

Scripture Text to accompany the themes of the Sunday Sermon; *Exodus 8:20-10:29 (NIV)*

**[The Plague of Flies]**<sup>20</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning and confront Pharaoh as he goes to the river and say to him, ‘This is what the Lord says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me.’<sup>21</sup> If you do not let my people go, I will send swarms of flies on you and your officials, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians will be full of flies; even the ground will be covered with them.”<sup>22</sup> “But on that day I will deal differently with the land of Goshen, where my people live; no swarms of flies will be there, so that you will know that I, the Lord, am in this land.”<sup>23</sup> I will make a distinction between my people and your people. This sign will occur tomorrow.”<sup>24</sup> And the Lord did this. Dense swarms of flies poured into Pharaoh’s palace and into the houses of his officials; throughout Egypt the land was ruined by the flies.<sup>25</sup> Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Go, sacrifice to your God here in the land.”<sup>26</sup> But Moses said, “That would not be right. The sacrifices we offer the Lord our God would be detestable to the Egyptians. And if we offer sacrifices that are detestable in their eyes, will they not stone us?”<sup>27</sup> We must take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the Lord our God, as he commands us.”<sup>28</sup> Pharaoh said, “I will let you go to offer sacrifices to the Lord your God in the wilderness, but you must not go very far. Now pray for me.”<sup>29</sup> Moses answered, “As soon as I leave you, I will pray to the Lord, and tomorrow the flies will leave Pharaoh and his officials and his people. Only let Pharaoh be sure that he does not act deceitfully again by not letting the people go to offer sacrifices to the Lord.”<sup>30</sup> Then Moses left Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord,<sup>31</sup> and the Lord did what Moses asked. The flies left Pharaoh and his officials and his people; not a fly remained.<sup>32</sup> But this time also Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go.

**[The Plague on Livestock]**<sup>9</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, says: ‘Let my people go, so that they may worship me.’”<sup>2</sup> If you refuse to let them go and continue to hold them back,<sup>3</sup> the hand of the Lord will bring a terrible plague on your livestock in the field—on your horses, donkeys and camels and on your cattle, sheep and goats.<sup>4</sup> But the Lord will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and that of Egypt, so that no animal belonging to the Israelites will die.”<sup>5</sup> The Lord set a time and said, “Tomorrow the Lord will do this in the land.”<sup>6</sup> And the next day the Lord did it: All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one animal belonging to the Israelites died.<sup>7</sup> Pharaoh investigated and found that not even one of the animals of the Israelites had died. Yet his heart was unyielding and he would not let the people go.

**[The Plague of Boils]**<sup>8</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot from a furnace and have Moses toss it into the air in the presence of Pharaoh.<sup>9</sup> It will become fine dust over the whole land of Egypt, and festering boils will break out on people and animals throughout the land.”<sup>10</sup> So they took soot from a furnace and stood before Pharaoh. Moses tossed it into the air, and festering boils broke out on people and animals.<sup>11</sup> The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils that were on them and on all the Egyptians.<sup>12</sup> But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said to Moses.

**[The Plague of Hail]**<sup>13</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me,<sup>14</sup> or this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth.’<sup>15</sup> For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth.<sup>16</sup> But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.<sup>17</sup> You still set yourself against my people and will not let them go.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, at this time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt, from the day it was founded till now.<sup>19</sup> Give an order now to bring your livestock and everything you have in the field to a place of shelter, because the hail will fall on every person and animal that has not been brought in and is still out in the field, and they will die.”<sup>20</sup> Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the Lord hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside.<sup>21</sup> But those who ignored the word of the Lord left their slaves and livestock in the field.<sup>22</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that hail will fall all over Egypt—on people and animals and on everything growing in the fields of Egypt.”<sup>23</sup> When Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, the Lord sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed down to the ground. So the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt;<sup>24</sup> hail fell and lightning flashed back and forth. It was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation.<sup>25</sup> Throughout Egypt hail struck everything in the fields—both people and animals; it beat down everything growing in the fields and stripped every tree.<sup>26</sup> The only place it did not hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were.<sup>27</sup> Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. “This time I have sinned,” he said to them. “The Lord is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong.<sup>28</sup> Pray to the Lord, for we have had enough thunder and hail. I will let you go; you don’t have to stay any longer.”<sup>29</sup> Moses replied, “When I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands in prayer to the Lord. The thunder will stop and there will be no more hail, so you may know that the earth is the Lord’s.<sup>30</sup> But I know that you and your officials still do not fear the Lord God.”<sup>31</sup> (The flax and barley were destroyed, since the barley had headed and the flax was in bloom.<sup>32</sup> The wheat and spelt, however, were not destroyed, because they ripen later.)<sup>33</sup> Then Moses left Pharaoh and went out of the city. He spread out his hands toward the Lord; the thunder and hail stopped, and the rain no longer poured down on the land.<sup>34</sup> When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts.<sup>35</sup> So Pharaoh’s heart was hard and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the Lord had said through Moses.

**[The Plague of Locusts]**<sup>10</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these signs of mine among them<sup>2</sup> that you may tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and how I performed my signs among them, and that you may know that I am the Lord.”<sup>3</sup> So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, “This is what the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, says: ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, so that they may worship me.’<sup>4</sup> If you refuse to let them go, I will bring locusts into your country tomorrow.<sup>5</sup> They will cover the face of the ground so that it cannot be seen. They will devour what little you have left after the hail, including every tree that is growing in your fields.<sup>6</sup> They will fill your houses and those of all your officials and all the Egyptians—something neither your parents nor your ancestors have ever seen from the day they settled in this land till now.” Then Moses turned and left Pharaoh.<sup>7</sup> Pharaoh’s officials said to him, “How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the people go, so that they may worship the Lord their God. Do you not yet realize that Egypt is ruined?”<sup>8</sup> Then Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. “Go, worship the Lord your God,” he said. “But tell me who will be going.”<sup>9</sup> Moses answered, “We will go with our young and our old, with our sons and our daughters, and with our flocks and herds, because we are to celebrate a festival to the Lord.”<sup>10</sup> Pharaoh said, “The Lord be with you—if I let you go, along with your women and children! Clearly you are bent on evil.<sup>11</sup> No! Have only the men go and worship the Lord, since that’s what you have been asking for.” Then Moses and Aaron were driven out of Pharaoh’s presence.<sup>12</sup> And

the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over Egypt so that locusts swarm over the land and devour everything growing in the fields, everything left by the hail.”<sup>13</sup> So Moses stretched out his staff over Egypt, and the Lord made an east wind blow across the land all that day and all that night. By morning the wind had brought the locusts;<sup>14</sup> they invaded all Egypt and settled down in every area of the country in great numbers. Never before had there been such a plague of locusts, nor will there ever be again.<sup>15</sup> They covered all the ground until it was black. They devoured all that was left after the hail—everything growing in the fields and the fruit on the trees. Nothing green remained on tree or plant in all the land of Egypt.<sup>16</sup> Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you.<sup>17</sup> Now forgive my sin once more and pray to the Lord your God to take this deadly plague away from me.”<sup>18</sup> Moses then left Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord.<sup>19</sup> And the Lord changed the wind to a very strong west wind, which caught up the locusts and carried them into the Red Sea. Not a locust was left anywhere in Egypt.<sup>20</sup> But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let the Israelites go.

**[The Plague of Darkness]**<sup>21</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that darkness spreads over Egypt—darkness that can be felt.”<sup>22</sup> So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days.<sup>23</sup> No one could see anyone else or move about for three days. Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.<sup>24</sup> Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and said, “Go, worship the Lord. Even your women and children may go with you; only leave your flocks and herds behind.”<sup>25</sup> But Moses said, “You must allow us to have sacrifices and burnt offerings to present to the Lord our God.<sup>26</sup> Our livestock too must go with us; not a hoof is to be left behind. We have to use some of them in worshipping the Lord our God, and until we get there we will not know what we are to use to worship the Lord.”<sup>27</sup> But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he was not willing to let them go.<sup>28</sup> Pharaoh said to Moses, “Get out of my sight! Make sure you do not appear before me again! The day you see my face you will die.”<sup>29</sup> “Just as you say,” Moses replied. “I will never appear before you again.”

### General Question Bank

**Observation** (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)

**Know** (what does the text say about God?) **Be** (what does it say about us?) **Do** (what does it call us to do?)

**Together** (What is our communal identity/response according to the passage/Holy Spirit?)

### Discussion/Topic Starter (Ice Breaker)

- As we live through many subsequent global catastrophes, how do scriptures like these provide perspective?

### Exodus 8:20-10:29

O: What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

*\*\*\*Another way to ask: “Choose one verse or phrase from the passage that stands out to you. This could be something you’re intrigued by, something that makes you uncomfortable, something that puzzles you, something that resonates with you, or just something you want to examine further.” Now share it with the group*

- O: Notice how pharaoh attempts to bargain with Moses and dictate the terms of his obedience. He offers to allow Israel to sacrifice within the land of Egypt (Ex. 8:25), to allow them to sacrifice but “not go very far away” (8:28), for only the men to go (10:11), and for the people to go without their flocks and herds (10:24). Does the Lord accept these compromise offers? Why might this be?
- O: The first three plagues affected everyone, but in the plagues of flies, livestock, hail, and darkness, the Lord explicitly “makes a distinction” and spares the Israelites. What message does this send?
- O: How do the plagues of frogs, livestock, and darkness especially apply to Egypt? (compare to frog goddess of fertility, Hathor the cow goddess of love, Apis the sacred bull, and Amon-Re, the chief sun god)
- I: Have you ever tried to negotiate with God, offering less than full surrender to all of what he’s asking of you? How have these scenarios tended to play out?
- I: In the first two triplets of plagues (1-6), pharaoh’s heart is hard, but by the final triplet, the text always says “the Lord hardened” pharaoh’s heart. Why would this be? Does this make a difference in who might get credit for liberating Israel? Why is this significant?
- I: The Lord’s stated intents are repeated: 1) let my people go so that they may worship the Lord, and 2) that you may know that I am the Lord. How do you see these purposes being fulfilled throughout this text? What fulfillment is yet to occur?
- A: This purpose of knowing that the Lord is God reminds us, as Psalm 46:10 says, to “be still and know that I am God.” Consider practicing centering prayer together in your group. Go to [www.riversidecommunity.org/practices](http://www.riversidecommunity.org/practices) and click “centering prayer” for access to the practice guide.

**-How WILL you respond this week? What one question do you want us to ask of you next week in regard to this?**

### Recommended Follow-up:

**Pray:** Pray together, and really focus in on that we are meeting with God, He’s in the room, and He wants us to KNOW Him. Pray together, spend some time being silent.

**Respond:** Spend this week responding to God’s word as fleshed out in the group time, as well as journey through this week’s devotional guide.

## **An explanation on how Riverside structures these discussion guides\*:**

Riverside defines a disciple of Jesus as a **“Know, Be, Do”** person. And since Jesus told us to “make disciples” we use the “Know, Be, Do” framework in our discussion guides. We believe the process for this transformation happens in community, hence the **“Together”** part of the Riverside mission as well.

Riverside leadership regularly asks questions around these areas:

- “What do we need to **know** about God?”
- “Who do we need to **be**?”
- “What do we need to **do**?”
- **“Together**, what is our communal identity/response according to the passage/Holy Spirit?”

Here is what we mean by “Know, Be, Do” (based on [Colossians 1:9-10](#), see below)

**Know** – *“to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives..., growing in the knowledge of God.”* Not just knowing about Jesus, but knowing Him personally, intimately, and deeply. This is also about knowing the scriptures, knowing the voice of the Holy Spirit, even knowing yourself.

**Be** – *“so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way.”* Becoming more like Jesus (sanctification). This is about our character and our heart and our motivations, our passions and convictions change the more we get to Know Jesus (and others).

**Do** – *“bearing fruit in every good work, ...”* Knowing Jesus and Becoming like Jesus practically will change our actions. As we grow in these areas we will naturally DO the things that Jesus did while in the flesh on earth (living and loving like Jesus). Some broad categories around DO are evangelism and justice and service.

Notice *“bearing fruit in every good work”* then yields more *“growing in the knowledge of God.”* In other words, while “Know, Be, Do” are three distinct words, they are deeply interconnected.

As a side note, the next chapter states: *<sup>6</sup> So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. <sup>8</sup> See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. (Col. 2:6-8)*  
To aid in this process Riverside also has a **daily devotional guide available each week**.

### **Colossians 1:9-10, NIV**

*For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,...*

---

\* As discussed in Riverside’s HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid “go through this guide word-for-word.” There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time. This guide was created in consultation with *Echoes of Exodus*, Alastair Roberts and Andrew Wilson, 2018; *Exodus: Life Change Series*, The Navigators, 1989; *Exodus 1-19*, James Reapsome; and *Exodus: Knowing the Bible*, Matthew Newkirk, J. I. Packer.