

Absolute Sovereignty Demands Absolute Surrender

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[0 : 00] Please turn with me to Exodus chapter 9, starting in verse 13, going all the way to chapter 10, verse 29. Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's word.

Heavenly Father, we humble ourselves before your word because your word makes us wise unto salvation in Jesus Christ because your word is truth, because your word is living and active. We wait on you. We expect to hear you speak through in your word. And we pray that as we incline our hearts, our ears to you, that you would teach us to surrender our lives to you, that we might enjoy the freedom, the abundant life, and the grace that is found in Christ alone.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Let me read out loud Exodus 9, 13 to 10, 29. Then the Lord said to Moses, Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, Let my people go that they may serve me.

For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself and on your servants and your people so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth.

[1 : 47] For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence and you would have been cut off from the earth. But for this purpose I have raised you up to show you my power so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.

You are still exalting yourself against my people and will not let them go. Behold, about this time tomorrow I will cause very heavy hail to fall, such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now.

Now therefore send, get your livestock and all that you have in the field into safe shelter for every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home will die when the hail falls on them.

Then whoever feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses. But whoever did not pay attention to the word of the Lord left his slaves and his livestock in the field.

Then the Lord said to Moses, stretch out your hand toward heaven so that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt on man and beast and every plant of the field in the land of Egypt.

[2 : 57] Then Moses stretched out his staff toward heaven and the Lord sent thunder and hail and fire ran down to the earth. And the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.

The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt, both man and beast.

And the hail struck down every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, was there no hail.

Then Pharaoh sent and called Moses and Aaron and said to them, this time I have sinned. The Lord is in the right and I and my people are in the wrong.

Plead with the Lord, for there has been enough of God's thunder and hail. I will let you go and you shall stay no longer. Moses said to him, as soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the Lord.

The thunder will cease and there will be no more hail so that you may know that the earth is the Lord's. But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the Lord God.

[4 : 11] The flax and the barley were struck down, for the barley was in the year and the flax was in bud. But the wheat and the emmer were not struck down, for they are late in coming up. So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and stretched out his hands to the Lord and the thunder and the hail ceased and the rain no longer poured upon the earth.

But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet again and hardened his heart, he and his servants. So the heart of Pharaoh was hardened and he did not let the people of Israel go, just as the Lord had spoken through Moses.

Then the Lord said to Moses, Go into Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your grandson how I have dealt harshly with the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them, that you may know that I am the Lord.

So Moses and Aaron went into Pharaoh and said to him, Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go that they may serve me.

For if you refuse to let my people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country and they shall cover the face of the land so that no one can see the land.

[5 : 32] And they shall eat what is left to you after the hail and they shall eat every tree of yours that grows in the field. And they shall fill your houses and the houses of all your servants and of all the Egyptians, as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen from the day they came on earth to this day.

Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh's servants said to him, How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God.

Do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined? So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh and he said to them, Go serve the Lord your God. But which ones are to go?

Moses said, We will go with our young and our old. We will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds. For we must hold a feast to the Lord. But he said to them, The Lord be with you if ever I let you and your little ones go.

Look, you have some evil purpose in mind. No, go, the man among you, and serve the Lord for that is what you are asking. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

[6 : 42] Then the Lord said to Moses, Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts so that they may come upon the land of Egypt and eat every plant in the land. All that hail has left.

So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind had brought the locusts.

The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole country of Egypt. Such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before nor ever will be again. They covered the face of the whole land so that the land was darkened.

And they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Not a green thing remained. Neither tree nor plant of the field through all the land of Egypt.

Then Pharaoh hastily called Moses and Aaron and said, I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you. Now therefore forgive my sin. Please only this once and plead with the Lord your God only to remove this death from me.

[7 : 50] So he went out from Pharaoh and pleaded with the Lord and the Lord turned the wind into a very strong west wind which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea.

Not a single locust was left in all the country of Egypt. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he did not let the people of Israel go. Then the Lord said to Moses, Stretch out your hand toward heaven that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness to be felt.

So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven and there was pitch darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They did not see one another nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the people of Israel had light where they lived. Then Pharaoh called Moses and said, Go serve the Lord. Your little ones also may go with you. Only let your flocks and your herds remain behind.

But Moses said, You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. Our livestock also must go with us. Not a hoof shall be left behind for we must take of them to serve the Lord our God.

[8 : 59] And we do not know with what we must serve the Lord until we arrive there. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not let them go. Then Pharaoh said to him, Get away from me.

Take care never to see my face again. For on the day you see my face, you shall die. Moses said, As you say, I will not see your face again.

This is God's holy and authoritative word. Once in a while, when I'm typing up a sermon at home, my mouse cursor will just get a mind of its own and start moving everywhere on my laptop. And my laptop will sometimes start typing gibberish on its own. And when this happens, I go to another room in the house and discover that my baby girl has taken control of my wireless mouse and keyboard while I'm on my laptop.

And of course, I immediately reclaim my wireless mouse and keyboard and turn them off because it's my computer. And I don't want someone else, and especially not a one-year-old that has no idea how to use a laptop to control my computer.

[10:11] Because to the extent that the laptop is under her control, it's not under my control. I can't write what I want to write.

I can't read what I want to read. And I can't do what I want to do with the computer. Only one person can truly have control over the laptop.

Likewise, only one person can truly have control over our lives. As Jesus said in Matthew 6, 24, no one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

As Christians, we acknowledge the reality that we are not our own, that we were bought with the price. So we have to glorify God with our body and with all that we have. And yet, when it comes to our daily lives, often we act like we are our own.

We live for ourselves. We make compromises with the world and we seek concessions from God rather than completely surrendering our lives to the will of our master Jesus Christ.

[11:18] But that will not do because this passage teaches us that God's absolute sovereignty demands our absolute surrender. So we're going to look at plague seven, the hail, where Pharaoh says, I will not let you go.

Plague eight, locusts, where he says, I will let you go, but not your children. And then plague nine, the darkness, where he says, I will let your children go too, but not your livestock.

You see how Pharaoh continues to seek concessions from God. And we're going to see how God responds to that. Ed mentioned in last week's sermon that the first nine plagues of Egypt are a series of triads, three sets of three.

And this is now the third and final triad of plagues. And there's a sense of progression and escalation throughout these plagues. And they're arranged in roughly ascending order of severity and scale.

And so like the other two triads here, Moses and Aaron go to Pharaoh in the morning. And this refrain comes up again. Let my people go that they may serve me.

[12:23] That happens again in chapter 10, verse three. Let my people go that they may serve me. And that phrase, serve the Lord, is repeated at least six more times in this passage alone.

That's the heart of the passage. That's the heart of the contest here between the Lord, Yahweh, and Pharaoh. Will you serve Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, or will you serve the Lord, the king of the universe?

And notice the demand isn't simply let my people go. It's not let my people go that they may be free. Rather, it's let my people go that they may serve me.

As the Old Testament scholar J.D. Levinson writes, Exodus is more about repatriation than emancipation. It is a movement from one form of servitude to another.

Freedom, independence, autonomy is not the goal. Servitude to God, dependence on God, submission to God, a covenant relationship with God is the goal of the Exodus.

[13:34] And that indeed is the only place where we can truly be free. The same is true for us as Christians. As they were for the Jews in the Old Testament. We are those who have turned and from idols to serve the living God.

The living and true God. It says in 1 Thessalonians 1, 9. Galatians 5, 13 says, You are called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Likewise, 1 Peter 2, 16 says, Live as people who are free. Not using your freedom as a cover up for evil, but living as servants of God.

That's what our freedom consists in, in servitude to God, in serving God's people. We have been freed to serve. Do we understand that that is our core identity as a Christian, that we are a servant of Christ?

We have a master. Every day we are to ask, Lord, what do you have for me to do today? All of our experiences, all of our competencies, all of our relationships, and all of our resources are to be leveraged in the service of the Lord God who purchased us with the precious blood of his son.

[14:49] That's what it means to be a Christian. We can't think whatever we want. We can't say whatever we want. We aren't to buy whatever we want. We don't go wherever we want because Israel, the servant of God, is God's son, God's servant.

And we cannot, therefore, be Pharaoh's servant. And so Moses demands, Let my people go that they may serve me. The Lord demands that. However, Pharaoh's stubborn refusal to let them go leads to a steady escalation of the God's striking of Egypt.

He says in verse 14, For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself and on your servants and your people so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence and you would have been cut off from the earth.

So up to this point, the disasters that have come upon Egypt have only affected the surrounding environment, turning the Nile into blood, frogs, gnats, swarm of flies, and disease on Egyptian livestock.

Even the sixth plague, where the boils appeared on Egyptians, it only was skin deep. But now the plague will become more severe. The Lord says, I will send all my plagues on you yourself.

[16:07] And literally the phrase is on your heart. Now God's saying, I'm going to strike you where it really hurts. What's on your very heart. This is the first time, the hail, the plague, where people will start to die.

And this shows God's forbearance up to this point, how patient he is to preserve the people made in the image of God. The plague is directly tied to Pharaoh's refusal to let the Israel go because he refuses to send the Israelites out.

And so God says, I will put out my hand and send this plague upon you. And what is the ultimate reason for these plagues? If God simply wanted to punish the Egyptians for their wickedness, he could have simply wiped them off the face of the earth.

He didn't need to bring plague after plague, gradually escalating the signs. But God has his reasons for doing it this way. He says in verses 14 to 16, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth.

He could have done that, but he didn't. He's using these plagues to reveal his power and his name to the end of the earth. So that the Egyptians too may know that there is none like him in all the earth.

[17:26] They are miracles that signify, they point to God and reveal who he is. Remember what Pharaoh defiantly said to God in chapter five, verse two, who is the Lord that I should obey his voice and let Israel go?

I do not know the Lord and moreover, I will not let Israel go. Ever since then, God has been repeatedly saying sign after sign that he is doing this so that you shall know that I am the Lord. But this declaration also becomes progressively more expansive. Formerly he wanted simply an acknowledgement of him as the Lord. Now he's seeking acknowledgement of his exclusivity and that he is the Lord not only over Israel but over all the land of Egypt.

God's sovereign control is such that even this royally stubborn Pharaoh has been raised up by God, sustained by God and brought to this point.

He says, for this purpose to show you my power so that my name be proclaimed in all the earth that God raised up Pharaoh. Even those who resist and oppose God's will in the end only serve to display more of God's glory.

[18:45] We can take comfort in this reality as we serve the Lord because when we face opposition from those with authority and power far greater than ourselves, we can rest assured that the Lord is sovereign over all and we'll use even them to show his power.

And for believers whose life mission is to glorify God, this is comforting truth indeed because our plans might be thwarted. Our plans might not go as we would like them to but we can take heart knowing that still God's going to be glorified.

God's plans cannot be thwarted and his name will be proclaimed in all the earth and we can rest assured of that even when things are going awry according to our estimation.

So the seventh plague of hail ensues and we see in verse 19 that God's merciful even to the Egyptians in his judgment. He says, now therefore send, get your livestock and all that you have in the field into safe shelter.

For every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home will die when the hail falls on them. So God's giving the Egyptians a way to be spared from the hail. He's being merciful even to them in his warning.

[19 : 58] And it says in verses 20 to 21 that whoever feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses. So this is where we begin to see the cracks in the Egyptian ranks.

So far they had all been united. They had a united front. They'd been following Pharaoh and his and whatever he said. But here they are instead of heeding Pharaoh, they're heeding the word of the Lord and actually listening to the warning and hiding their belongings, their livestock into the field. And before the Egyptian magicians tried to replicate what Moses has done had succeeded in the first two instances but they had failed and by the third plague of the gnats they claimed this is the finger of God and now even the servants of Pharaoh are listening to the word of the Lord and in fear responding to the warning.

And verses 25 to 26 tell us what happened in the aftermath. The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt both man and beast and the hail struck down every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field.

Only in the land of Goshen where the people of Israel were was there no hail. It uses the word fire and thunder interchangeably so it seems like it's thunder and lightning.

[21 : 19] there's a it's a it's a it's a thunderstorm that comes with huge hail that's big enough to kill livestock and to kill a man and and it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a a lot of a lot of people will be asking themselves well is this the end of the world so that kind of hail comes down and and and pharaoh can't stand it and so he he seems to repent he says I have sinned he says the lord is in the right I am in the wrong so far so good because recognizing that is the initial step toward repentance and faith in God there are people in this world who live their entire lives pointing fingers at God and blaming God thinking that they're in the right and that God is in the wrong thinking that God is not done right by them but this is backwards the lord is the benevolent creator of all the earth he is a source and the giver of all good gifts and he has given common grace to all of humanity despite the fact that we are hell deserving sinners who are guilty of treason against our king it is we who have not done right by him and yet pharaoh here says people sometimes refuse to acknowledge that and so this is the beginning of repentance this is the first step toward

God I have sinned the lord is in the right and I and my people are in the wrong pharaoh's plea to stop the hail is heated Moses pleads with the lord and he says he will plead with the god that the thunderstorm and hail might cease but there are a couple clues here in narrative that tells us that Pharaoh is not going to keep his promise again because Moses says I know that you do not fear the lord god and we also get a parenthetical note in verses 31 to 32 that the flax and the barley because they were already nearly fully grown were totally destroyed but the wheat and the other crops were not yet grown still have some food that they can survive on and so not surprisingly when Moses prays to God and God stops the hail he says Pharaoh sinned yet again and hardened his heart he and his servants and he did not let the people of

Israel go I think we've mentioned this before the word hardened literally means to strengthen it means to strengthen someone's resolve so Pharaoh's doubling down on his original Israel go and going back on his promise to let them go and yet God's sovereignty is displayed here also because he says that the heart of Pharaoh was hardened who hardened his heart the passive construction implies that God is the subject of that statement and that's made more explicit in chapter 10 verses 1 to 2 and the Lord said to Moses going to Pharaoh for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants that I may show these signs of mine among them that you may know that I am the Lord God himself strengthened Pharaoh's own sinful resolve and once again the ultimate reason for that is to display his power and his name that's exactly what the

Lord has said he would do and Pharaoh is hardening his heart just as the Lord has said he would do that the Lord and his representative Moses they keep their word they're faithful to their word they if they say they're going to bring a plague they bring a plague they say they're going to remove a plague they remove a plague but Pharaoh is in stark contrast to that because again and again he is

seen to be undependable and fickle he says he'll let them go and then he doesn't again and again and again and he still thinks that he is in the right ultimately and that the Lord is in the wrong and Pharaoh is really a picture of our own fickleness the fickleness of humanity how often do people turn to God in desperate situations and falling to their knees in prayer confessing that they need God and that they can do nothing apart from him that they will always remember him if they act on their behalf and as soon as that desperate situation is resolved they start to live like they have no need for

God again are we dependent on God only in crises or do we truly need him always do we not every single moment of our lives have our life sustained by his power and provision how often do we confess our God tell him that we are truly sorry only to return to our folly and sin do we believe that sin really is grave and grievous do we really believe that God is holy and that his name should be hallowed Pharaoh didn't and by his actions he declares I will not let you go and due to Pharaoh's stubborn refusal the conflict gets escalated again and Moses and Aaron say to Pharaoh in chapter 10 verses 3-6 thus says the Lord the God of the Hebrews how long will you refuse to humble yourself before me let my people go that they may serve me for if you refuse to let my people go behold tomorrow

[26 : 58] I'll bring locusts into your country and they shall cover the face of the land so that no one can see the land and they shall eat what is the flax and barley that was destroyed by the hail but the wheat and the emmer will now be consumed by the locusts and this escalation of the sign leads to escalation in protest by the Egyptian officials remember it was after the seventh plague that they first started breaking rank from the party line and now here servants of Pharaoh pay attention to the Lord again and they go up to Pharaoh to confront him directly in verse seven they say to him how long shall this man be a snare to us let the men go that they may serve the Lord their God do not yet understand that Egypt is ruined so this is a vote of no confidence for Pharaoh they're going to him and saying under your leadership

Pharaoh due to your stubbornness Egypt has been ruined so now do something about it and their solution is cunning as much as it is diplomatic they say let the men go that they may serve the Lord their God the Hebrew word here for men here doesn't necessarily refer to adult males only but it's often used inclusively to refer to men and women so it can be translated people that's exactly how it's used in Exodus 35 12 it refers to both men and women in that context so the contrast here is not between men and women the contrast here is between adults and children the officials are suggesting have them leave the impressionable and controllable children in Egypt and send the adults and you could tell that that's what they're referring to by Moses response because he says in verse 9 we will go with our young and our old we will go with our sons and daughters and Pharaoh's angry reaction also confirms this in verses 10 and 11 the Lord be with you if ever I let you and your little ones go look you have some evil purpose in mind no go the men among you and serve the Lord for what is that is what you are asking so the issue at hand is the children so formally in Exodus 5 18 Pharaoh refused to let Israel go and he told them to go now and work and those two same commands are repeated here as go and serve it's the same Hebrew word serve and work and so now he's conceding the point before he wanted him to go and serve himself Pharaoh but now he tells him to go and serve the Lord he's making a concession but he is also seeking a concession from God you can take all the adults but not the children leave them here as collateral to ensure that the Israeli adults all come back after worshipping in the wilderness this way even if Israel ends up never coming back and fleeing Egypt for good which Pharaoh fears might happen then at least they have the God's plan for Israel is not only for this generation it's for all future generations because from everlasting to everlasting the Lord is God he ought to be worshipped generation after generation God does not deserve the worship of us only but of all our children and their grandchildren as a parent we can't say well

I believe God and that's enough the kids can choose whatever they want to believe no I want my kids to believe God and their kids to believe God and on and on not only for their own salvation but because that's what God deserves he is the God from everlasting to everlasting the fact that Pharaoh is trying to keep the children in Egypt shows that he still doesn't understand his proper relationship to God he still thinks he has some leverage he thinks he can negotiate with God when what is proper is worship and total surrender heeding his officials advice Pharaoh summons Moses there and back implies that they shouldn't take everyone which ones are to go and Moses insists they're going to take everyone and then Pharaoh ironically utters a blessing to Israelites he says the

Lord be with you if ever I let you and your little ones go what he means by that is the [32 : 14] Lord has never been with you and if he if I ever let you go which I will never do then the Lord is with you then the Lord will be with you but since I will never let you go that means the Lord is never going to be with you but little does Pharaoh realize that soon he will in fact let Yahweh means the Lord will be with you so due to Pharaoh's continued sinful resistance the eighth plague of locusts come over Egypt and it's so severe that it says Pharaoh hastily called Moses and Aaron and once again confesses that he has sinned and God once again is merciful he takes away the locust drives away the locust with a strong wind I think in some ways God making the plague seize is even more impressive than

God bringing the plagues upon Egypt in the first place if you could think about it this way if you're in the gym and you're trying to lift some weights let's say you're on the bench press anybody can lift put a lot of weights on the barbell and then just let it fall on their chest can you do you have actual control over the barbell and that's what God's showing here he's not just unleashing disaster that he can't control he makes it start and stop when he wants it he makes it go where he wants it and keeps it from coming where he doesn't want it he has complete mastery over all of this that's what he's showing his power his might his name but Pharaoh's repentance here is also not genuine he repents only to have the punishment removed he's not really sorry that he has sinned against God he's only sorry for himself and for

Egypt and we know this because as soon as the locusts are gone Pharaoh again refused to let Israel go and that brings us to the second to last plague the darkness says God commands Moses in verse 21 stretch out your hand so that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt a darkness to be felt so three days of pitch darkness falls upon all the land of Egypt you know it's kind of hard for us to imagine this because even when it's dark outside for us we live in a city where there's a lot of artificial light I guess people call it light pollution right and so you're never in complete darkness and so your eyes can get adjusted to the dark and you can see plenty but imagine pitch darkness where you literally can't see anything your eyes never adjust to that dark it's a palpable darkness darkness that can be felt it was so bad that in verse 23 it says no one saw one another none of the Egyptians could see one another and they didn't even rise from their place for three days because there's no point they can't do anything there's no one to guide them they can't see anything unless you think that this was just a solar eclipse it says here at the end of verse 23 all the people of Israel had light where they lived that's not an eclipse there's light in Goshen there's no light in all the land of Egypt the darkness selectively affected Pharaoh to make yet another concession he says in verse 24 go serve the Lord your little ones also may go with you only let your flocks and your herds remain behind so he's making another concession okay now you can take the children too fine take the children just leave your cattle your livestock your herd so Pharaoh is still seeking concessions from

God he's not ready to let go entirely of his labor force because this is really costly for him very costly for him but once again God's not willing to compromise Moses replies in verse 26 our livestock also must go with us not a hoof shall be left behind for we must take them to serve the Lord our God we must take all that we have with us because all that we are and all that we have is necessary to serve and worship the Lord our God isn't our response to God often like Pharaoh's as well we compartmentalize our lives and then cordon off God to a small part of our lives and then we say well I'm willing to do everything you ask me to do unless it causes me discomfort and suffering my children's faith is yours but not their careers please don't let them be pastors or missionaries please let them be doctors and lawyers professors my

[37 : 36] Sunday morning is yours but the rest of the week is for me to do whatever I want to do the tithe the 10% of my income is yours but the rest of it I will spend however I wish I'll give as offering as much as I can spare without affecting any of my savings and retirement plans and vacation plans and entertainment plans and eating out plans sure I'll serve you here in Massachusetts but Idaho New Mexico that's too much in the middle of nowhere going to a foreign country forget about it sure I'll steer clear of the hard drugs but my unhealthy drinking habits don't touch that God you can do whatever you want with that part of my life but please keep your hand off this part of my life that's off limits we need to stop trifling with

God God is not our business partner he's not our equal he's not an elected official with term limits that we put into office he's no mere manager he's our Lord he's our God he's our king who has given us everything we have where are the Christian brothers and sisters who say here I am all of

me all that I believe all that I think all that I have my health and my wealth and my very breath is yours God to do whatever you want your kingdom come your will be done in every aspect of my life we have all failed in this regard all of humanity ever since Adam's fall is born into sin and our default mode is to be in rebellion against

God like Pharaoh we all once refused to acknowledge the name of the Lord we lived in ignorance refusing to worship our creator living in the passions of our sinful flesh following the course the patterns of this sinful world following the evil spirit that is at work in all those who disobey God so then aren't we no different from Pharaoh is there any hope for us but thanks be to God in his sovereign grace he chose his people from before the foundation of the world and though we had failed to live and surrender and worship under his rule he sent Jesus his only son to represent us to live and die and to be raised again for us Jesus is the one person in all of human history who was completely surrendered to God the father he says in John 5 truly truly

I say to you the son can do nothing of his own accord but only what he sees the father doing for whatever the father does that the son does likewise Jesus was perfectly obedient all of his life and Jesus life is a microcosm of the history of Israel because he represents all of God's people and the good news is that wherever we have failed Jesus has succeeded all your sins all your failures all your defeats that you remember with pain and shame in all those places Jesus has succeeded he perfectly obeyed God the father to the end and even on to laying down his life on the cross to take our place to pay the penalty for our sins to fulfill all righteousness and then having been raised victoriously from the dead Jesus offers us his righteousness eternal life so that as far as the east is from the west our sins are removed from us do you feel that you can't stand before

God the righteous judge no one can in his or her own righteousness but we who believe in Jesus can receive his righteousness Jesus' righteousness as a free gift and this is how you receive that free gift by letting go of what you're holding on to in your own hands and clinging to Christ by despairing of all your own efforts to save yourself by denying yourself by yielding to the lordship of Christ and to the power of his spirit and Jesus extends this invitation to all of us in Matthew 16 24 to 26 if anyone would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me for whoever would save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it for what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul losing our life in this way is no loss for us because by doing so we gain

[43 : 07] Christ the priceless treasure Andrew Murray uses this analogy in his classic book absolute surrender he says I have a pen in my pocket and that pen is absolutely surrender to the one work of writing and that pen must be absolutely surrender to my hand if I am to write properly with it if another holds it partly I cannot write properly will you be a pen that is absolutely surrender to God's hand let us surrender ourselves to the grace and power of God in Christ and there find our freedom and eternal life let's pray Lord we confess that we are stubborn we relinquish our control and so often sinfully seek to grasp again for it but Lord again and again by the power of your

Holy Spirit we yield ourselves to you be enthroned upon our hearts govern us with your word and as we surrender ourselves to you help us to enjoy the great joy and the abundant life that you promised us in Christ in Jesus name we pray amen amen peace amen to you will you will it is the important