

Sermon Transcript

07.26.2026

Hebrews 11:23-28

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- Good morning. Please open to Hebrews 11. We'll be in vss. 23-28.
- As you open there, I want to tell you a story. Not a silly story, but a biblical story.
- If you are generally aware of redemptive history, it will be familiar to you, but you need to know it to understand Hebrews 11 so I want to make sure we are all on the same page.
- To tell the story, we need to back up to previous weeks to set the stage.
- For over a year now, we've explored the contours of Hebrews and seen this one unifying theme. You know it as a three word summary of the book which is what? Christ is better.
- Better than the angels. Better than Moses. Better than Joshua. A better priest who has offered a better sacrifice in a better sanctuary offering better access to a better covenant built on better promises of better rewards.
- In any and all ways, exhaustively and comprehensively, Christ is better. Hebrews is a systematic exposition of the supremacy and superiority of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- And this would have been of particular interest to the first century Christians reading this book because they were suffering. They were being persecuted. Some had been imprisoned, others had their possessions plundered. They were hurting and scared.
- And that fear provoked a temptation. An enticement to recant, to relent, to drift. Away from Christ. Away from the Church. Back to the seeming safety of the synagogue, back to the Mosaic covenant, back to the shadows.
- But the problem is that shadows don't provide much protection. Shadows don't satisfy, we need substance.
- So the author writes to show that Jesus is better than shadows in order that they might resist the temptation to drift from His supremacy. Why would you ever choose the inferior shadow over the superior substance is the question that undergirds the entire book?
- And this drumbeat of the superiority of Christ grows ever louder as we get into chapters 7-10, the heart of Hebrews.
- It reaches a crescendo in 10:39
 - *But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.* (Hebrews 10:39)
- So those are the two paths. One path leads to destruction. That is the path of shrinking back, falling away, drifting.
- This the path of giving in to fear. For the first century audience to allow the fear of ostracization and marginalization and imprisonment and persecution to lead them to drift.
- And for us, that same temptation. Maybe not the temptation to go back to OT Judaism, but the temptation to despair, to shrink back, to give in to dread and anxiety. The temptation to take our eyes off Christ, like Peter walking on the water.
- The fear of cancer or the fear of a wayward child or the fear of staying in a loveless marriage or the fear of the economy or whatever. Fear always presents a temptation to shrink back, to drift, to fall away, to isolate, and disobey and disengage. That's one path.
- The other path leads to preservation and that path is paved by faith. But what is faith? What does it look like in action? How does faith work?

- That's what chapter 11 is about.
- The author reaches deep into his OT bag to show what faith looked like in the patriarchs. We've seen vivid depictions of faith from Genesis with Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. That takes us through Genesis.
- As we've seen, the author picks and chooses certain aspects of these fathers. He skips over huge sections of the narrative in order to emphasize particular instances that highlight what faith looks like in action. That's the point. He isn't eulogizing these saints so much as commending faith. So previous sermons have taken us through Genesis.
- As we'll see today, the author picks up the narrative in Exodus with Moses. So let's recap the story of Moses.
- When we close the book of Genesis, Joseph has died. But before he dies, he is able to remigrate his entire family to the land of Egypt since Canaan is experiencing severe famine. So the chosen family is saved and the promise is preserved.
- But, as God had told Abraham, Joseph's great-grandfather, in Genesis 15:13-14
 - *Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. (Genesis 15:13-14)*
- That hope was passed on from generation to generation. As we talked about last time, that was what was meant by Joseph mentioning the Exodus. Though the Exodus hasn't happened and won't happen until 400 years after Joseph, still he was able to believe in it because of God's promise to his great-grandfather. The promise was passed down generation to generation and by its light each subsequent son was able to see the unseen God.
- So Israel initially flourished in Egypt, but their prosperity made Pharaoh nervous. What if they rebel, what if the revolt? So he had the Hebrews enslaved; but still he was afraid so he determined to kill all of the male children.
- As Exodus 1:22 says:
 - *Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live." (Exodus 1:22)*
- You may recall this attempt to crush the seed of the woman functions as a type that Herod will eventually reproduce as well since Satan is always working behind the scenes to massacre God's people and her messiah.
- So Pharaoh decides to kill all the male children and enlists the help of Hebrew midwives who strategically disobey his order. We'll see another example of that civil disobedience next week as we consider the faith of Rahab.
- That's the general setting and then the Exodus narrative focuses in on a Levite and his wife who have a child whom they refuse to kill. This child is named Moses and he's kind of a big deal. We'll read about him in our passage today beginning in vs. 23.
- But first, let's pray.
- Self, others, me

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. (Hebrews 11:23)

- We begin not with the faith of Moses, but the faith of his parents. We read about this in Exodus 2

- *Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. (Exodus 2:1-2)*
- Now, in Exodus, we have the phrase fine child, but in Hebrews it says he was beautiful. Where does that come from? Well, the LXX has the same Greek word translated beautiful rather than fine. And we see the same thing in Acts 7
 - *At this time Moses was born; and he was beautiful in God's sight. And he was brought up for three months in his father's house... (Acts 7:20)*
- So read the Exodus account and the reference to his being fine in the 80s sense of the word fine. Like that girl is fine which means beautiful.
- Anyway, because of their faith, they were willing to defy the king's orders.
- And notice how their faith is contrasted with fear.
- This is something that we'll see as a theme in the paragraph. For example, we'll encounter it again in vs. 27.
 - *By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. (Hebrews 11:27)*
- We'll explore this theme more in depth when we get to that verse, but I want you to just see it for now and think about how faith speaks to and confronts fear and how that might have been of particular interest and relevance to the first century audience.
- Undoubtedly they were afraid. The fear of imprisonment, the fear of social marginalization, the fear of persecution. Though they had not yet been martyred, I'm sure the possibility of such lingered. In particular, they likely feared the wrath and anger of the governing authorities just as Moses' parents had every earthly reason to fear the wrath and anger of Pharaoh.
- So this example from Exodus serves a two-fold purpose. It not only gives another example of faith in general, but also a story of faith that speaks to the particular circumstance of fear that is most likely gripping the original audience and perhaps even gripping your own life as you ask yourself of what or whom are you afraid? The fear of death, the fear of man, the fear of suffering, the fear of failure, the fear of shame.
- In particular, where might you fear that fear more than you fear the Lord?
- As we've talked about when it comes to idolatry, an idol can be defined as anything you are willing to sin to acquire, so, ask yourself what fear leads you to sin?
- For example, I got my son's permission to share this, but this past week I asked him to do something for me, but it involved him going into my bedroom at night when all of the lights were out and he was afraid. Now that fear in and of itself isn't sin. Humans have a natural unease in the dark, but when that fear causes disobedience, that's a problem.
- And as I talked to him, I told him that it was okay to be afraid, but not okay to allow that fear to conquer him, to paralyze him, to lead him to disobedience.
- I talk about that a lot when it comes to something like baptism. We're baptizing a couple of guys after services. But I've often talked to people who say they know they need to be baptized, but they are just afraid of the crowds.
- So I'll often tell them about when I was baptized and I was terrified at the time by the idea of being on stage and in the spotlight.
- I was petrified by the idea of public speaking, but even facing the congregation at my baptism was daunting. So I decided to just never look out at the congregation. I got into the water with my back turned to the sanctuary and then was baptized with them only seeing my profile. I never once turned to face the church.

- My point is that I was afraid. It would be years until my fear of being on a stage was conquered, but in that moment I at least confronted it. I didn't give in to it, I didn't let the fear win.
- I knew that to refuse baptism out of fear would be sin.
- So are there areas of rational or irrational fear that are paralyzing you from obedience? Maybe you know you need to get baptized, but are afraid of being seen. Maybe you know you need to confess some sin, but are afraid of the consequences. Maybe you know you need to forgive someone, but you are afraid of getting hurt again. Maybe you need to engage your spouse, but you're afraid of being vulnerable.
- What do you fear so much that you are willing to sin to avoid it? That's a question this passage prompts.
- By faith Moses' parents were willing to defy the king rather than fear his edict. They are an example of how faith does what is right despite the danger.
- Let's keep going. Vss. 24-25.

By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. (Hebrews 11:24–25)

- Continuing in the narrative of Exodus. Moses' parents placed him in a basket in the Nile and that basket was found by the daughter of Pharaoh. She then sends Moses back to be nursed by a Hebrew woman, not knowing it was Moses' actual mother. Then, eventually, he was brought back to Pharaoh's daughter. We read about that in Exodus 2:10
 - *When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, "Because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."* (Exodus 2:10)
- To understand that, we need to understand that Moses sounds like the Hebrew for drew. She named him Moshe because she masha him out of the water.
- So Moses is an Israelite. But he is raised as an Egyptian.
- But now look at Exodus 2:11-12
 - *One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to his people and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his people. He looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.* (Exodus 2:11–12)
- Just reading the Exodus account, you could assume that Moses simply helped out some unknown person who was being oppressed. And he certainly was. But there is more to it than that.
- Notice that he looks this way and that before acting.
- He wasn't just helping because a random stranger was being beaten, but because Moses identified with the man in their shared heritage. This was not a random man, but a Jewish man, one of his own people.
- In other words, his act of saving the Jew and striking down the Egyptian was an act of identifying with the Jews over and against the Egyptians. It was an act of allegiance, a statement of loyalty.
- And consider how that relates to what these first century Jewish Christians are experiencing. Look back to chapter 10
 - *But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those*

in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. (Hebrews 10:32–34)

- Notice the theme of identification. Part of the manifestation of faith is identification with the people of God. They were partners with those mistreated, they had compassion on those in prison.
- That is a fundamental aspect of discipleship as we'll see. You can't identify with Christ without identifying with His body. We'll talk about that in a couple of months in TEC.
- So the question is whether or not your faith leads you to sacrifice for the sake of others. Are you generous with your time, talents, and treasures?
- Are you even aware of the needs around you? Are you so deeply connected to community that you can rejoice with the joys and mourn the sorrows around you?
- Is your life wrapped up in the body of Christ?
- Well, that's what Moses is exemplifying here. He was identifying with the suffering of his people.
- And in doing so, he forfeited his identity in Pharaoh's household, undoubtedly, a life of relative luxury. Certainly for the living standards of the day, I would imagine growing in Pharaoh's household had its privileges and comforts.
- To forsake those conveniences and embrace mistreatment is profoundly counter-cultural, but the author is already preparing us for chapter 12 and how God's people are disciplined by pain and suffering for our good. He is showing us an example of what it looks like to lay aside every weight and sin which easily entangles as the next chapter begins.
- Now, in speaking of that life of luxury, the author references the fleeting pleasures of sin. In essence, that's what all sin entails.
- As the prophet Jeremiah says:
 - *Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water. (Jeremiah 2:12–13)*
- Sin is fleeting. Its temporary. Transient.
- As the Aaronic priests and their priestly ministry were temporary as opposed to the permanence of Christ's ministry as we saw in chapters 7-9, so sin is always fleeting, always temporary, always eventually unsatisfying.
- Sin always promises, but never delivers. Or, you might say it does deliver, but not what it promises. Instead it delivers disappointment and despair.
- So yes, Moses forsakes fleeting pleasure, but not actual joy.
- You see, what faith does is sees through the façade and transient pleasures to the truer delights.
- This reminds me of Captain Jack Sparrow's compass in the Pirates of the Caribbean movies. Throughout the series people assume its broken because it doesn't point north. But its not actually broken. It isn't supposed to point north, but rather its oriented toward your heart's most ultimate desire. Whatever you want most in the world.
- That's like faith. Faith isn't swayed by the world's cardinal directions and pursuit. Faith is able to see into a deeper reality. It sees beyond what is seen.
- So Moses serves as an embodiment of that which then sets the stage for the ultimate exemplar par excellence, Jesus Christ. As we'll read in chapter 12
 - *looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)*

- Notice that He despised the shame and was able to see the future joy and that future joy was His compass that led Him to suffer for the sake of His people as we read about back in chapter 2.
- So Moses is a type of that same principle and is held up so that we too might see through the shadows, that we might reject the mirage.
- Let's keep going. Vs. 26.

He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. (Hebrews 11:26)

- Now, if you were to ask Moses, whatcha doing as he's killing an Egyptian and burying the body, he wouldn't say, I'm considering the reproach of Christ. That's not really the point. Rather, the author is reading the text through a Christological lens. In other words, he is interpreting Moses' actions as a seed that has now fully blossomed in Christ. Everything written in the OT has now found its goal, its end, its telos, its ultimate meaning in Jesus Christ.
- The same way that Abraham didn't know where he was going, but the author said that he was ultimately sojourning toward a heavenly home, so Moses may not have known he was bearing the reproach of Christ, but that's the ultimate reality.
- To be identified with God's people means to be identified with Him. You can't identify with Christ without identifying with His body.
- As Cyprian of Carthage in the 3rd century said,
 - "No man can have God as his father who has not the church as his mother." (Cyprian)
- And once again, we see a contrast between two pleasures. You have the treasures of Egypt vs. the wealth of some other reward.
- Notice how this relates to vs. 6
 - *And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.* (Hebrews 11:6)
- And how that relates to what we saw in chapter 10
 - *Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.* (Hebrews 10:35)
- Like Dickens writes about in the Tale of 2 Cities or Augustine in his discourse on 2 cities and 2 loves, so the author of Hebrews holds out 2 contrasting visions of wealth, 2 types of reward.
- We see the same thing all over the NT. Here are a few examples of that kind of thinking:
 - *Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* (Matthew 6:19–21)
 - *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.* (Romans 8:18)
 - *So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.* (2 Corinthians 4:16–18)
 - *As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus*

storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. (1 Timothy 6:17–19)

- As we've seen earlier in the chapter, faith inherently seeks for reward.
- Christianity is not about self-denial. Or at least self-denial isn't ultimate. It is temporary self-denial of lesser pleasures for the sake of greater eventual reward. In other words, you can either have temporary fleeting sin or you can deny yourself that and have eternal glorious joy.
- The Christian ethic is not Kantian. Immanuel Kant was an Enlightenment philosopher that we mentioned back in vs. 6. He's significant for his view of ethics that an act is only truly virtuous if done out of a sense of self disinterested duty. If you do something for a reward, benefit, pleasure, or joy, you rob that act of its moral worth.
- But there is no such thing as a disinterested duty. God has designed us to seek joy, as sure as He has designed us to seek food or water or air to breathe.
- We were made to worship. We were made to will, to want, to enjoy. The fall has frustrated that longing, but not quenched it.
- In fact, everything we do is for the sake of joy or happiness. As Blaise Pascal said, all men seek happiness. There is no exception to this rule. Everything we do in life is ultimately about the will's orientation toward whatever it values. The heart always seeks for treasure.
- If you want to know what you value, just look at what you do, what you think and say and desire.
- The question is not whether we seek reward, but where we seek it. Not whether, but which.
- Will we seek it in broken cisterns that can hold no water or in the living fount? Will we seek it in a bowl of stew or in a birthright and blessing? Will we seek it in forbidden fruit or in a massive paradise of plenty?
- Will we seek it in isolation or community? In internet images or intimacy w/ our spouse? In shallow relationships or deep friendships? In lies or truth? In submission to Christ or rebellion?
- Moses was a man of faith and faith both believes that God exists and that He rewards those who seek Him so Moses was driven by faith in the promises and rewards of His God.
- So he was willing to bear the reproach. That's a word we've seen before. 10:33
 - *sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. (Hebrews 10:33)*
- We'll see it again in chapter 13 where the author will tell us to:
 - *Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. (Hebrews 13:13)*
- What would cause you to willingly pursue reproach?
- Only confidence in some greater reward.
- As Christ says in the beatitudes
 - *Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:11–12)*
- Faith says, I believe that. I trust that. I am confident in that reward. I know that every abuse, every reproach will be sufficiently repaid.
- IOW, faith is the ability to see the future beyond the current circumstance. Beyond the broken marriage or wayward child, beyond the medical diagnosis and prognosis, beyond the addiction.
- As we read in vs. 1
 - *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Heb 11:1)*
- Faith is always hopeful. As we've often said, there's an inherent optimism to Christianity and that comes from the contours of Scripture.

- The trajectory of your life may show no signs of hope. From a human perspective, things seem impossible. Why would your spouse change when for 40 years they haven't? Why would your parent apologize when for your entire life they have been self-righteous? Why would you child bend the knee to Christ when she's been chasing sin for so long? Why would I keep trusting the Lord when my sexual desires have been oriented toward disorder my entire life?
- But the resurrection changes the math. For millennia, ever since the creation of the world, a tomb marked finality. Not once had a man ever simply gotten up and walked out of the tomb on his own accord. But Christ.
- Death is the absence of hope and yet even death was overcome. So why can't your circumstance?
- In other words, if the grave is empty, and even death has been defeated, if God is truly sovereign over all, if Christ is truly better, then what right do you have to despair?
- Let's keep going. Vs. 27.

By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. (Hebrews 11:27)

- Back to the Exodus account. The very next day after saving the Hebrew and killing the Egyptian, he is out walking around and sees two Jews fighting so he attempts to intervene, but one of them says this:
 - *He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought, "Surely the thing is known." (Exodus 2:14)*
- Remember how he had looked around before acting? He thought he hadn't been seen, but now that wishful thinking has been laid bare.
- And what is his response? He is afraid.
- So why does Hebrews say that he wasn't afraid?
- Thanks for asking. That's a great question.
- I think the answer is to say that He feared the King of heaven more than he feared the king of Egypt. He feared the Lord more than he feared Pharaoh.
- In other words, the author of Hebrews doesn't actually mean that Moses didn't experience any fear at all, but that his faith in God and fear of God made it seem as if he didn't fear Pharaoh.
- As Calvin states:
 - "Moses so endured, as though he was taken up to heaven, and had God only before his eyes; and as though he had nothing to do with men, was not exposed to the perils of this world, and had no contests with Pharaoh." (John Calvin)
- In other words, whatever fear Moses experienced wasn't the ultimate reality in his life. His faith bore a more substantial weight.
- And again, we can extrapolate from that to our own experience. Fear is a normal part of our human experience. Fear is a natural response to danger. Fear isn't inherently sinful. In fact, the Bible commands and commends fear in certain contexts.
- But when our fear leads to sin. When we fear something more than we fear God. When our fear leads to disobedience and disbelief, then fear has exercised an undue and wicked influence upon us.
- Moses had something to fear and yet that fear didn't get the loudest or last word. God's voice was louder and more authoritative than that of terror.
- That's what the author is getting at by saying he endured as seeing him who is invisible.
- We've encountered that imagery a number of times.

- In vs. 1 faith is the conviction of things not seen. In vs. 3, what is seen is not made out of what is visible.
- So faith is the ability to see what cannot be seen.
- This reminds me of the story of Elisha and his servant in 2 Kings 6.
- In case you don't recall, I'll remind you.
- Syria was at war with Israel and the Syrians decide they want to take the prophet Elisha out because the Lord is continuously telling him all the Syrian's secret strategies. So they finally corner Elisha and we'll pick up the narrative there. 2 Kings 6:15
 - *When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" He said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. (2 Kings 6:15-17)*
- This is what faith does. This is how faith sees. Faith sees God working in the midst of the bad marriage or negative prognosis or unemployment or whatever. You don't even need to know how He is working. Just that He is. Faith says, God is doing something in my cancer, something in my marriage, something in my family, something in my job.
- Faith says, God hasn't abandoned me because He's promised to not abandon me. Faith says, God is working this for good because His word promises that He works all things for good.
- Disbelief says, why isn't God working? Faith says, I know He is, even if I can't see what or how.
- There is something God wants me to see here. He wants me to see His sovereignty and see His goodness and see my responsibility to be faithful in spite of the circumstance.
- God is doing a million things and I may only see 3 or 4.
- Faith says, my circumstance isn't sovereign. My God is sovereign. My fear isn't final, God's word is final.
- Let's keep going. Vs. 28.

By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. (Hebrews 11:28)

- So far in Hebrews 11, we've seen a theme of death.
- The death of Abel, the undeath of Enoch, the death that surrounded Noah, the dead womb of Sarah, the near death of Isaac, Jacob's death and Joseph's death are mentioned as well.
- And we've seen sacrifice. Abel's sacrifice. The near sacrifice of Isaac.
- So now those themes converge in the story of the Passover.
- We read about that in Exodus 12. At this point, Moses has already spent 40 years in exile outside Egypt. He returns as an ambassador of God. There are 9 plagues by means of which God judges Egypt and the final plague involves the Destroyer. God will judge Egypt one final time, this time by the death of the firstborn of all homes. But God gives a sign to Israel, a sign of salvation from the surrounding death, as sure a sign as Noah's ark. All within the sign are saved, all outside will face judgment.
- That sign is what Passover is about. We read about it in Exodus 12:22-23.
 - *Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to strike the*

Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you. (Exodus 12:22–23)

- Now, that takes faith. If I was told that someone or something was coming to my house tonight to kill my firstborn child, I wouldn't spend my time painting my doorway red with blood, I'd be loading ammo into some guns.
- But the Passover takes faith. Faith that God's word is true. That you don't need guns or swords. That you need the blood of a lamb painted on the doorposts. That as you hear the wails of grief spring up over the land, you don't need to fear. Your child is safe.
- The same is true of all God's signs. In just a minute we'll partake of communion. How in the world can a little cracker and a shot of wine communicate forgiveness of sins and vertical communion with Christ and horizontal communion with each other?
- And after services we'll celebrate baptism. How can dunking someone in a hot tub represent regeneration, cleansing, and eternal life?
- Because those signs represent divine promises. So faith adheres to those promises, clings to those promises. Faith sees that death doesn't have the final word. God does.
- Likewise, adultery doesn't have the last word. Betrayal doesn't have the last word. Divorce or abuse or unemployment or Alzheimer's or pneumonia or addiction doesn't have the last word.
- As Hebrews 1 begins, Christ is the final word, the better word.
- Faith sees beneath the façade of supremacy that our feelings invest in our circumstances.
- Faith sees that God's word is better, His promises are better, His rewards are better and thus faith is able to endure, to persevere, to hold fast. Because Christ is better.
- Let's pray.

Communion

- Fence table
- Picking up the imagery of the Passover from today's text, you are aware that the Lord's supper was originally instituted during a Passover meal.
- And that meal symbolized something different and distinct.
- It was unlike other meals in that there was a promise attached to it.
- There was an objective meaning to the meal. It symbolized the original night of the Passover when all whose doors were covered in the blood of the lamb were spared the wrath and judgment of the Lord.
- Well, that's what communion means as well. Communion is a meal that symbolizes Romans 8:1, there is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.
- That's true regardless of how you are doing or feeling this morning. If you are in Christ, then you are forgiven and loved.
- So every couple of months, we've been reciting a traditional prayer of confession during communion and I want us to do that again and then I'll declare a traditional assurance of pardon as a sign of the objective reality of our inheritance in Christ.
- Will you recite the following with me:
 - "Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;

we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will,
and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.”

- On the basis of this sincere confession, we are confident that this meal means that we are perfected, forgiven, justified and sanctified. By the authority of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the meal represents the entire forgiveness of all our sins, past, present, and future, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- Because on the night...