Grace and peace this day, my friends. Today we will continue our year long walk through Scripture with a brief look at the second book of the Bible, Exodus.

The Israelites grow as a people in Egypt because the patriarch Jacob (later called Israel) and his family move there at the request of Jacob’s son Joseph, who has risen to prominence in Egyptian government. However, their growth in numbers and prosperity become a threat to the Egyptians, and thus the Egyptians enslave them for 430 years, until the day when Scripture records that “God heard their groaning and he remembered His covenant with Abraham, and with Isaac, and with Jacob” (2:24).

As a result, God decides to send Moses to confront Pharaoh, and meets Moses in the famous scene of the burning bush. Moses tries to get out of the job, and finally has this exchange with the Lord:

“Moses said to God, ‘Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?’ God said to Moses, ‘I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you.’’ God also said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’

“This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation” (3:13-15).

This is a remarkable scene. First, God gives Moses His personal name: “I am.” While that sounds somewhat mysterious to our modern ears, in Hebrew it has deep meaning. It is a form of verb that at the same time contains a past, present, and future tense. Thus, God, in referring to Himself in this way, is speaking to His eternal and enduring nature.

Second, He invites Moses and the Israelites to call Him by this name. Imagine, on a much smaller scale, if the president said to you, “Just call me Joe” or the pope said, “feel free to call me Francis.” God is, on the one hand, invoking His holy and eternal nature, but at the same time inviting us into an intimate relationship by allowing to call Him by His personal name.

Lastly, God invites us into this relationship as well by stating that we can call Him by this name “from generation to generation.

Amazing. The God of the universe so loves us and desires relationship with us, that He wants nothing more than for us to simply call upon Him by name.
So, my prayer for you today is this: know that the God of Moses is also the God of the year 2022. Go ahead and call upon Him by name. Jehovah, Yahweh, Almighty, Most High. I promise, He’s ready to listen.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

January 11
Greetings, DGCC Family.

Continuing with the book of Exodus. We see that as Moses confronts Pharoah, Pharoah’s heart becomes increasingly hardened, first of his own accord, and then of God’s accord. No amount of plague or pestilence will convince him to free the Israelites. Finally, God has had enough, and the ultimate plague will be served upon Egypt: the taking of every firstborn son in the land, including Pharoah’s.

However, God instructs Moses to tell the Jewish families to slaughter a male lamb (or goat) without defect, and smear some of the blood on the outside doorway entering the home. In this way, the plague of death will “pass over” that household, sparing the Jews from this curse. This is the Passover holiday that Jewish people honor and celebrate to this day.

This is how Scripture records that night:

“At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead” (12:29-30).

The Jewish people would have had no way of knowing it, but God was foretelling a time when 1,300 years later, the blood of another “lamb without defect” would also save us from death. His blood would not stain a doorway, but a cross set into the rocky ground on a hill called Calvary.

So, my prayer for you today is this: go ahead and remember a different kind of Passover. The sacrifice not of a lamb of the field, but the Lamb of God, whose blood allows us, if we place our faith in Him, to pass from worldly life and not into death, but eternal life.

IHS,
Pastor Lou
January 12

Greetings and peace to you, DGCC Family.

As we have seen before, God is a God of covenant, that is, He is a God of promise and sacred oath. We have discussed before the covenants He made with Noah, Abraham, David, and so on. This theme repeats itself throughout the Old Testament as a reminder that unlike the many pagan gods, the one true God is true to His Word. Moses reminds the Israelites of this as they leave Egypt and are about to cross the Red Sea:

The Lord said to Moses, “Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether human or animal.” Then Moses said to the people, “Commemorate this day, the day you came out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery, because the Lord brought you out of it with a mighty hand. Eat nothing containing yeast. Today, in the month of Aviv, you are leaving. When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites and Jebusites—*the land he swore to your ancestors to give you*, a land flowing with milk and honey…” (13:1-5).

The modern reader might gloss over this, or ask himself, “what’s the big deal?” Here’s the big deal: This promise was over 400 years in the making. And it was no small thing. God promised to make the Israelites into a great nation. He promised to bless the world (with the Messiah) through them. He promised them a King on David’s throne forever. And in order to keep this promises, He had to deal with the hardened heart of Pharoah: water turning to blood, frogs, lice, flies, livestock pestilence, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and the killing of firstborn children.

What do we learn from this today? Here’s what I think: God will go to extraordinary means to keep His promises, even to the death of His Son on the cross in order to keep His promise of eternal life. So, my prayer for you today is this: go ahead and stand on His promises. As the old song says:

Standing on the promises of Christ my King  
Through eternal ages let his praises ring  
Glory in the highest, I will shout and sing  
Standing on the promises of God…

IHS,

Pastor Lou
January 13

Blessings to you this day, my friends.

The Exodus story is one that is steeped in Jewish history and culture, even to this day. Repeatedly throughout Scripture, God reminds His people of how He redeemed them from bondage and set them aside for His special purpose (for example, "he sent them a prophet, who said, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery’" (Judges 6:8)).

The reason this story is so important to the Jewish people, and to us as well, is that it demonstrates that God is not only a God of covenant, but He is also a God of redemption. As He redeemed the Israelites and set them for a special purpose thousands of years ago, so does He do the same for us today. This is how the Lord Himself described it through Moses:

"Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, ‘This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites" (19:3-6).

Think of it...those of us who are followers of Christ are the “treasured possessions” of the Almighty. Think about some “treasured possession” that you have. I have an old pipe wrench that my dad gave me. It was actually his dad’s. It hangs in my workshop in the basement. It’s old and rusty, but it still works. It reminds me of the times my dad let me help him with repairs around the house, and how he was teaching me. It is a treasured possession of mine. This is a picture of it:
I wonder if sometimes we look like that to the Lord. A bit rusty, a bit dirty, a bit beat up. And I wonder if like that old pipe wrench, because of our condition, the Lord treasures us that much more.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

January 14
Happy Friday, everyone!
Here’s your musical devotional for today – turn up the volume and enjoy!
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvpjxfWrjzY&list=PL6E9789DEEA84D32C

IHS,
Pastor Lou