Face to Face
Plagues • Message 3
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Prayer Points for Prayer Time:

- **Thank God that he is sovereign over all creation.**
- **Pray for faith to trust that God knows our needs and will provide.**
- **Pray to live in a way that points others to Christ.**

Scripture Reading:
"The elders of Israel will accept your message. Then you and the elders must go to the king of Egypt and tell him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So please let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD, our God.' "But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand forces him. So I will raise my hand and strike the Egyptians, performing all kinds of miracles among them. Then at last he will let you go.
Exodus 3:18-20 (NLT)

A. Introduction: We continue the series *Face to Face* (referring to Moses and God; Exodus 33:11).
(Exodus 4:21-23. C/R: Exodus 5:1-2, 7:1-5; Psalm 103:7)

This message, titled, **Plagues**, will focus on the ten disasters God struck Egypt with to free Israel.

1. Moses was called by God from the burning bush in Exodus 3 to lead Israel out of slavery in Egypt after 430 years of oppression. (Exodus 12:40-41)
2. **Psalm 103:7 (NIV)** - *He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel:*
3. God let Israel observe His actions, but He communicated His motivations to Moses.
4. He spoke directly to Moses 15 times in Exodus 7-11 (chapters that describe the plagues).
5. In every interaction with Moses, God revealed more of Himself - His nature (who He is) and character (what traits control why He acts as He does). [He does this with us!]
6. God instructed Moses and his brother, Aaron, to speak with Israel's elders to convince them the Lord was concerned and had sent them, then to approach Pharaoh. [Exodus 4:29-31]
7. **Exodus 5:1–2 (NLT)** - *....They told* [Pharaoh], *"This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Let my people go so they may hold a festival in my honor in the wilderness." "Is*

that so?" retorted Pharaoh. "And who is the Lord? Why should I listen to him and let Israel go? I don't know the Lord, and I will not let Israel go."

8. Pharaoh, who was considered to be divine by himself and his people, arrogantly denied knowing Israel's God, rejected another god's directive and refused to release Israel.
9. God sent them a second time: **Exodus 7:1-5 (NLT)** - *Then the LORD said to Moses,... Aaron must command Pharaoh to let the people of Israel leave his country. But I will make Pharaoh's heart stubborn so I can multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. Even then Pharaoh will refuse to listen to you. So I will bring down my fist on Egypt. Then I will rescue my forces—my people, the Israelites—from the land of Egypt with great acts of judgment.*[plagues] *When I raise my powerful hand and bring out the Israelites, the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD."*
   [Exodus 7:17; 8:10,22; 9:29]
10. When Moses and Aaron returned to speak to Pharaoh, he required them to perform a miracle: Aaron threw down his staff, and it became a serpent; when the Egyptian magicians did the same thing with their magic, Aaron's serpent swallowed theirs; Pharaoh's heart remained hard, and he refused to listen, as God predicted. [Exodus 7:6-13]
11. God sent Moses and Aaron a third time to communicate God's command to Pharaoh in the morning at the Nile River, then to strike Egypt with the first plague. (Exodus 7:14-16)

The Ten Plagues [estimated to last 5-10 months (range: 40 days to 1 year), 7 appearances]

1. **<u>BLOOD.</u>**
   (Exodus 7:14-25)
   ...the whole river [Nile] *turned to blood! The fish... died, and the water became so foul that the Egyptians couldn't drink it. There was blood everywhere throughout... Egypt.* [all water in the land, even in containers – verse 19].
2. **<u>FROGS.</u>**
   (Exodus 8:1-15)
   ...frogs came up and covered the whole land! [houses, beds, ovens, bowls, people]
3. **<u>GNATS</u>.**
   (Exodus 8:16-19)
   ...gnats infested the entire land, covering the Egyptians and their animals. ...
4. **<u>FLIES.</u>**
   (Exodus 8:20-32)
   ...terrible swarms of flies in Pharaoh's palace and every home ...
5. **<u>LIVESTOCK</u> pestilence.**
   (Exodus 9:1-7)
   ...all the livestock of the Egyptians died.

6. **BOILS.**
   (Exodus 9:8-12)
   ...boils broke out on people and animals alike.
7. **HAIL.**
   (Exodus 9:13-35)
   ...hail struck down everything in the open field—people, animals, and plants alike. Even the trees were destroyed.
8. **LOCUSTS.**
   (Exodus 10:1-20)
   ...locusts... devoured every plant in the fields and all the fruit on the trees that had survived the hailstorm.
9. **DARKNESS.**
   (Exodus 10:21-29)
   ... deep darkness covered the entire land of Egypt... [23] ...the people could not see each other, and no one moved…
10. **DEATH of FIRSTBORNS.**
    (Exodus 11:1-12:32)
    ...the LORD struck down all the firstborn sons in the land of Egypt... Even the firstborn of their livestock were killed.

B. What the Plagues Proved [Lessons for Moses (and us)!]
(Exodus 7-11)

1. **SOVEREIGNTY of God.**
   (Exodus 4:21-23, 7:3. C/R: Genesis 12:3; Psalm 75:7; Daniel 4:35; Romans 9:17-18, 22-24)

- Sovereignty: Authority of God over all of creation to act according to His will.

1. "It doesn't seem right for God to kill so many sons of Egypt!" It is just (God determines).
2. Consider: a) Pharaoh received nine opportunities to repent and release the Israelites before this plague was unleashed; three times, he said he would let them go, but changed his mind when the plague ended.
   (Exodus 8:15;9:35;10:20)
   b) Egypt had murdered Israelite boys at birth since before Moses' birth (Exodus 1:22). No indication when this slaughter ceased, or how many Hebrew boys were killed. Eighty years later, Moses asked Pharaoh to release them. How many Israelites - men, women, children - had been killed during 430 years of enslavement?
   (Exodus 12:40-41)

3. Before the death angel was sent out into Egypt, Pharaoh was warned specifically about what would occur, but he again refused to release the Israelites. (Exodus 11:4-8)
4. It seems God did not allow Pharaoh to release the Hebrew slaves, as you heard from [that I read] -
   Exodus 7:3 (NLT) *"...I will make Pharaoh's heart stubborn* [other verses: *harden*] *so I can multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in the land of Egypt."*
5. This verse doesn't seem fair, but it demonstrates the judgment of God against sin, pride and unbelief; and it asserts God's sovereignty over all of creation.
6. Ten times the Bible says God hardened Pharaoh's heart. (Exodus 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:1,20,27; 11:10;14:4,8,17) and ten times it says the king hardened his own heart (Exodus 7:13,14,22; 8:15,19,32;9:7,34,35;13:15). [Yet people remain personally responsible for their actions.]
7. Pharaoh was not an innocent or godly man; He was a brutal, evil dictator overseeing the terrible abuse and oppression of the Israelites, who likely numbered over 1.5 million.
8. Could it be, as a result of Pharaoh's hard heart, that God hardened his heart even further?
9. Since the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), and Pharaoh and Egypt had sinned against God, it would have been just if God had eradicated Egypt, but He showed mercy.
10. Also, God promised Abraham, **Genesis 12:3 (NLT)** - *"I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."*
    [By cursing Abraham's children, Egypt brought a curse upon herself.]
11. APP.: Moses had to communicate God's will to Pharaoh; do you communicate His will in our culture in your family, among friends, even in conversation with strangers?

The plagues proved the...

2. <u>SUPREMACY</u> of God.
(Exodus 7:11-12,22, 8:7,18-19. C/R: Isaiah 46:9; Jeremiah 10:11-12; Romans 1:25; 1 John 4:4)

- Supremacy: Preeminent, unrivaled position as Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

1. The Egyptians worshiped 39 nature-gods that they believed controlled natural occurrences by their powers.
   [Ex.: There were gods and goddesses who controlled the sun, the river, childbirth, crops, and fertility, for example, among many others.]
2. The plagues proved that the Israelite's God was more powerful than the gods of Egypt.
3. Pharaoh's magicians duplicated Moses' miracles of Aaron's staff changing into a snake (Exodus 7:10-11), turning water into blood (Exodus 7:22) and causing frogs to come up

onto land (Exodus 8:7) (by illusion or demonic power), but they could not stop or reverse those plagues.

4. They couldn't copy the third plague of turning the dust of Egypt into gnats; when they failed, they acknowledged, *"This is the finger of God!"* [**Exodus 8:19a (NLT)**].
5. The plagues proved God was supreme over Egyptian gods who supposedly controlled specific areas, for example: when the Nile was turned to blood it defeated Hapi the god of the Nile who controlled annual flooding that made Egyptian soil fertile; when God sent frogs to overrun Egypt, it conquered Heqt, a frog-headed goddess of fertility and birth; hail and locusts both demonstrated domination of Osiris, the god of crops; darkness dominated the sun god Re, who was supposed to be embodied in the Pharaoh; and the death of the firstborns was judgment on Isis, the protector goddess of children.
6. God said in **Exodus 7:5 (NLT)** -*"When I raise my powerful hand* [plagues] *and bring out the Israelites, the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD."* [also Exodus 7:17; 8:10,22; 9:29.]
7. APP.: Do you know God controls all things, or do you believe luck or fate play a part?

The plagues proved the...

3. <u>COMPASSION</u> of God.
(Exodus 8:22-23, 9:6,26, 10:22-23, 11:5-7, 12:12-13, 21-23, 31-36. C/R: Psalm 103:8-14; Jeremiah 29:11)

1. **Exodus 8:22–23a (NLT)** - *But this time I will spare the region of Goshen, where my people live. No flies will be found there. Then you will know that I am the LORD and that I am present even in the heart of your land.* [Egyptians believed a god only had power in his domain.] *I will make a clear distinction between my people and your people....' "*
2. God protected His people while punishing the Egyptians.
3. The compassion of God also shielded Israel from the livestock epidemic (Exodus 9:6), hail (Exodus 9:26), darkness (Exodus 10:22-23) and the death of the firstborn sons (Exodus 11:5,7;12:13).
4. When the death angel struck the Egyptians, he passed over the Israelite's homes.
5. The Israelites took the blood of a one-year-old lamb or goat without defect and smeared it on the top and sides of the doorframes of their homes (Exodus 12:12-13,21-23). [Passover]
6. The Passover foreshadows how the blood of our perfect lamb, Jesus, covered our sins so we could escape death and have eternal life. [ILL.: Symbolized in the Lord's Supper.]
7. God not only protected Israel from the effects of plagues, but He also provided them with what they would need as they journeyed in the wilderness.
8. After the death of the firstborns, the Egyptians forced them to leave. [God predicted.]

9. **Exodus 12:31-32 (NLT)** - *Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron during the night. "Get out!" he ordered. "Leave my people—and take the rest of the Israelites with you! Go and worship the LORD as you have requested. Take your flocks and herds, as you said, and be gone. Go, but bless me as you leave."*
   ... [God directed Moses' instruction.]

Exodus 12:35-36 (NLT)

And the people of Israel did as Moses had instructed; they asked the Egyptians for clothing and articles of silver and gold. The LORD caused the Egyptians to look favorably on the Israelites [respected Moses! 11:3] *and they gave the Israelites whatever they asked for. So they stripped the Egyptians of their wealth!*
[See Exodus 3:19-22; 11:1-3.]

10. God knew how long Israel would be in the wilderness and what they would need.
11. Israel would need their animals for food and for sacrifices, and articles of precious metals for making necessary items for the tabernacle, which would be built in the wilderness.
12. APP.: Do you believe God knows your needs and that He protects and provides for you?

- Care volunteers will be at the front and across the concourse at the Care Connection room.