jesus is complete.

That they need Jesus and they would be nowhere without him. We don't care if you're a member of Providence or not. We simply gather together in the name of Jesus Christ and observe the table set before us.

[39 : 23] In a way, Exodus is kind of a sad story. Because in some sense, what happens to Pharaoh also happens to the Hebrews. That first generation also fails to find repentance that leads to life.

It's a book, as we work through it, that demands we have good news that comes from the New Testament. And that good news is that Jesus Christ has offered himself as our righteous sacrifice and given himself up, not only for our sins, but also for our freedom.

So that we can walk with him in the power of the Holy Spirit. So if you're a believer in Jesus this morning, you heard this message, you thought, I really need to repent. You know, you can work this into that.

You can say, Lord, I really need you. And I really need this gospel. Now let me taste and see that the Lord is good. So come. So come.

So come.