



THE WIN

The group member will demonstrate their comprehension of why a Christ-follower must view themselves as new creations in Christ by examining the story of Israel, draw comparisons between enslaved Israel and freed Israel, discussing the freedom found in Christ, and the gospel implications for the Christ-follower.

3-5
minutes

SERMON RECAP: WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

In the sermon this week we learned God revealed His good news to the world through the Church. The perspective of the Christ-follower is forever changed through Jesus Christ.

ASK THIS:

What were a few things taught in the sermon that challenged you? In what way were you challenged?

3-5
minutes

WARM UP

What is your favorite story/movie/tall tale of someone who is enslaved but then is set free? What is it about the story that makes it your favorite?

SAY THIS:

In Ephesians 3:1-13 Paul teaches that Christ-followers are prisoners to Jesus and they are living by God's grace, and should proclaim His grace to the world. Paul's outlook on his own life reflects a belief that he owes everything to Jesus. While Paul's story is incredible, the Old Testament reveals a similar concept of freedom in God's grace.

35-40
minutes

THE TEXT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

HAVE SOMEONE READ EXODUS 1:1-22

Israel spread throughout Egypt and because of this, the Egyptians feared them and decided to enslave and oppress the Israelites. The treatment they endured during their stay in Egypt was poor and it ultimately led to God intervening.

- Using your mind's eye, describe what you think the conditions may have been like for the Israelites in Egypt?

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- In light of verse 14, what do you think the emotional/mental condition may have been like for the Israelites?

The setting in Egypt is bleak for the Israelites but did not forget them but rather decided to save them.

HAVE SOMEONE READ: Exodus 3:1-22

Moses was tasked with facing Pharaoh and demanding the release of Israel.

- Notice vs. 7-10, God provides specific reasons as to why he will rescue Israel. What are those reasons?

HAVE SOMEONE READ: Exodus 19:3-6

In Exodus 19, God has worked through Moses and rescued Israel from the Egyptians.

- What is his promise to Israel?
- What did God mean by 'kingdom of priests' and 'holy nation'?

See HCSB Study Bible page 131:

The ideas of priesthood and holiness go together, since special requirements marked priests as set apart for special service that benefited others (Lv 21). The tasks of priests included helping people offer sacrifices to God, according to the need or condition of the person (Lv 1-7). Priests acted as judges, both in matters of ritual purity and in civil controversies (Lv 13-14; Dt 17:9, 21:5), and they taught God's law (Lv 10:11; Mal 2:7-9). These tasks pointed to the work of Israel among the nations. As the priesthood in Israel was to the nation as a whole, so Israel should be to the other nations; as Israelite priests had unique requirements, duties, and privileges among the Israelites, so Israel would have unique requirements, duties, and privileges among the nations (Lv 20:22-26; Dt 4:5-8, 14:21; 26:17-19; Is 2:1-5).

READ THIS:

So, God has selected Israel to be His chosen people that will show the world the holiness and righteousness of God. Israel was once enslaved with no hope of rescue or salvation but God sent Moses to save them for a new future and purpose.

HAVE SOMEONE READ: Ephesians 3:1-6

- Paul keeps referring to a 'mystery', what is the mystery?
- In light of Exodus 19:3-6 what is the heir entitled to enjoy?
- v. 6 reads, Gentiles who come to faith are 'sharers together in the promise of Christ Jesus.' What is the promise of Christ Jesus?

Leader Tip: What we hope groups accomplish throughout all of these questions is to begin formulating an understanding of the parallels between enslaved Israel and free Israel AND enslaved sinner and saved Christ-follower.

HAVE SOMEONE READ: Ephesians 3:8-12

- What does 'manifold wisdom of God' mean?

See HCSB Study Bible page 2032,

God's intent was that through the church, his multifaceted wisdom should be made known. "Multifaceted" means manifold or multicolored like a beautiful jewel. The history of the Christian church and the unfolding drama of redemption is watched with avid interest by the rulers and authorities in the heavens, an apparent reference to angels (cp. 1Pt 1:12).

READ THIS:

So, Paul teaches the Ephesians that God's ultimate mission is to proclaim the gospel to the world through his church, which is comprised of Jews and Gentiles. All who come to him are members of one body and sharers in the promise of Christ Jesus.

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER:

Leader Tip: This is the section where you will be able to tell who understands and who does not. While the focus of the lesson is on Paul's words to the Ephesians, Exodus provides an added dynamic and reinforces the necessity of viewing yourself on a new team. Their whole view of life should change. We are to be defined by the mission God has given to us.

Divide the group up into 3-4 people. Have them summarize or outline the story of the Israelites in Exodus and Paul's teaching in Ephesians 3:1-13. Next, have them compare the summaries/outlines to see links of life enslaved verses life set free by God. Last, have each group report back to the large group their findings.

Leader Tip: If groups are struggling to grasp what we're trying to do; consider prompting them with questions like "what are the main features of the Israelite narrative? Where's the turning point? Where did they end up? How did they get there? What is Paul trying to say? What are his presuppositions? Where is Paul's beginning point? At the end of the day, what is Paul trying to tell the reader?"

An example is below:

| Israel in Captivity | Paul's teaching in Ephesians 3 |
|--|---|
| Israel was enslaved and oppressed | Prior to the gospel all are enslaved to sin (v.7) |
| God sent Moses to save Israel | God sent Christ to save humanity; mystery of Christ is Gentiles are heirs alongside Israel (v.6) |
| God promises to love Israel and set her up with a new future and new purpose | God's ultimate intent is that through the church the gospel (manifold wisdom of God) would be made know to all. (vs.9-11) |

Notice the link-God sent _____ in order to save _____

SAY THIS:

God is the one who initiated towards us out of love. For the Christ-follower, our worldview must change to reflect a belief that God has chosen us to spread His good news to the world.

- What is the most challenging aspect of maintaining a worldview that seeks to make Christ known throughout the world?
- How do you struggle in your life with this worldview?
- What are a couple of key decisions that you have had to make recently where this worldview played a role? Describe your situation to the group.

10
minutes

DIGGING DEEPER

Challenge each group member use a blank sheet of paper and write out in summary form the gospel. Encourage them to begin with sin introduced in the garden and end with Jesus' offer of salvation.

Leader Tip: The more group members are put in situations to share the gospel, the more confident they will become in sharing the gospel in their daily walk.