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First Baptist Arlington  
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**2021**  
**A JOURNEY OF FAITH**  
*Celebrating 150 Years of Ministry:*  
*Appreciating Our Past*  
*Anticipating Our Future*

**SPRING 2021**  
*Keeping the Faith*  
April 11 – June 5, 2021

*Redeemed, How We Love to Proclaim It!*  
Exodus 15:1-21

## **INTRODUCTION**

We are reflecting upon the event of the Exodus itself as well as exploring the theology of the Exodus. We are thinking together and reflecting upon how the Exodus affected not just the people who experienced the Exodus but also how this story captured the imagination of the people of God, and it became woven into the theological fabric of the people of God: both Old Testament and New Testament.

Here is how I would divide the Book of Exodus itself:

## **EXODUS**

**Deliverance: Exodus 1-18**

**Discipleship: Exodus 19-24**

**Devotion: Exodus 25-40**

**SERMON TITLE SLIDE**     *Redeemed, How We Love to Proclaim It!*

**Text:**     Exodus 15:1-5; 12-13; 17-21

## A SONG OF REDEMPTION

Wow. What a story! Exodus 14 recounts the incredible deliverance of Israel from Egypt by the mighty God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The one and only true God!

Israel passed through the Red Sea (Sea of Reeds) on dry ground while the chasing Egyptian army was destroyed by the collapsing of the walls of water that engulfed them.

It was a mighty, incredible, miraculous, unforgettable display of the redemptive power and grace of God.

Moses and the people of Israel have just experienced this miracle and the narrative is interrupted. By a song! Not just any song, but a substantive song.

Moses and Israel broke out into a glorious, beautiful, emotional, spiritual song. It was not just any song – it was a song of redemption! Exodus 15 is a celebration of the deliverance of Israel from the strongest empire on earth at the time.

With no army, no government, no resources, no standing --- Israel was set free! All Israel had was their God! And that was enough!

*And Israel sang! Moses sang! Miriam and the women sang!*

### **Music – something about it!**

Music stirs the soul. It offers you a way to emote. It gives you an opportunity to declare. Praise God for the talented musicians who have made it possible for the rest of us to join the choir!

Do you know the story of Fanny Crosby?

She was the first woman to ever address the US Senate in person.

Fanny Crosby would live to be 94 years old. When she was 6 weeks old, an incompetent doctor placed a poultice mixture on her eyes and blinded her for life. It was 1820. Her parents knew this was going to be incredibly challenging for a little girl growing up in that era. However, Fanny would demonstrate her determination, in spite of her blindness, to receive an education.

At the age of 30, she attended a camp meeting and heard an evangelist's message. She responded to the invitation that night – and the elders laid hands on her and prayed

over her. She said it had no effect. She responded another night – same experience. Finally, on a third night, the evangelist issued the invitation and no one responded – so she came in response to the invitation and found her Savior.

Some 10 years later, Fanny Crosby began to sing --- her own songs – songs of redemption. Starting at age 40, over the next 50 years, she would write over 8,000 songs of redemption. Here are some of her original songs of redemption:

- *All the way, my Savior leads me*
- *Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine*
- *He hideth my soul,*
- *I am thine, O Lord*
- *Jesus is tenderly calling you home*
- *Near the cross*
- *Pass me not O gentle Savior*
- *Praise Him, Praise Him, Jesus our Blessed Redeemer*
- *Rescue the Perishing*
- *Tell me the Story of Jesus*
- *To God be the Glory*

In 1882 – she wrote:

*Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it, Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;*

*Redeemed through his infinite mercy, His child and forever I am*

*I think of my blessed Redeemer, I think of Him all the day long;*

*I sing, for I cannot be silent, His love is the theme of my song!*

For many years, Fanny would serve the Sixth Avenue Baptist Church in New York. She served as a Deacon and a lay preacher!

The Bible contains numerous songs of redemption:

- Numbers 21:17-18 – the Song of Israel
- Judges 5 – the Song of Deborah
- 2 Samuel 22 – the Song of David
- 1 Samuel 2 – Hannah’s Prayer
- Psalms – 150 Songs of Redemption
- Luke 1:46-55 – the Song of the Virgin Mary

The songs of redemption are in our heritage!

SONGS OF REDEMPTION – They are in our future!

**REVELATION 15:1-4 – the songs of Moses and the Lamb!**

Did you hear that? A testimony to God’s redemption! All nations will sing!

## **THE PURPOSE OF REDEMPTION**

Why did God rescue Israel? Why did He redeem these people?

My goodness – don’t miss this. God is at work in His world. He is making things right. He is reclaiming, redeeming, restoring, rebuilding, resurrecting, re-everythinging!

Why did He save Israel? Because this is the story of redemption!

He promised in Genesis 3:15 to one day crush the head of Satan!

He told Abraham that all the peoples of the earth would be blessed through him.

He calls Israel to Himself to be a holy people, a royal priesthood – representatives for Him to the rest of the world (Exodus 19).

He offers Israel the opportunity to be a light unto the Gentiles so the nations may find their way to Him.

In other words, God did not redeem Israel for Israel’s sake --- but for the world’s sake. They would become the shepherds of a blessing, a hope, a promise, a future, a message, a path, a possibility ----- that would reach far beyond the bounds of a promised land.

God’s purpose was lived out in them and through them, but it was for the whole world!

God’s redemption of people was a part of His redemptive, restorative work in His world.

Many years later, Jesus would come and embody the promise in a Person. God in the flesh!

And He called a people unto Himself. The new people of God. With His parting words, Jesus would commission His people – to go and make disciples of all the nations!

The Purpose of Redemption is to be used by God in His great plan of redemption. God is using us to serve Him in His great redemptive work!

## REDEMPTION AND FIRST BAPTIST ARLINGTON

Who is First Baptist Arlington and why are we still here? What is God doing through us?

What kind of church are we? Are we an avant garde church? Are we a multi-site church? Who are we? How would you answer that?

Praise God that testimony, that song of redemption made its way all the way to Arlington, Texas.

It settled upon a small group of hardy Baptists, eking out a life on the frontier of the newly---re-United States of America.

It was inauspicious in its beginnings. I'll give you that. Just a handful of Baptists in Johnson Station, Texas back in 1871 organized by Elder John Quarels Burnett from South Carolina. A nation was emerging from a terrible Civil War. It was a tumultuous time.

And thus began a long and winding journey for our church family. Who could have predicted it back in 1871?

- **1876 - move north with the community to settle along the new railroad line - become a part of the heart of a new community known as Arlington. We became the first church in this new community.**

Our church has ministered faithfully through:

- **Industrial revolution**
- **World War I**
- **The pandemic of 1917ff**
- **The roaring twenties!**
- **The Great Depression**
- **World War II**
- **Korean War**
- **Vietnam War**
- **Turbulent sixties**
- **Civil Rights Era**
- **Sexual Revolution**
- **Economic booms and busts of the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century**
- **2000**
- **9/11**
- **Iraq and Afghanistan**

- **The pandemic of 2020**

And guess what --- after all these years, here we stand! By God's grace, now 150 years old ---- and still singing the songs of redemption! We are still giving testimony to this community.

Why did God redeem us? Why are we still here after 150 years???

Just like Israel of old, God has not redeemed us for our sake - but for the sake of the world!

We've been through so many seasons as a church.

Recently - the ministry of Dr. Henard East was a season of expansion and growth and outreach. Dr. East led our church to expand the Baptist Brand across our city. We started Baptist churches across Arlington: Northside Baptist, Highland Baptist Church, Fielder Church, Mt. Olive Baptist Church, University Baptist Church, Parkview Baptist, Lamar Baptist, NorthPointe Baptist.

All of these churches --- our church helped to launch. People, land, resources, signing notes to guarantee loans, donating financial resources or people ---- our church stretched the reach of the Gospel across our city.

So - are we a multi-site church?? I don't know - but we have undergirded the Baptist witness across this community.

Dr. Charles Wade came in 1976 and brought his incredible energy, pastoral skill, missional vision and led our church to solidify our nerve center here on Center Street through the purchase of more land, construction of new buildings, growing our staff, and leading us to great days in ministry. Guided by Matthew 25, in a desire to reach the least of these, he left an indelible imprint on this church, community, and denomination.

His legacy is forever solidified by the starting of Mission Arlington.

Dr. Wade's vision to take the Gospel to the people was poured into Tillie Burgin who took the reins of Mission Arlington back in 1986 and launched a Bible Study.

Again, an inauspicious beginning!

Now – a sprawling, growing, miraculous ministry that reaches across our city each and every day. Some 350 Apartment Bible Studies and churches are now under our ministry umbrella reaching over 3500 people here in Arlington every week in Bible Study and worship. Plus, a holistic ministry that meets the real needs of people in our city every day. And this church has given over \$13 million to support this ministry.

Praise God for how He has used and continues to use Mission Arlington!

And then, we embarked on another season as a church in August of 2001, when you extended the invitation for me and Cindy to join you in ministry and allow me to serve as your pastor.

Another season of ministry began --- deepening our commitment to discipleship and mission.

God began to stir in our hearts the need to respond more personally to the call of the Great Commission. Building on the strong mission legacy already in place here in this church, we began to mature in our missiology and started the incredible journey of sending workers from our church to be supported by our church, strategically guided by our church, and live cross-culturally across the world.

We've met some amazing people along the way – including my friend, the Chief!

You have supported, trained, commissioned, and sent:

15 units (either a single adult or married couple)

36 people

Established 3 global centers that we currently support and operate today in Europe and Africa where our church members live and serve.

You have mobilized hundreds of volunteers who have taken this Gospel literally across the globe.

You have forged partnerships with key global partners that are at work right now in some of the most remote places in our world.

In our direct and personally connected network of ministry through our global centers -- right now – today – while you and I are meeting on this campus and online – right

now – in our ministry umbrella – you are connected to, you are helping to resource and support:

172 church planters/evangelists/leaders

160 church plants/preaching points overseas

7400 believers

Just in our network in Africa, you are a part of 10 new churches planted during the pandemic, some of them already with over 100 new converts each.

What are we doing???

Singing songs of redemption!!!!

And, y'all, we are just getting started!

We are still here – in Downtown Arlington.

Here we are. By the grace of God, we are still here.

Why?? For ourselves?? My goodness, no. Do we enjoy the blessing of living in community? Yes! Do we have to take care of our people? Yes! Do we have to be characterized by real programming that continue to meet the needs of families, children, adults, youth, students, single adults, senior adults????

Yes!! Of course ---- but why?

The purpose of redemption is what guides us!

Our church has joined and Adaptive Cohort of churches from across America, led by Tod Bolsinger. A small group of staff members have joined me in these meetings.



Recently, we were asked, “What are the three core values of your church?” Not our aspirational values --- but our real values.

How would you answer that question? Here is what we said:

### **Adaptive Church Cohort - Core Values of First Baptist Arlington**

- **Blessing the Generations** - Our church is a church for everyone
- **Generosity** - At the heart of our missional call is a spirit of generosity
- **Lay People - leaders, ministry** - We believe in lay leadership

So - what has God built here? A church!

A Psalm 1 church - where He is glorified and honored. Where people are encouraged and led to develop deep, strong roots that can result in that strong trunk --- resilient, mature, committed --- with branches that reach far and wide bearing fruit for God’s Kingdom.

A place where you are welcomed, accepted, blessed, and challenged.

A place for the young and the old, the weak and the strong.

And - a church with a future!

A new era of ministry on the horizon.

These facilities ---- fresh and newly renovated. Why have we renovated and prepared so diligently these past few years?

Here is where we are headed:

- **Expand our ministry to young families. Our Child Development Center is expanding its offerings this summer to include school aged children for the first time**
- **Expand our Counseling Center’s reach into this community**
- **Senior Adults - a daily ministry to Senior Adults and their families. We will be a resource center for families of Senior Adults across our community.**
- **Cross-cultural ministry in this community - new global center located right here targeting an unreached people group - already in the works**
- **Broad, holistic ministry to all age groups and life settings**
- **Ministry training center for young ministers in training**

- Lay institute for equipping lay people to engage this changing culture through training in theology, apologetics, and ethics
- Entrepreneurial center to bless, provide resources for marketplace ideas to bring new businesses to this community that will transform communities
- Utilize these investments to address the cycle of poverty that imprisons so many in our community
- Forge strategic partnerships across racial and cultural lines to end racism once and for all in the Name of Jesus
- To develop an evangelistic ministry to the gamers in our community
- Expand our online campus and off-campus ministries
- To foster alliances across North America to mobilize churches to take the Gospel to the far reaches of the globe

How will we accomplish this?

Church members and Staff Members – now is the time to respond to a vision.

I'm ready to lead.

Come on!

We are going to have to work a little harder. We are going to have to be a little more patient. We are going to have to get up a little earlier. We are going to stay a little later.

Let's do it together.

Let's live our lives together. Let's raise our kids together. Let's raise our grandkids together. Let's take care of our parents together. Let's sit down with lost people together.

Let's play together. Let's laugh with one another – occasionally laugh at one another.

Let's worship God together. Let's pray together.

Let's sing together.

Let's sing the songs of redemption . . . together!

*Redeemed, How I love to proclaim it!*

*Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb*

*Redeemed by Hi infinite mercy*

*His child and forever I am*

*Redeemed! Redeemed!*

*Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb*

*Redeemed, Redeemed, His child and forever I am!*