

Monday
Exodus 5–14

Do you remember when God made Joseph ruler over Egypt? Joseph had been in prison, but God blessed him and he became Pharaoh's right hand man and the ruler of Egypt. Joseph's family (all eleven of his brothers and their families) moved to Egypt. They enjoyed a good life in Egypt and grew in numbers until they became a mighty nation of God's people. But a new king, or Pharaoh, in Egypt became afraid because there were so many of them. This was a couple hundred years after Joseph had died and this new Pharaoh didn't know Joseph. So this Pharaoh made all the people in Joseph's family slaves.

In the misery of their slavery, the people cried out to God. God raised up a leader named Moses to lead his people to freedom. (Moses had been born as an Israelite, but he was adopted by pharaoh's daughter and raised in the palace.) After God called Moses to lead his people out of Egypt, Moses went to Pharaoh's palace often. His brother Aaron went with him. They asked Pharaoh to let God's people leave Egypt. Pharaoh refused, so God turned the water of Egypt, even the whole river, into blood. God punished Egypt with large numbers of frogs, lice, flies, and locusts. Still, Pharaoh would not let God's people go. God sent sickness, storms, and darkness. Even then, Pharaoh would not free God's people. Then God told Moses to tell the people, "Prepare a lamb for food. Sprinkle the lamb's blood on the doorpost of your houses. Prepare a special Passover meal. Then get ready to travel."

That night, an angel of God killed the oldest boy in every house without the lamb's blood on the doorpost, but passed over those who trusted and followed God's Word. Then Pharaoh told the people of God to go. The people of Egypt even gave silver, gold jewelry, and clothes to the Israelites. God's people left Egypt. God went with them. Then Pharaoh changed his mind. He wanted the Israelites to come back. He and his army chased after them.

The Israelites were now at the shore of the Red Sea. When they saw Pharaoh's army coming, they became afraid. God told Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea, and the waters divided. The people walked across the sea bed on dry ground. Pharaoh and his army tried to follow them. The water came back over them, and they drowned. God's people praised him for saving them.

The people of God remembered God's salvation by eating the Passover meal every year at the same time of year. When the people ate the lamb at this special meal, they remembered how God had saved them and freed them from slavery in Egypt. The Passover lamb also reminds us of the salvation Jesus brought to all people. Just as the blood of the lamb on the doorpost saved God's people in Egypt, the blood Jesus shed on the cross saves all people from their sins.

• **How are you saved by the blood of the Lamb?**

Father, when I think of you sacrificing your only Son for me, I don't know what to say. Thank you for sending Jesus to be my Savior. Jesus, thank you for sacrificing yourself to save us. Help me to live my life for you. Amen.

Tuesday
Exodus 34

When Moses came down Mt. Sinai with the two tablets of the Ten Commandments, he found the Israelites dancing, singing, and worshipping around the golden calf. He became very angry right away, and rightfully so. He threw the two tablets, and they broke. So Moses went up Mt. Sinai again to get a second set of Ten Commandment tablets.

This time, when Moses was at the top of the mountain surrounded in a cloud, Moses was so ashamed of the people. He pleaded that God would forgive them and give them another chance. Then the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. This doesn't mean Moses actually saw God to have a face, but that God and Moses were very close to each other and they talked back and forth like friends.

Moses told God that he wanted to see his glory. And God told him, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. While my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft of a rock, and I will cover you with my hand, for no man shall see God and live."

It happened as God said it would. Moses stood in a cleft of a rock, and as the Lord passed by he heard a glorious voice saying, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in love and faithfulness."

When Moses came down from Mt. Sinai this time, his face was shining with a strange and wonderful light. It was so bright that his own brother Aaron was afraid to come near him. So were the rest of the people. Before Moses could talk with them, he had to cover his face with a veil.

The radiant glory of the Lord could be seen reflected in the face of Moses. With hearts veiled by the shame of sin, the people of Israel could not look upon Moses' face. The stark contrast between the Lord's glory and our own darkened features reminds us of our guilt yet foretells of the glory that awaits us through Jesus.

- **Do you see darkness in this world?**
- **Do you see God's glory in your life?**

Close with prayer

Wednesday
Numbers 13-14

A year after leaving Egypt, the Lord told Moses to send one man from each of the twelve tribes of Israel as a spy to explore the land God had promised to his people. (Hundreds of years earlier God had made that promise to Abraham, Israel's grandfather.) Forty days after Moses sent the spies into the Promised Land, they returned with a cluster of grapes so huge that two people carried it suspended from a pole. They also brought back pomegranates and figs.

The spies said, "The land indeed flows with milk and honey! But the people of the land are strong, and the city is well fortified. We even saw giants there. The people there are stronger than we are." Two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, didn't agree with the rest. They said, "We need not be afraid of the people, because the Lord is with us." But the people of Israel were afraid. They said, "If only we would have died in Egypt or in the desert!" They even talked about choosing another leader instead of Moses and returning to Egypt.

The Lord said to Moses, "Because these people who have seen my glory and the miracles I did in Egypt and in the wilderness have not listened to me, those twenty years old and older shall not see the land I promised to give to your family – except Joshua and Caleb. The people will wander in the wilderness for forty more years, one year for each day the spies spent in the Promised Land." So the people of Israel wandered in the desert. After forty years, the people entered the Promised Land. The oldest among them were Joshua and Caleb. They now entered the Promised Land because of their faith. They trusted in God's grace and saving power.

Dear Jesus, there is nothing in this world that I can do to gain heaven on my own. Thank you for being my Savior and for earning for me the free gift that saves me. Amen.

Thursday

Deuteronomy 31–34

“Please, please, dear Lord, let me go over and see the land of Canaan,” Moses prayed over and over again. And no wonder! For eighty years he had dreamed about it. In the dark days in Egypt and all through the years of wandering in the wilderness, he had thought about it. When the people had become discouraged, he tried to cheer them up by reminding them of God's Promised Land for them.

Now he had arrived at the Jordan River once again. Across it he could see Jericho and the mountains beyond. He was so near, yet still so far. God had said that Moses would not enter the Promised Land because for one moment one day Moses misrepresented God. Moses was showed anger to the people when God wanted him to show comfort and compassion.

Moses was 120 years old now, and God put Joshua in charge of the Israelites to succeed Moses and lead the people across the Jordan and into the Promised Land. Moses addressed the people one last time and encouraged them. He had given them the Ten Commandments, and he wanted them to be good examples to the world, knowing right and wrong.

Of course Moses wanted to go into the Promised Land with the rest of the people, but God had something better in mind for Moses – not the Promised Land of Canaan, but the Promised Land you and I look forward to too – the Promised Land of heaven!

Moses climbed to the top of Mt. Nebo to meet God whom he had served so faithfully for so long. He did not have Aaron or Joshua with him. This time he walked alone. From the top of that mountain, he looked over the Promised Land. It was the last thing his eyes saw before he fell asleep in the arms of God. “So Moses the servant of the Lord died there... And [the Lord] buried him.”

One day we will fall asleep in God's arms, too, and we will enter the Promised Land.

- **How do we get to heaven?**

Close with prayer

Friday
Joshua 3–4

Long ago, God's people, the Israelites, wandered in the wilderness for forty years. After this, the Lord led them across the Jordan River and into Canaan, the land God had promised to give them. Here, they would enjoy a new life. They would live in houses they had not built and harvest crops they had not planted.

Their entrance into this Promised Land happened like this: When the feet of the priest who carried the ark of the covenant touched the Jordan River, the waters parted and the ground under the river became miraculously dry. (The ark of the covenant was kind of a beautifully decorated, precious box like an altar that represented God's presence with the people.) The priests carrying the ark stood in the middle of the dry riverbed while all the people crossed over. Then they carried the ark onto the riverbank, where the people had gone. When the feet of the priests carrying the ark touched the riverbank and all had safely crossed, the waters of the river returned and began to flow as normal once again.

When we begin anything new, we can remember how God makes us new in Baptism, when we too pass through waters connected to God's Word. Through Baptism, God makes us new people, people forgiven in Jesus and welcomed into a new life as members of God's family in our Promised Land of heaven. Here, we too daily experience newness of life, knowing Jesus has forgiven our sins. We have a new life to live for Jesus and an eternal home in heaven awaiting us.

- **When you think about the bad things you have done, how does knowing God forgives all your sins make you feel?**

Dear Jesus, help me follow your example. And when I don't, help me thank you for giving me a fresh start every day by forgiving my sins. Amen.