

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E.
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Exodus 6:2-8

**14th Sunday aft Pentecost
(series A.)**

September 14, 2014



God also said to Moses, “I am the LORD. ³I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself fully known to them.

⁴I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they resided as foreigners. ⁵Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant. ⁶“Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. ⁷I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. ⁸ And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.’”

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Solomon Northrup was born a black man – born free in New York City. Solomon was in Washington, D.C. when he was drugged and kidnapped and smuggled down to New Orleans – where he was sold into slavery. Solomon kept a journal – a record of his bondage for the next 12 years – picking cotton and cultivating sugar on major plantations in Louisiana. Solomon’s journal was a best seller back in the day – around the time people were reading the novel – Uncle Tom’s Cabin. Then for almost 100 years Solomon’s book was pretty much forgotten – until it was re-discovered by two historians. Back when I was in grade school people

researched and retraced Solomon Northrup's journey and added all sorts of historical details to his journal. Then it became a PBS television movie and then last year – 12 Years a Slave – the movie of the year! Movies about slavery are hard to watch – as people treat other people – other human beings as if they were less than people – less than animals. They wouldn't mistreat animals the way they beat and starve and utterly humiliate slaves. Living here in the United States – the "*land of the free and the home of the brave*" – everything about slavery goes against us! I think it's almost impossible for us to understand what it must be like to be a slave. And yet – as we study God's Word today we will think about the children of Israel in slavery in Egypt. Today God's Word encourages us to stand beside Moses as we:

I. He ~~Meets us~~ **Meets us** ~~in~~ **rescues us** ~~from~~ **rescues us** ~~slavery~~

II. He ~~brings us to the Promised Land~~

You know the Bible history – how Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt. How Joseph was the most trusted worker in Potiphar's House. How Mrs. Potiphar set her eyes on Joseph. When she finally literally took hold of Joseph – he said, "**How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?**" And Joseph ran away from her. From Prison Joseph was delivered by the LORD to be second in Egypt – second only to Pharaoh himself. Joseph's family came down to Egypt – and Joseph moved them into the Land of Goshen – the finest part of all of Egypt. Time passed – and the years rolled by. The day came when no one remembered the seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. No one remembered how the LORD had used Joseph to save his people. And so the time came when people began to ask – what are all these Jewish people doing here in Egypt? And some people asked – what would happen if some enemy attacked – and all these Jewish people turned against us and joined our enemy? We would be in a terrible position! And so there was more and more backlash against the Jews. It got so bad – they started throwing little Jewish baby boys into the Nile River to drown them. We might be filled with moral indignation – were it not for the fact that so many babies in the United States are put to death before they are born! Literally millions of babies – right up to the moment of birth – not to mention the horrors of partial birth abortion – for any reason – are put to death. Since 1973 – my 3rd year of college – more than 53 million abortions have been performed in the United States. Almost 3,000 people died on 9/11. About that many die

from abortions in the United States every single day – day in and day out – day after day! How sad and tragic is that? When a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman they had a son. They named him Moses. For 3 months they kept Moses hidden. But the time came when this became pretty much impossible. So they took baby Moses and hid him in a papyrus basket – covered with pitch – among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. Moses’ sister Miriam kept watch. The Pharaoh’s daughter went down to the Nile to bathe and her attendants were walking along the river bank – when they found the basket and found baby Moses. Baby Moses was rescued. He was nursed by his birth mom – then grew up in the Palace. The day came when Moses was grown up and saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Looking this way and that and seeing no one, Moses killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. Exodus 2:11b,12 Moses ran for his life – all the way to Midian. There he married a lady named Zipporah – and had a son named Gershom – which sounds like the Hebrew word for *an alien there*. When Moses was somewhere approaching 80 years old – had been a shepherd forever in the middle of nowhere – the LORD spoke to Moses from the burning bush. The LORD said to Moses – tell the mighty Pharaoh – this is what the LORD says, **“Let my people go!”** And so?

Pharaoh didn’t take the news well. He said, **“Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go.”** Moses and Aaron said, **“The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Now let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, or he may strike us with plagues and with the sword. But the king of Egypt said, “Moses and Aaron, why are you taking the people away from their labor? Get back to your work!”** The Pharaoh ordered that the Israelites continue to make the same number of bricks – but from now on they would have to find their own straw. The people said to Moses and Aaron, **“May the LORD look upon you and judge you! You have made us a stench to Pharaoh and his servants and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.”**

Moses needed more encouragement and more instruction from the LORD. That is where our text comes in. Exodus chapter 6! **God also said to Moses, “I am the LORD.”** This is the Great I AM. This is the LORD who changes not! The same yesterday and today and forever! People change all the time. Sometimes we grow and change. That’s part of being a

Christian – to grow and change! We need to expect change in one another – to encourage and enable change – and to recognize and acknowledge change when we see it. To build up one another! The LORD never changes. He loves us as much right now as the moment Jesus said from the cross, **“It is finished!”** All our sins were paid for. All our guilt taken away. All our sins washed away with Jesus’ blood! Jesus loves us now – and he always will – tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow Jesus’ love never fails!

God also said to Moses, “I am the LORD. ³I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself fully known to them.” In early Old Testament times – God’s power and his wisdom and his holiness were especially prominent. The LORD – the God of free and faithful grace – the Savior God – was also there, too, and so? The LORD made a covenant – a promise to redeem His people. Think what was coming – very soon! The 10 plagues – one after another – each more withering than the last – would culminate in the death of the firstborn! God’s people would be spared by grace through faith. God’s people would be spare because of the blood of the Passover Lamb. What a powerful picture of the grace of God – the Lamb of God who would take away their sins. That powerful promise would come true through Jesus – the Lamb of God – who takes away the sin of the world! On a hill shaped like a skull – that ultimate Lamb would die – once for all! That means all our sins are forgiven. When we have troubles – problems – frustrations. When things go painfully wrong in our life – don’t be fooled by the devil into thinking God is somehow punishing me for my sins – my mistakes. Don’t be fooled by thinking Jesus is putting pain into my life – because I have done ten thousand little things that are wrong – or I have done one or two things that are wrong and huge! There are not big sins and small sins. There are not little slips and slight mistakes and enormous malicious moral failures. We have all sinned and fallen far short of the holiness God demands. And Jesus suffered for all those sins to the point he cried out from the \dagger in unimaginable agony. And then – at Easter’s first light – he was alive again. Jesus is the Risen Christ – our Redeemer and Savior!

⁶“Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with

mighty acts of judgment. ⁷ I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.” An outstretched arm – a picture of power and might. Today we might flex our biceps! Strength and power unlimited belong to the LORD. The proverbial – with one hand tied behind my back – I will set my people free. We are fellow redeemed! Jesus bought us back from sin and death! Redemption! It’s what Jesus did for us. We watch Chopped! – the cooking competition. Sometimes they have chefs who were on before and lost before. They say again and again – they are seeking redemption. We watch American Ninja Warrior – a contest with almost impossible obstacles and sometimes a time limit to beat, too. This has been going on for some 6 or 7 years. They too have repeat athletes – trying again and again to climb Mt. Madoriama. Some have fallen again and again on the same obstacle – the salmon ladder – the spider leap – the warped wall and more. Again they seek redemption. They try to make up for the past failure with triumph this time. And I get that! This is an obstacle course – not the Seminary. But the word redemption – technically speaking – is to be bought back. Jesus bought us back with his innocent blood spilled on the † . We are saved and we are forgiven by grace alone – for Jesus’ sake.

“⁸ And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.” Ultimately – the LORD would part the Jordan River – and God’s people would walk into the land flowing with milk and honey on dry land – reminiscent of the parting of the Red Sea – and so? The walls of Jericho would come tumbling down – not because of battering rams or catapults lobbing massive stones through the gates and the walls. The walls would fall down upon themselves – when the ark of the covenant had been carried around the city again and again – and trumpets of rams’ horns blasted – the power of the LORD! It is in fact a most wondrous place – the Promised Land. The Sea of Galilee – not very big – with smooth round stones on the shore. The Sea of Galilee – where Peter and Andrew, James and John caught fish and mended nets – and enjoyed morning fish fries with the Risen Christ. The north shore of the Sea of Galilee – where thousands of people sat down and heard Jesus preach – **blest are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God.** Don’t worry about tomorrow – consider the sparrows. They don’t plant little

fields or harvest or store away in barns – and yet in the winter – they are warm and safe and round. Consider the wild flowers! Even Solomon in all his royal splendor was not dressed like one of them. Go down the Mount of Olives – across the Kidron Valley – up to Jerusalem – the city of David. Here Solomon built the Temple. Here Hezekiah made a way for fresh water to come into the city when she was under siege. Here the Babylonians destroyed the Temple. Here Herod rebuilt the Temple. And here the Romans smashed it down – so that not one stone was left upon another. Here Jesus died and rose again – so that we will live in the New Jerusalem because all our sins are forgiven!

“I am the LORD!” This phrase occurs 3 times in this reading. At the beginning – in the middle and at the end. Not *I was* – nor *I will be* – but **I am!** The LORD sets us free from our slavery to sin. Back in 1888 there were a number of murders in the Whitechapel district of London. Some people called the murderer Jack the Ripper – because of a letter written most likely by a journalist – claiming to be the murderer – in order to sell more newspapers! It was on the news just the other day – that an author claims to have DNA proof that the person who took the lives of at least 5 “ladies who sold hugs and kisses” is in fact – a Polish immigrant named Aaron. That DNA from the scarf of one of the victims proves that a man who died in a mental hospital was in fact the serial killer. If you watch CSI programs or lawyer programs or detective programs you know about this thing called *chain of custody*. You need to have a chain of custody of evidence – to do everything humanly possible to make sure no one tampered with the evidence. 130 years is a long time – if someone were to want to tamper with the evidence. All that aside – it’s tempting – when you read about unsolved murder mysteries – cold cases – as they are called – to say to your self – “they got away with it”! The fact is – no one gets away with anything! Jesus knows all our sins – all our sinful thoughts, words and actions. Jesus died on the \dagger for all the sins of all people everywhere. The LORD is in fact the God of free and faithful grace who sent His one and only Son to redeem us. Jesus died and rose again – so that we are forever free of all our sin and guilt. We are no longer slaves again to fear – but heirs of eternal life for Jesus’ sake. Amen!

To God alone all glory!

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