

Greg Laurie: Break Off the Chains of Your Past With This Refreshing Truth

For me, it's always a great thing to start something fresh. I love it when Daylight Saving Time begins and we spring forward an hour. It's like getting a whole new part of the day. I also love the first day of spring. I like the way everything looks after it rains. And as an artist, I love a blank sheet of paper.

Another thing that's great is when you come to the end of a great difficulty or failure and can have a fresh start, a new beginning.

Moses, the world changer, changed the world for the captives of Egypt, the nation Israel. He led them to a new beginning in a new land. And the way he did it all was by faith. But before this happened, Moses himself needed a new beginning. You probably know the story. He killed an Egyptian and went into exile for 40 years. But the Lord spoke to him and recommissioned him to service. Moses had crashed and burned, but God gave him a second chance. God gave him, and ultimately the Israelites, a new beginning.

It comes down to this: When you've been changed, you want to see others changed as well. Or to turn that around, if you don't want to see others changed, then how have you really been changed? Jesus said, "But he who is forgiven little loves little" (Luke 7:47).

If we could wrap our minds around what God has done for us and how much he has forgiven us, how he has taken all that sin and removed it from our lives, then we would have an eagerness, an excitement and a passion to tell others about what God has done for us. With this comes responsibility, because Jesus

also said, "And from him to whom much was entrusted, much will be asked" (Luke 12:48).

The Jewish people had been living as slaves under Pharaoh in Egypt. But through Moses, the answer to their prayers had finally come. The problem was that Pharaoh wasn't cooperating. Instead of releasing the Jews, he dug in his heels and refused to release them. And even worse, he effectively chose to reject God. He said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go" (Ex. 5:2).

If you get into a fight with God, you're going to lose. Just know that. If you're running from the Lord, you're going to lose. As it's been said, your arms are too short to box with God.

God gave Pharaoh chance after chance to release the Jews, but Pharaoh refused. So the Lord brought judgments, 10 plagues in total, upon Egypt. These included lice and flies and bugs and spiders and frogs and hail. It just got worse and worse. But the Bible says Pharaoh's heart got harder. Then it says the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, which means God strengthened Pharaoh in the decision he had already made.

When Pharaoh realized he was outgunned (or out-plagued), he tried to get Moses to compromise. He tried to deceive Moses by saying they could go ahead and leave Egypt to worship the Lord—but they were not allowed to go very far. Moses said no. Then Pharaoh said they could go, but they needed to leave their children behind. Moses said they were not leaving their kids. Then Pharaoh said the people could go, but the animals had to stay. Moses said, "Not a hoof will be left behind" (Ex. 10:26). In other words, "You get nothing."

Remarkably, Pharaoh still resisted, so the Lord brought a severe judgment on him: the death of the firstborn. This might seem harsh, cruel and even extreme on the part of God. But for

all practical purposes, Pharaoh had decided his own fate. How? Moses warned Pharaoh that he would be treated the same way he had treated the Jews. He would reap what he sowed. What Pharaoh was doing to the Jews would come right back on him.

While the Israelites were still in the land of Egypt, the Lord gave instructions to Moses and Aaron for the first Passover. God started by making it a new beginning for the nation of Israel. It would be like saying today, "We're starting the year over again because it hasn't gone so well." On the 10th day of that month, each family was to choose a lamb or a young goat for a sacrifice. It was one animal for each household, but if the family was too small, they were to share with another family. The animal had to be a 1-year-old male with no defects. Then they were to sacrifice that animal, take the blood and put it on their doorposts—on the left side, the right side and on the top of the door.

What does it remind you of? Jesus hanging on the cross, with the crown of thorns pressed on his brow, nails driven through his right hand and left hand. This is what Passover was pointing to. It was pointing to Jesus Christ. And really, the Old Testament is pointing to the New Testament. It's one revelation from Genesis to Revelation. There isn't an Old Testament God and a New Testament God. It is one God, and all of those Old Testament sacrifices pointed to Jesus, who would be the fulfillment of them as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

The Passover was a new beginning. Have you ever wished you could start all over again, maybe in your marriage, maybe in your relationship with your children, or maybe with someone you have fallen out with? In a way you can, because the Bible says, "Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things have passed away. Look, all things have become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

You don't have to be crippled by your past anymore. You can

put it behind you. You might say, “My life is messed up. It’s broken down. It’s falling apart.”

Your life can become new and fresh in Jesus Christ. You, too, can have a new beginning. I love how the Lord effectively said to the Israelites, “It starts now.”

It doesn’t matter what time of the year it is. It can all change because of the blood of the Lamb. God can do that for you. {eoa}

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