

DEEP PREP GUIDE

UNSTUCK | OCTOBER 5 | BIG GOD STORY

BOTTOM LINE:

God moves us from being stuck to living free.

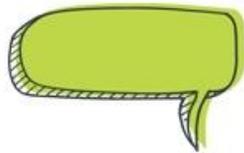
STORY TEXT:

Exodus 12-13

One of the more memorable aspects of the Jewish faith is the celebration of Passover. Our story this week concentrates on the genesis of Passover, namely, the revelation from God to the Israelites that God will give them victory by leading them into the promise land, however they are to have their “liturgy” around a meal where they relive God’s movement in them as a people. The Passover meal becomes the regular remembering and celebrating to help them live into what God has done in and through them.

While this is a significant experience in the Jewish faith (still a very recognizable experience today for many Jews), this story and experience speaks directly into what God does in and through us. Simply, God gives us opportunities and relationships to move us from being stuck to living free. The experience of stuck can be anything: a stale relationship, an “unchangeable” problem in a family, an addiction, loneliness, or a deeply lived experience of guilt or shame over something done by or to you. Stuck is anything that prevents you from living into the freedom God invites us into through the promise land, and in our faith, through Jesus.

We explore Passover, but we do not get hung up on the specifics of how Passover is done, nor the significance of Passover to the Jewish faith. We must cross the bridge of the Biblical world into our world through the Passover story. While there are ties to how we partake in communion as well as the paradigm relating to the ministry of Jesus, the importance of this story is centered on proclaiming and living freedom with God to those who are in slavery, or to use a different word, stuck.

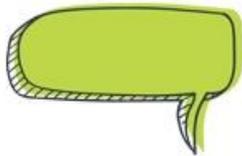


TENSION

In many ways, students experience being “stuck” every day. If it’s a relationship that feels like it’s not “doing anything”, or even this experience of being stuck between grades, or situation in a classroom. There shouldn’t be too much effort taken to help see that students experience ‘stuckness’. The difficulty of this passage comes with the fact that as Christians today, we do not regularly celebrate the Passover

meal. It can appear to be dated, old world, and ancient. The tension in this passage is not merely focusing on the “whats” of the passage, but rather the why.

The “why” is typically the best place to start, particularly with students who have experienced a certain passage of Scripture before. Truth be told, the why of the passage should be a big enough truth that you shouldn’t even have to worry about the “whats” before figuring out the “why”.



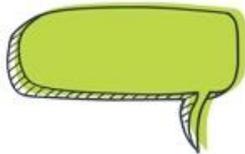
TEXT [CONTEXT]

God instructed every household of the Israelite people to select a year-old male lamb without defect (Exodus 12:5). The head of the household was to slaughter the lamb at twilight, taking care that none of its bones were broken, and apply some of its blood to the tops and sides of the doorframe of the house. The lamb was to be roasted and eaten (Exodus 12:7-8). God also gave specific instructions as to how the Israelites were to eat the lamb, “with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand (Exodus 12:11; cf. Ephesians 6:14). In other words, they had to be ready to travel.

God said that when He saw the lamb’s blood on the doorframe of a house, He would “pass over” that home and not permit “the destroyer” (Exodus 12:23) to enter. Any home without the blood of the lamb would have their firstborn son struck down that night (Exodus 12: 12-13).

Basically, you kill a lamb, paint its blood on the outside of your door, and eat unleavened bread (bread that doesn't rise). The blood tells God not to destroy an Israelite's house, and the bread signifies that the Israelites had to leave quickly. Moses reminds the people how big a deal their liberation from Egypt was, and proclaims that the festival of the Lord will occur every year to commemorate the event. God is speaking a word of freedom to people who are still in slavery. God tells His people how to celebrate the victory before the victory ever happens.

This story is the definitive paradigm that the early church understood the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Passover meal meant to give the context for understanding the work that Jesus would eventually do (in fact, he’s referred to as the Passover Lamb).



TRUTH

God needs us to be on the move as His chosen people. It’s counter-productive to be stuck. We are good at being stuck. The Israelites have the exodus story to remember who they are; who they are as unstuck. Stuck sucks. What is stuck for you? It doesn’t matter. You’re stuck! The problem is being stuck because

the point is moving. We are meant to move. God gives us the liturgy to remember where our power comes from. We like to sit in the cell because it's safe, but aliveness is adventure with God.

We continue to do it because we live into the narrative we tell ourselves. We are not defined by slavery, failure, and death, but redemption, forgiveness, and grace. The "whats" of this passage are pointing to the fact that God continually uses tangible things in and through our lives to show us that we are His and we are free. He helps us live into these realities every day. The Passover meal was that experience for the Jewish people.

What new story is God helping us live in? How is God helping us to live into it?