

Escape
From Slavery to Freedom
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The reason we don't do the Lord's Supper more often in church is because I believe it is a very special event. I believe it is a very important event. It symbolizes what God has done; paid the price to set us free and I never want it to be tacked on to the end of a service and I never want it to be taken for granted and I never want it to become a ritual. So as we begin to take the Lord's Supper, I want you to begin to prepare your hearts. I'm going to ask you to pray. I'm going to ask you to pray for yourself though and I know that's not something that a lot of us do but you're probably going to be tempted when you bow your head to pray for that person you brought to church with you today, to pray for that family friend, to pray for that person next to you and say God, hopefully this will be the day they get it. Hopefully this will be the day that they will receive you and get their life on track. But I am going to ask you not to do that today, not to pray for anybody else except you. To pray for your eyes to be open, to pray for God to enter and to speak to your heart and for you to see yourself the way God sees you. As we pray that prayer, listen, I want to be honest with you, if you want to bow your head and pray God just leave me alone, that's fine because that's an honest prayer and God knew that when you walked in the door. So just pray that. When you bow your head pray, God just leave me alone, I don't want anything to do with you. That's honest so do that. But just pray for yourself. I am not going to lead the prayer, take just a moment for you to pray and then I will close so if you'll just bow your head and close your eyes. (pause) Father, speak to us as only you can in Jesus name, Amen.

Today we are starting a study in the book of Exodus. We're going to go through the book of Exodus and look at what it means. Exodus means escape and it's a story of how the people of Israel went from slavery into freedom and it's a story that we need to repeat in our own life daily. How we can escape from slavery and how we can move into the freedom that God has for us? I don't know about you but I have a lot of trouble feeling trapped and I have what is called probably semi claustrophobia. I am not fully claustrophobic and I don't have seizures and throw up, but it's close. You take away my oxygen and I completely go out of my mind. Now this was kind of rough when I was a youth minister because every time we got in a swimming pool all the young people wanted to dunk me. I hurt a lot of teenagers trying to dunk me, because me being under someone else's control and being underwater...not a good place. We were in Destin a few weeks ago and we had this condo with an elevator that went up to the third floor but this elevator was about the size of me. I mean it was tiny. So you get in this elevator and the kids want to ride the elevator, now the elevator doesn't work when we

first get there and then it finally starts working and the kids want to ride it and I am thinking do I really want to get in there? What am I going to do if it gets stuck between floors? Because I knew that I would embarrass myself. I knew that if it got stuck between floors I would scream like a little girl and I would cry like a baby until somebody fixed it and if I stayed in there very long and it started getting hot, I would go out of my mind. So every time I would get in that elevator, me and God got real close! God, please just let it work, please just let it work, don't let it get stuck. I'd open the door and praise Jesus and have a worship service every time it would open because I don't like being trapped. I don't like being in bondage and God looks down at us and says listen, I want to set you free. The book of Exodus is all about being set free and we want to talk about that freedom and we want you to understand that freedom and that some of you are trapped and you're in bondage. For some of you it's your past. You have things in your past that you're ashamed of. There are things in your life that when you start talking about God you start thinking about the things that you've done in the past and you start talking about your life and you get bound up and you get locked up and you can't go there and focus because your past has you in bondage. For some of you it's your fear. You're afraid that if you truly sell out to God, God is just going to wreck your life, God's just going to just turn it upside down so you're afraid to totally sell out to God because you may lose some friends or lose your job or people may look at you differently. For some of you, you never sell out to God because you don't feel worthy. You don't really feel like you're good enough. Everything that we talk about, God loving you, that applies to everybody else, that doesn't apply to me. If you really knew me pastor you wouldn't tell me that God loves me because there is no way that God loves me. Today, I want you to see something about God. I want you to know that God has a plan for your life and I know some of you are afraid of God's plan for your life because you grew up in church and those of you who grew up in church, some church people have told you what God's plan is and God's plan for everybody to go to Africa as soon as they get saved. I am not going to totally sell out because I don't want to go to Africa, I don't want to live in a hut, it's hot enough in Texas, I don't want to go. So you're afraid of God's plans because they've taught you all through the years that God wants you to try harder and if you really want God to love you you'll try harder. If you really want God to be pleased with you you'll read your bible every day, you'll pray every day, you'll give 20% to the church, you'll do this, you'll do that and you're afraid of that. You're like I can't do that I don't want God's plan. I want you to understand that God had a plan for you from the beginning of time, from the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation we see God's plan and it's a plan to love you. A lot of people say that God created man because he was lonely and needed fellowship; that's the wrong answer. Well didn't God want fellowship? Isn't that why he created us? No, God doesn't need us. God had everything he needed. He is completely sufficient in himself. But God wanted a place to pour out his love. God wanted a place to give love so he decided to create man and woman and when he created men and women, he did that to pour out his love so we see the book of Genesis and God is

going through the book of Genesis and he's creating all this incredible stuff and he's not creating it for him, he's creating it for me and you. He creates beautiful mountain tops and he creates beautiful oceans and beautiful scenery and does all these things for your enjoyment. He begins to create these animals for us to enjoy and he looks at Satan and asks, would you like to try one? And then Satan created cats and I know you think that's an opinion but there's some theology to back it up. So as God continued and did all this and Adam comes in, God creates him and God starts to speak to him and what do you think the first three words God said to Adam? We all know the first three words right? Thou shalt not; that's God, that's your concept of God. That's what you've heard about God all your life that's what's been focused on and so you got to know the first three words that God said is thou shalt not. Turn to Genesis 3; I want to show you the first three words. The first three words God said to mankind were you are free. Free; you're not in bondage, you're not made to be enslaved; you're free. I loved put the five words together...you are free to eat. Amen, you're free to eat and I've been doing all I could in the past few weeks. You are free to eat from any tree in the garden. God wanted to give us the freedom, he wanted us to enjoy creation and let me tell you what God gets out of this...God enjoys us, he watches us and he loves it. That's where he gets his joy. That's what worship is, him watching us do things. Now I know a lot of you think that God only loves you when you're in church. God's only happy with me when I'm sitting in church reading my bible. I want you to know that God loves everything you do. God loves to watch you sleep, he loves to watch you play sports; some of you, God loves to watch you do all kinds of things, love on your kids, swim in the pool, go to the lake. He loves watching all of that. The only time God doesn't love watching us is when we sin. The only time that God doesn't love watching us is when we take these chains and we wrap them around ourselves. God doesn't love that. You're free to eat from any tree in the garden but there is one tree in the middle and you need to stay away from that tree because if you eat from that tree you will surely die. Don't eat from that tree, stay away from it. Now, why did God say that? Well, I don't know, why do you tell your children not to play in the highway? Is there a reason you tell your children not to play in the highway? Is it because you don't love your children? Is it because you're mean and you don't want your children to have a real good time and so you tell your children to stay out of the highway. The highways so much fun but I'm not going to get there. No, you tell your children to stay out of the highway for their protection. God told Adam and Eve don't eat from that tree. I want to protect you, if you eat from that tree you're going to die. I have people come to me and say they ate from the tree and they didn't die...really? Have you seen them? Because I'm pretty sure they're dead. God knew what he was talking about. God said if you eat from that tree, now you're free, but if you eat from this tree you're going to die. Don't eat from this tree. So then we have Satan. Satan begins to enter and we have a problem. Apparently we don't like to live in freedom. Apparently we like to bind our hearts up. We have a problem. In fact, tell the person next to you...you have a problem, go ahead. Some of you like that way too

much. I had a guy look at his wife over here and say you're my problem! We have a problem. For some reason we like to be in bondage. For some reason we like to be enslaved. Genesis 3 continues and it says *"Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman,"* Now if I had been in this story, as soon as the serpent raised his head and spoke, story over! I would have been on the other side with the cats because talking snakes doesn't work for me. But the snake, the serpent filled with Satan said *"Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"* You see what Satan's first words to mankind were; did God really say? See because what Satan wants you to do is doubt the word of God. He comes to you and says does the bible really say, because if he can get you to doubt the word of God, he can destroy you and that's what he wants, that's his entire job. The tempter, the accuser, his job was to come in and to tempt you; to accuse you; to bind you in chains, that's what Satan desires to do and the first step is to make you doubt the word of God. I want you to know that this word of God is the perfect word of God; infallible; used for the authority in our life and I've never seen anybody mess their life up following the word of God. You will never mess your life up following his word, but when you start doubting it, did God really say... you're in for some trouble. *"The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden and you must not touch it, or you will die.'* Did God say that? No, Eve is already adding to the bible. Eve's is already adding to the word of God. God said do not eat from the tree; she adds don't even touch it. See because, mankind loves to be in bondage and some of you are in bondage today because of people who have added to the word of God. People have added law, people have added rules and people have told you the bible says...and it says... That's not in the word of God. Some of you who grew up Baptists; we're great at that. We've added all kinds of things to the word of God didn't we? We love adding stuff to the word of God because, you see, we're going to be in chains and if it's not chains to sin, let's be in chains to legalism but let's be in chains one way or another. So Eve added to the word of God like many people do and finds herself in slavery. It goes on, he looks at her and says, *'You won't surely die,' the serpent said to the woman. 'For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'* So here is the second thing that Satan says to man...you won't get caught. It's okay; nobody knows what you're doing. Nobody can see you; it's just between you, go ahead take a bite. Go ahead; open up that computer, go ahead; take that drink, no one can see you, go ahead; it's alright you won't get caught. But you know what? You will. Satan is the father of lies, he continues to lie so the woman looks and hears it and says, *"When the women saw the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye and desirable for gaining wisdom she took some of it and ate it. She also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves."* I know we give women a hard time and talk about how women sin; you know

what's more embarrassing for men? Adam stood right beside her and said nothing. Adam stood beside her and was spineless. Adam stood beside her and allowed Satan to lie to her and never opened his mouth. Satan lied; they took it; they traded freedom for bondage. In fact they realized they were naked and they began to sew leaves together and they began to hide much like many of you are hiding. The story goes on and says, *"Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, 'Where are you?' He answered, 'I heard you in the garden, and was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.'"* Like many of you are hiding today. You're wearing masks and pretending and covering up and you're saying the right words but your life is in chains; your life is in bondage. You try to hide from God but you can't hide from God and in your heart you know it. All of us have been in bondage at one time or another. The bible says, *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* All of us are wrapped in chains and God wants to set us free. But listen, when you do something wrong, when there's that sense that there has to be a payment when something is done wrong, you all know that; we all have a sense of justice in our lives don't we? How many of you have ever bought a brand new car? Don't be embarrassed just raise your hand. Whoa, that's a bunch of you! Offering ought to be good today! If you can afford to buy brand new cars, wow! Have you ever bought a brand new car and somebody messed it up? You park it at Wal-Mart or somewhere and you come out and there is a scratch all the way down the side. How does that feel? Do you want some justice? When you see that happen, hey I don't care if that happens to my truck in the parking lot here at the church, if I go out and Cory Hines has ran into my truck, Cory Hines is gonna pay! Because somebody's got to pay, when something is damaged, somebody's got to pay. When the World Trade Center's fell, didn't all of us say somebody's got to pay? When you hear about a child being molested, don't you want somebody to pay? See that's the justice in our heart and some of you get confused and we talk about the love of God and it's real and we talk about the mercy and grace of God and those are all real, but there is another part of God and that's a holiness part. God is a holy God and he cannot stand in the face of sin. We cannot enter his presence with sin. Somebody has to pay. So here we have Adam and Eve standing before God in their sin and God does something that he continues throughout eternity. It said, *"The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them."* This is how a garment of skin was made. He probably took a lamb that was in the garden and he brought it before Adam and Eve and they saw death for the first time. As he cut that lamb's throat, and that lamb bled all over the ground, and he sheared that lamb and he took it's skin and he made garments, what he did is he took something innocent, something perfect and he spilled it's blood. He killed it so that the guilty could walk free. As he killed that innocent lamb so Adam and Eve could walk free he started something that we are going to see throughout time. Fast forward to Exodus Chapter 12; in Exodus the escape was happening. God was looking down at the children of Israel and

the children of Israel have sin in their life; the nation of Egypt has sin in its life and God is looking at it and he is finally saying enough is enough. With every nation that has ever existed they reach a point and God looks down at that nation and says, I've had enough and then there's a payment. He looks at our lives and he gets to a point and he looks at you and says I've had enough and then he exacts a payment. For the children of Israel he said we're going to do this. On the night that the angel of death comes to this nation, all the first born will be destroyed. That is the payment, that is the penalty for sin, someone has to pay but if you want the angel of death and destruction to pass over you I want you to go out into the field and I want you to find an innocent lamb and I want you to kill that lamb and I want you take it's blood and put it over the door post and on that night when the angel of death comes, when he sees that blood he will pass over you. So you can see the dad going out with the son to the pasture and he picks the perfect lamb and the son says daddy, no don't kill that lamb, that's my favorite one. It's the prettiest of all of them, please dad don't kill that one! And the father says it's either you or him. And he says kill the lamb and that night the angel of death passes over and for generations they celebrated that fact that the blood of the innocent lamb allowed the guilty to walk free. When Jesus came to the earth, he came as a Jew by the way, a lot of you think he had blonde hair and blue eyes, but he came as a Jew. He grew up in their traditions; he celebrated the Passover year after year after year and then as he was getting ready to celebrate his last one he changed the rules. In Luke 22, verse 7 and 8 says *"Then came the day of the Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Jesus sent Peter and John saying, 'Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.'" and his is how it changed in verse 17, "After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said 'Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.'*

you, I want you to confess and be set free because it's going to catch you. The word of God says in Galatians, *"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows."* So today as we take the Lord's Supper, if you're a Christian and you're trying and you want to live for God but you're making mistakes, that's different. Nobody's perfect and we make mistakes but the difference is we run to God and we say God look what I did, I messed up again, and could you take these off me? We may run right back out and wrap the stupid things right back around us again, but we're trying to live our life different. If that's you, you need to take the Lord's Supper and you need to remember that something innocent had to die so the guilty could walk free. But I want to warn you if today you're a Christian and you make no plans to change, today is there is unconfessed sins in your life and you're not repentant, don't take the Lord's Supper. Stay away from it. Don't let it come to you, let it pass you by. I know you're thinking well somebody will see me and see it pass. I don't care what other people think, you better care about what God thinks and today if you're not planning to change your life, if you're not planning on giving up your sin, then let the cup and let the bread pass you by. It says in 1 Corinthians 11:27, *"Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the very body and blood of Jesus. A man ought to examine himself before he eats the bread and eats of the cup for anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body, without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself."* So today, if you're a Christian struggling to get by and trying to live the life, run to Jesus and let him set you free but if you have no intentions of being set free, let it pass. If you're a non Christian, you're in chains, plain and simple. Now I'm not asking if you're a good person, I don't really care about that, I'm asking you have you ever bowed your knee and confessed Jesus. Now, I know in Waxahachie, Texas everybody's saved. You know, when I was six years old I got baptized, didn't ask that, don't care when you were baptized, don't care when you joined the church, don't care if you give thousands of dollars to the church every year. My question is have you bowed your knee and said Father God take away my sins and God you've paid the price? I want to walk free and I want to live for you. Have you prayed that prayer? If you haven't prayed that prayer, please don't take the Lord's Supper because it doesn't mean anything. This is for those of us who are striving to live for Jesus and we want to be set free and we want to remember how much it cost so next week when I bow my head and I say Father forgive me for my sins, it's not something I tag onto the end of the prayer, but I remember with tears in my eyes that the penalty for my sin was my savior dying on that cross and I don't take it lightly. Are you ready, a man ought to examine his own life.