

This month our pastors will begin a theme about being in the wilderness. And so this first scripture begins with the people of God's preparations to escape slavery to the Egyptians – before they wander in the wilderness. Today's specific theme is about praises and pain. God's praised salvation came at the cost of the pain and death of Egypt's firstborns. Judgement is difficult, but necessary.

#### Exodus 12:1-14 - New International Version

**12** <sup>1</sup>The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, <sup>2</sup>“This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. <sup>3</sup>Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. <sup>4</sup>If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. <sup>5</sup>The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. <sup>6</sup>Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. <sup>7</sup>Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. <sup>8</sup>That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. <sup>9</sup>Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire—with the head, legs and internal organs. <sup>10</sup>Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. <sup>11</sup>This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the Lord's Passover.

<sup>12</sup>“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. <sup>13</sup>The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

<sup>14</sup>“This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord—a lasting ordinance.

This second scripture, deals with sin in the church. Another form of judgment that is both difficult and necessary. Praise for when a wrong-doer humbles and repents – pain when a relationship is broken.

Matthew 18:15-20 - New International Version

<sup>15</sup> “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. <sup>16</sup> But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ <sup>17</sup> If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

<sup>18</sup> “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

<sup>19</sup> “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”