

Exodus 4:18–26

“God's Deadly Seriousness about Our Giving His Sign and His Means to His Covenant Children”

to listen to this lesson as taught to a family, click bit.ly/2Ycs4Df (or scan QR code→)



Why is God about to kill Moses (or Gershom)? Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. Exodus 4:18–26 prepares us for the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these six verses, the Holy Spirit teaches us that God is deadly earnest that those upon whom He has laid a special, covenantal claim must receive His mark and the means of His grace. Christians must have their children baptized, hoping in God for the realities which that baptism displays, and employing the means (including baptism!) by which He produces that reality.

Wednesday, September 1, 2021 ▫ Read Exodus 4:18–26

Questions from the Scripture text: To whom did Moses go in v18? What did he ask to do? What does Jethro say? What does Yahweh say to Moses in v19 (cf. Mat 2:20)? Whom does Moses take, how (v20)? Where do they go? What does Moses take in his hand? What does Yahweh remind him to do in v21? What does He remind Moses that Pharaoh will do? What is Moses to say then (v22)? What does He claim about Israel? What does He threaten against Pharaoh if he withholds the Yahweh's son (v23)? But what does Yahweh do in v24? Who saves the day in v25? How? What does she now call Moses (v25–26)?

Moses takes his leave from his father-in-law and takes his wife and his sons with him. The Spirit reminds us at the end of v20 not only of God's power, but of what occurred with the rod earlier in the chapter.

It's not until now that the Lord adds the message of v22–23 to His earlier instructions, summarized in v21. It seems that the Lord waits until now to call Israel, “My son, My firstborn” to highlight how serious of an offense it was for Moses to “withhold” his own son from the Lord by failing to put the covenant sign upon him. The penalty for Pharaoh doing this with respect to Israel is the death of his firstborn son (end of v23), and it may well be that the same is imminent for Moses in v24.

There is some uncertainty in the text about who the “him” is that Yahweh sought to kill. Despite some translations' insertions, Moses's name does not actually appear in our passage after v21, and the word translated “husband” in v25–26 refers to any covenant relation. After the threat against Pharaoh's firstborn son, it may well be that it is Gershom, Moses's firstborn, who is nearly executed at this point, who is circumcised, and who has the bloody foreskin touched to his feet.

If it is Moses who nearly dies, this would heighten the seriousness of the action taken, since the Lord has made such an emphatic point of specifically requiring Moses to be the one who confronts Pharaoh.

What is very clear is that the Lord takes the sign of circumcision very seriously. He was about to publicly own every member of Israel as “His firstborn son.” And He was about to demand that Pharaoh recognize this fact. But Moses and Zipporah had not properly recognized this fact about their own child. And God is deadly serious about His requirement that His sign be put upon the children of His people (cf. also Gen 17:14).

Now, this has an obvious application for those who recognize that baptism is a covenant sign—with water now, not blood, since the blood of Christ has been shed once for all. The Lord takes His signs seriously not only because they are indicators that point to Christ and His now-finished work, but also because they are seals by which His covenantal ownership of us is acknowledged. Our children are not merely biological relations or legal relations to us. They are covenantal relations to us.

When Zipporah yields to the Lord's mechanism for acknowledging this—that the blood of the covenant is a stronger bond even than her own blood—the Lord lets him go. Gershom is not thus eternally saved; he still must come to faith in the promised Savior. But, his circumcision is a necessary means by which God's special propriety in him is acknowledged and responded to.

Now, if we understand that the same is required of us with God, that we receive His sign upon ourselves and upon our children, it must not stop with the sign. For, those who are His owe Him worship, obedience, and service. And we must submit to His means and His ways for all of these, and for the spiritual life and holiness required to walk with Him in it. Our own baptism, or our child's baptism, is not the end of our covenant responsibility but its beginning. And we look to Him to make all of it effectual by His grace from start to finish.

How does the covenant ownership of God shown in your baptism also show up in your daily and weekly activities? How can it comfort you, when you're about to face the opposition of the world?

Sample prayer: Lord, for whatever You send us to do, You Yourself are our only hope. You are all our strength, and Your covenant faithfulness is perfect. Thank You for setting us apart to Yourself in Christ and for giving us a sign and seal of that in baptism. By the

grace that You have promised, give us the love and obedience and service that we owe to You, which we ask through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP50A "God, Most Supreme in Might" or TPH190 "Thus Saith the Mercy of the Lord"

For more Hopewell @Home devotionals, please visit bit.ly/harpcHAH

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Exodus chapter 4. verse 18, going through verse 26 next, to just four versus 18 through 20 60s. About its words, some of those went and returned to Jethro's. Father-in-law said to him, please let me go and return to my brethren who aren't Egypt and see whether they are still alive.

And Jethro said to Moses going peace. Now, y'all face it to Moses and MIDI and go return to Egypt for all the men who sought your life are dead and Moses, took his wife and sons and set him up, set them on a donkey and he returned to the land of egypt and Moses took the rod of God in his hand.

And the office said to me is this when you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh, I have put in your hand but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go. Then you shall say to Pharaoh. Thus says y'all is Israel.

Is my son, my firstborn. So I say to you, let my son go that he may serve me, but if you refuse to let him go, indeed, I will kill your son. Your first voice. And I came to pass on the way at the encampment that you always met him and sought to kill him.

And support took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin universe on and casted. It his feet and said surely you are a covenant relation of blood to me so he let him go and she said you're a covenant relational blood because of the circumcision for the reading of God's inspired and an errand toward

Probably notice a couple of translation differences in the last couple of verses one is it doesn't say much as it says his. And the other is that the word translated husband doesn't even mean necessarily bridegroom, like some of your footnotes may say it is a word that just means male, covenant relation.

It's used actually of Jethro, not in verse 18, but in another place later on in the book of Exodus in the place of the word, father father-in-law, anyway, we'll get to that when we get there. So verse 18, Moses returns to Jethro says, please let me go to turn on my brother and see whether there's still alive that basically means the equivalent of see how it's going with them.

But he says that this way and there's a parallel with verse 19, we always says to Moses return to each of all the men who saw your life. Our dead. This would be a parallel when Joseph and Mary had the Lord Jesus, as a baby in Egypt. That's very similar to what the Lord sends and tells to Jesus that all those, all the child's life are dead.

Except in that case, they sought refuge in Egypt because the murderers were in in Israel. But it is ironic when he tells him all the men who saw your life are dead because God is about, to threaten to kill. And we're not sure if it's threatened to kill your sham.

The eldest son or whether it's threatened to kill Moses from the text, but our greatest danger is not from men. It is from God which is a lesson that Farrow was about to learn. When when he says go back to Egypt, do the wonders before Pharaoh, the hardness heart, then you shall say to Pharaoh, and this ties very directly to what is about to happen, between what is about to happen, between God and Moses ties.

Very directly to what got what most God tells Moses to say to Pharaoh? Thus says, y'all a Israel is my son, my first born. So, I say to you, let my son go, he may serve me, but if you refuse to let him go, indeed, I will kill your son, your firstborn.

When Abraham had a 14 year old Ishmael and he was promised another son, Isaac and Abraham's faith or Abrams, faith is, his name is getting changed a bedtime at that moment was weak about his sons. God gave him the sign of circumcision, a sign of circumcision is cutting away a flesh.

The happens on a boy, it was on the boy part by which boys become fathers, and it causes blood to flow and you cut away the flesh. And it shows a first of all, that we need blood, atonement for our sin. Second of all that we need a fatherhood and life from God.

Not just from our earthly father, and see that because we must have spiritual life from God. Our hope can only be that we belong to God. Well here God is sending Moses to Pharaoh to say Israel is my firstborn

son. Israel actually belongs to Yahweh Pharaoh not to you.

So you have to let Israel go to worship, God and Moses had not circumcised his own firstborn son in which the Lord says to Moses. And now it's not just for sons because the sign isn't circumcision anymore. What is it? It's baptism. And the Lord says to us, when he, when we put the covenant sign on our children as well, that our children do not belong, ultimately to us, but ultimately to the Lord.

And that it is more important that they have fatherhood and life from God, then that they have fatherhood and life from us. And that our job is to use. The means by which God has commanded us to bring those children to the Lord, that they may be his converted redeemed worshipers just like Pharaoh is being commanded to let Israel go.

So that they might be delivered worshipers. So there's a very strong parallel and it's interesting, isn't it? This is the moment at which God is about to strike someone. Perhaps Moses, perhaps in the threat, he threatens the firstborn son, so maybe it's your shaman himself is being threatened here.

But this is the moment that God threatens death because when God gave the sign to Abraham, he said anyone that doesn't receive circumcision shall we cut off from among his people and they're supposed to do it on the eighth day. Well, you're Sean's a lot more than eight days old, isn't he?

So God could have rightly justly, threatened death, at any point from the time. He was eight days old even up until now. Why. Now it's so that Moses can see the lesson between what God is telling Pharaoh about Israel as a whole and what what God tells believing parents, covenant parents about their children.

Specifically Lord, blessing you, my dear children? One day, you will have children. And just as we saw that Jesus was greatly displeased with his disciples when they did, not bring those children who had kingdom status to into their rightful access to the king for his blessing, he is greatly displeased with them.

So also we see that Jesus is Yahweh in the flesh that the Jesus of Mark 10 is the Jehovah of Exodus 4 and he is greatly displeased. That Moses has not put the covenant sign of God, on his son to recognize that his son is even more gods, then he has Moses's, so you must be determined that you if God grants unto you, the care of one of his children.

One of his godly seed which he tells us and Malachi is one of the primary purposes of marriage. That if God grant you, the care of one of his godly seed, you are going to use all the means. But which God says for you to bring his covenant, child to him, the means of his grace because they need his grace.

They need the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, they need the holy spirit to give them faith. They need to be joined to Jesus Christ through that faith. They need Jesus's blood to take away their sin. They need Jesus's resurrection to be the life by which they live Godly lives before him, which is why not just telling you what you need to do with your children, but it is the great reason why we're sitting around the table with our Bibles open and I'm explaining to you what these words mean.

Why? Because this is one of the means of God's grace and he by putting you in this family has set you apart to himself and commanded that mom and me that mom. And I bring you to him by his means because you don't just need to be born into a Christian family and attend public worship week by week and have family worship day by day.

What you need is those things that are signified in circumcision and especially signified in baptism. You need God to pour out his Holy Spirit, upon you. You need life from God and new birth, you need faith in. Jesus Christ to be joined to him. You need to have your conscience cleansed and your record with God.

Cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Just like bodies are washed with water. You need the resurrection power and life of Jesus Christ to be in you, as the way by which you love God and obey him and serve him. So whenever you feel like you're dead or you feel like you're guilty, you feel your neediness of these things, you don't say ah but I got wet in church once or oh we have family worship you say ah when God when I got wet in church, once it was because God commanded that sign because he lays claim upon me and all of those things that that sign shows are spiritual realities that he promises to give me.

And you cling to him, you cling to the father, you cling to the son, you cling to the spirit, the trust in what the sun has done for you to be your salvation and say, oh, but I have family worship, you say the family worship is full of the means of God's grace and he promises to attend and help and bless and make it powerful to me and you cry out to God, to do in your heart and in your life, the things that he promises for.

These means now is a poorer at least in the immediate threat of death saved a life by throwing the bloody foreskin onto the feet. Probably of Gersam and not Moses. Don't know why they say Moses here in verse 25 but she saves somebody's life by throwing the the bloodiest force can onto the feet.

The sign has been applied and the blood that points forward to Christ is displayed. And and verse 26 says, he let him go and then she says, you're a covenant relation of blood to me. She recognizes that the blood of God's covenant ties us even closer together than marriage or motherhood.

If this is as we suspect from the text, that it's Gershon, the blood of the everlasting covenant, that we often hear announced to us as the blood of Jesus and Hebrews 13 verse 20. And that is our hope of blessing instead of curse and death from God, which is what we deserve.

So God takes his sign. Very seriously, but that's because his ownership of you is covenant, his covenant ownership of you setting you out from the world to himself and you're neediness of him and his supplying all of that need by his son and by his spirit and our response to those things.

He takes very seriously if that was all the support I did for her son, the circumcision. She might have saved him on one day. While Moses was traveling from midian to Egypt, but she will have condemned him. We are to take God's ownership of us and of our children.

And to use his means seriously, day by day, our whole life long. So they don't just display what God has promised to us. They remind us of what he has commanded to do commanded us to do independence upon him. And even see that with the way Jesus commanded baptism making disciples baptizing them teaching them to do or to keep all that.

I have commanded so there's not just promise but obligation, but obligation that is dependent upon him, teaching them to keep all that. I have commanded you and I will be with you. He says so circumcision baptism very important and yes. All though, God is very merciful. And as opposed to even for that for many Christians who fail to do this by the blood of Jesus.

God is very, very angry. When believers do not baptize their children, this is why you may never consider for a wife. My dear sons and you may never consider for a husband. My dear daughters. One who does not understand. God's covenant. Identification of your future children and the necessity of the sign and the fury of God upon and against those who don't apply the sign spread.

Oh Lord. We thank you that you are our father in heaven. That you beget in us, spiritual life that you pour out your spirit to give us that life to give us that your birth, that your spirit gives us faith so that we may be united to Christ. So that our baptisms are into him and into everything that he has done for us as death as blood, that washes away, our sins cleanses, our consciences his resurrection that new life that we have, by which we walk in newness of life and offer, our wholeselves as slaves.

And to you, for righteousness, we thank you for baptism. We thank you that, you take it. So seriously, we pray that you'd help us to take it. So seriously, we thank you that it displays and guarantees, all of these things that you have promised and of which we are so needy.

We pray that you would make us not just to take back, baptism itself seriously. But, especially that we would take the realities that you have thus communicated to us that seriously. Oh, Lord, grant that I would see your promises come true in the lives of my children. I know that I'm much like Moses.

So many things in which I ought to have recognized my children, as yours and brought them to Christ by your means, in which I have stumbled or failed or done. So poorly and yet, oh God, our hope is in you and what you have promised. And so, we cling to you and we ask that you would say and we ask that we might see our children's children and that they might tell these things.

Even to another generation after them. Granted all we pray in. Jesus name, Amen.