



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

A Devotion During This Time of the Coronavirus Pandemic Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost, September 6, 2020

Prepare to Remember!

by Garland F. Pierce

Exodus 12:1-14

12:1 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt:

12:2 This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you.

12:3 Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household.

12:4 If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it.

12:5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.

12:6 You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight.

12:7 They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.

12:8 They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

12:9 Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs.

12:10 You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn.

12:11 This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the LORD.

12:12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD.

12:13 The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

12:14 This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

Plagues, pestilence, death, and oppression, these are strong words that describe the realities of the Israelites in ancient Egypt; but, they are words that seem aptly to describe the realities of many of us during these pandemics of COVID-19 and anti-Black racism and xenophobia. God has called Moses to be prophet, spiritual and justice leader, and freedom fighter, giving him voice and authority against the oppressive and arrogant power of Pharaoh on behalf of God's suffering people. God has been acting and is now ready to take yet more action on their behalf.

Chapter 12 is interesting because rather than laying out a way of escape or a multi-point strategic plan of action, we find intricate details about a meal and a ritual complete with a menu. These details are still followed by many all these generations later. We are called to never forget; we do all of this in this way so that we will not forget God's salvation and deliverance. "This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance." Even before deliverance comes, plan now what you will remember about God's salvation and deliverance. Even now, how will you observe a remembrance that you will repeat over and over and pass on to generations to come? This is the "recipe" for a living tradition. In a time when technology and innovation seem to capture our imagination, tradition often takes a back seat or is dismissed all together. Tradition holds memories; and, remembering the saving acts of God is the stuff of which faith is made. We are called to pass a living faith tradition on to the generations which follow us.

Like the Israelites, we are call to remember our deliverance even before it actually happens. No vaccine as of yet, Black Lives still do not matter to all; but God sees the suffering and is acting even now. Do you see it? How will you share the good news when it happens? What will you do to tell the generations to come? How will you ensure that we never forget that our God is the God of Justice and Love for all, our God is faithful to save and deliver?

TALK: Take a moment to be silent, reflect, and share (write down)— Revisit the questions above. How will you ensure that we never forget that our God is the God of Justice and Love for all, our God is faithful to save and deliver? What actions, rituals, etc. will help us remember?

PRAY:

Good and gracious God, you hear and see us, our longing and our need. You love us and always work for our freedom and our good. Forgive us when we forget who you are and how you act. Please help us to always remember your steadfast loving kindness and faithful action on our behalf, for the sake of love and liberation. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb and Savior, AMEN

ACT:

1. Based on your reflections from the TALK section, start to think through and make a plan as to how you will help those who shall come behind us understand what it was like to live through these tumultuous times of 2020. For those US citizens, here are some practical actions to take: Participate in the current democratic processes (voter registration, voting, completing the 2020 census and encouraging others to do so—See: <http://www.amev-alert.org> and <https://2020census.gov>.) For everyone, practice social distancing as much as possible, wash your hands often, and wear face covering to help prevent the spread of COVID-19—See: <http://www.amehealth.org>.

2. See also the activity that accompanies this devotion.

3. Revisit the Psalm 23 Challenge first issued as part of the March 22, 2020 set of resources.

Song:

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah
AMEC Hymnal, #53

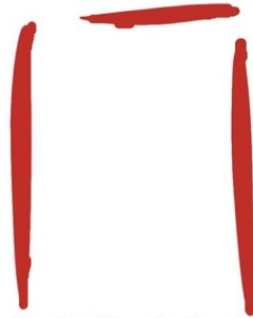
1. Guide me, O Thou great Je-ho-vah,
Pil-grim through this bar-ren land;
I am weak, but Thou art might-y,
Hold me with Thy power-ful hand;
Bread of heav-en, Feed me till I want no more;
Bread of heav-en, Feed me till I want no more.
2. O-pen now the crys-tal foun-tain,
Whence the heal-ing wa-ters flow;
Let the fire and cloud-y pil-lar
Lead me all my jour-ney through;
Strong De-liv-erer, Be Thou still my strength and shield;
Strong De-liv-erer, Be Thou still my strength and shield.

3. When I tread the verge of Jor-dan,
Bid my anx-ious fears sub-side;
Bear me through the swell-ing cur-rent,
Land me safe on Ca-naan's side;
Songs of prais-es I will ev-er give to Thee;
Songs of prais-es I will ev-er give to Thee. A-men.

Alternative Song: *Deliver Me (This is My Exodus)* by Donald Lawrence,
<https://youtu.be/W5aD6b3LSqg>

Physical space—You may wish to create a dedicated space for your time of devotion. You may choose to place a candle, bible, and special symbols or material/fabric to help you focus and center during this time of reflection and prayer.

If you use this meditation and exercise in a time of family or group devotion, share in the leadership; allow different persons to read or lead different parts of this meditation.



"The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you..." - Exodus 12:13

The Christian Education Department will continue to develop resources that can be used as times of personal and collective devotion and study during this pandemic to help us all sustain and strengthen our faith and resolve.