

**Sunday September 6, 2020 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church**

**Bible Study – Exodus 12:1-14  
“Praises and Swords”**

Open with a word of prayer

**Gathering Time** (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, discuss the following: “Name an event or circumstance that is making you angry.”

**Exodus 12:1-14. Context:** After receiving his commission from God, Moses returns to Egypt, and together with his brother Aaron makes his case to Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go free: God requires them to worship him on his holy mountain. Pharaoh refuses. There follows a series of contests between Moses and Pharaoh’s wise men, the first nine plagues, by the end of which even Pharaoh’s advisors are convinced that Moses clearly has powers far superior to their own. Pharaoh still refuses to free the Israelites. The tenth, final, and most deadly plague is visited upon Egypt: the death of the firstborn of all people and animals, from Pharaoh on down. In this week’s reading God gives instructions to Moses and Aaron to protect the Hebrews from the angel of death. The instructions given here are rather precise and detailed, and disrupt the drama of the narrative. Scholars generally believe that the form of the Passover celebration given here comes from the period after the Babylonian Exile (6th-5th c. BC), rather than from the time of Moses, some seven centuries earlier (13th c. BC). Passover becomes for “the whole congregation” a “day of remembrance.” In biblical terms this is not just an occasion for the community to reflect on the deeds of the past, but more importantly, an occasion to recommit themselves to the God who has in turn “remembered” the covenant made with them and now gives them their freedom from slavery. Jesus at his last supper with his disciples reinterprets the Passover event, making himself the paschal sacrifice that saves his followers; and the freedom he gives becomes the freedom from the slavery of sin and death.

**Read Exodus 12:1-14**

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

**Read Exodus 12:1-14 again**

**Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.**

- What part of this story do you find most intriguing?
- On whom does God execute judgment (v. 12)?

- What do you think the Israelites would have learned about God from this experience?
- What do we learn about God from this passage?
- Why is the act of remembrance so important (12:14)? [One thought - We remember experiences that shape our perspective.] What important milestones do you repeatedly talk about?
- Share the story of your baptism. How can stories of remembrance be transformative? [Theologically, the Israelites are people who have been delivered and, as such, that shapes how they are to live – as the people of the God who freed them. They seek to be a light to the nations as the chosen people of God.] How do your stories of remembrance shape and transform do and impact the way you live?

**Read Exodus 12:1-14 again**

**Closing Reflection Question**

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

**Prayer** (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

**Sending Forth** (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

Giver of freedom and liberation, you continue to call us out of the slaveries of racism, sexism, ageism, addictions, mindsets of scarcity, and other behaviors and mindsets that keep us from living abundantly. Empower us to remember who we are (children of God) and who we are called to be (salt and light to the world). **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord's Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.