

A Sermon for Dayspring Baptist Church
By Chris Fillingham
“My Superbook Adventure”
Exodus 13:3-10
World Communion Sunday
October 2, 2016

Since the real ground breaking started up this week, we thought it was time to start going through the house to see what needs to be cleared out. I was digging through a shelf of old books in a back corner upstairs and you're not going to believe what happened.

I saw the spine of one of the books with this ancient calligraphy writing on it that said, Superbook, which reminded me of an old TV show I watched as a kid about bible stories, but it didn't look like a kids' book.

So, I pulled the book out, opened it up on my desk... and I know this sounds a little crazy... but... well... I suddenly got sucked into a swirling vortex of rainbows and shooting stars. It was psychedelic 1980's Japanese anime all over again.

Talk about terrifying!

It was the craziest thing I've ever experienced. In fact, I was so confused and disoriented, I didn't know what was going on.

Before I knew it I was lying on the ground outside some tent in a kind of wilderness looking area. And I don't mean some Coleman camping tent you could pick up at Target. This tent was a whole lot more old-school than that.

And then, I heard these three voices talking inside the tent. So, I crawled up closer to the tent to try to see if I could hear what they were saying.

“Moses, we've got to talk about this,” I heard a woman's voice say.

“Really? I mean, come on. There's no way they could forget this,” one man's voice said.

Then there was the third voice... also a man's voice.

“No, Aaron, I think she's probably right. We need to do something. I mean have you noticed how dense they all are?”

“Sure, but there's no way they are going to forget about that night. I mean, the blood on the doorposts, the dinner... and then the screams off in the distance. Are you kidding me? I'm still having nightmares!”

“Stop being such a baby, Aaron,” the woman’s voice said. “You always did have nightmares growing up. But, they won’t remember. I mean I was just talking to Joe this morning. He already forgot about the Red Sea incident... and that was just last week!”

“My Yahweh, these people are dense!” the third voice said. “I think Miriam’s right. Even if they don’t forget, their children will...”

As you can imagine, hearing that made my head start to spin and my heart started to pound. In fact, I thought I must be dreaming. Maybe I had passed out from some of the left-over toxic mold dust on that book I grabbed... which would explain the psychedelic stars and rainbows.

So... I tried to wake myself up... but nothing worked.
And it didn’t work ... because I wasn’t dreaming.

I know you think I’m crazy, but it happened.
And there I was, hearing this conversation and these names. Moses, Aaron and Miriam in a tent, talking about that dark night in Egypt.

And who knew, right? Who knew the three of them sat around talking about how to get everyone to remember? But that was the conversation I was overhearing. Around and around they went about the need to remember, and to keep remembering.

And the more they talked about it, the more I started to think about that word... “remember”... and it’s two parts: “re” and “member”

Because the way they were talking about it wasn’t as if they were just talking about recollecting something that happened in the past.

But when they said, “re-member” it was as if they were talking about participating in it again, becoming part of it again.

Being re-membered... being brought back into it again.

And in a way... it calmed me... because when I thought about that, they didn’t seem like such strangers, and I didn’t feel... as out of place. Because I realized that every time I “re-member” I was making myself part of them... putting myself back among them, becoming a member of this ancient story myself... of this ancient people.

You and I... we are re-membered into this story.

Well, before too long, they started brainstorming about how to remember. It was the most fascinating conversation:

“Should we have a special dance to remember?” Aaron asked. “Maybe a circle dance? That would be fun.”

“Nope. No Good.”

“Why not?”

“Because white people can’t dance and we don’t want to leave them out.”

And in that moment I knew why I loved Moses so much.

“We should make it a meal... a memory meal.” Miriam said. **Everyone likes to eat.”**

“Oh, I like the sound of that!” Aaron sounds pretty eager here. **“We could have roasted lamb, lamb chops, rack of lamb with goat cheese, and goat stew, cooked in a nice red wine sauce. And then we’ll have some fresh baked bread the way mom used to make it. And for dessert, how about baklava?”**

“Aaron,” Moses finally chimed in. **“That’s too much. No one in the world could afford to eat like that.”**

“You’re right,” Miriam said. **“How about.. just bread?”**

“Now you’re on to something...”

“Why bread?” Aaron asks.

“Because... well, everyone loves bread.”

“Not everyone. What about gluten free folks?”

“Well, too bad for them!”

“We’ll stick with the bread!” Moses sounded a bit exasperated by now.

But I found the whole conversation fascinating. In fact, I wanted to watch this exchange... it was so incredible.... and who knew when I’d have this opportunity again, right?

So, I found a small tear in the tent where I could peep through and watch.

“Fine. We’ll go with bread,” Aaron caves. **“But let’s at least make it good bread. How about asiago cheese?”**

“That does sound nice,” Miriam said. **“Or maybe we could have bread stuffed with goat cheese and maybe even a little rosemary and olive oil basted on top?”**

“You guys are missing the point. We’re re-membering, remember? Let’s just use the same bread we ate that night.”

Silence followed that one.

In fact, it was one of those really awkward silences. Aaron and Miriam look at each other.... and then looked back at him like he was crazy.

“Seriously?” Aaron asks. **“Unleavened bread? That’s how you want us to celebrate each year? You’ve got to be kidding. That stuff is so... so ordinary.”**

“I’m not kidding, Aaron”

Miriam sighs. **“Being a shepherd all those years sure did change you.”**

Aaron looks a little crestfallen here because he knows he’s not going to win this one. **“You’re such an ascetic sometimes, Moses...”**

At this point my mind started to wander a bit. I was thinking about how spiritually intuitive Moses was... making this meal out of the most ordinary thing there is.

If eating this ordinary bread invites us to be re-membered into this ancient story, then you have to wonder... how else does the ordinary re-member us into God’s great salvation?

And it got me thinking about the incarnation... The almighty, mysterious, divine presence, God, the holy one, slips into ordinary skin. God enters an ordinary human body. And all of humanity is now re-membered; is now made part of the life of God.

Somehow, the ordinary re-members us, and puts us back into the body of Christ. We are re-membered into the body.

Of course, there is no way Moses was thinking about the incarnation, but it was a stroke of brilliant spiritual intuition on Moses’ part. ***In fact, you might say it was inspired.***

Because if ordinary bread can open me up to God’s presence in our world, then so can everything else that is ordinary. Suddenly the whole world becomes sacramental... full of grace that is flowing to us, into our lives.

The ordinary life of a leaf-- turning red or orange-- can open me up to God’s transformative work in our world... and in me.

The ordinary sound of a baby crying or a child laughing can become the sound of God’s laughter and tears... echoing in our world.

The ordinary work of cleaning the dinner dishes can become a sacred moment where God is breaking into our lives... reminding us of our deepest reality...

It’s in those moments we are re-membered,
put back into the life of God.

I was thinking about this when I realized they were still trying to figure out the details of this whole thing.

“...Seven days, that should be about right.” Moses said.

Miriam agreed. **“Seven days, every year... just to remember.”**

Aaron had another thought. **“We may need more than just the meal, you know.”**

“What do you mean?” Moses asks.

“We need to tell the story.”
“Doesn’t that go without saying?” Miriam wonders?

“No. We need to say it, out loud.... or it will just become another family ritual.”

I could see Moses pondering what he was saying and starts nodding his head. **“You’re right. We need to keep telling it to each other. And we need to tell it to our children... and our children’s children.”**

“Yeah, and don’t forget Joe. He definitely needs to be told!” Miriam says with a grin.

“OK so we need to tell the story,” Moses says, **“But I think it needs to always be told in the present, not the past. So, when they have the meal... every generation should say the same thing. *‘It is because of what the Lord did for me, when I came out of Egypt.*”**

Aaron smiles. **“That’s beautiful.”** He looks over at Miriam and sees her eyes lost in wonder with a slight grin still on her face. **“What is it, Mer?”**

“It’s just... we were in Egypt for so long. It’s hard to imagine we’re really free from that place.”

“I know.”

“And... I’m picturing my grandchildren and their grandchildren saying those same words... living in this moment with us. ‘It’s because of what the Lord did for me,’ they will say ‘when I came out of Egypt.’”

Then all three of them said it together, ***“It’s because of what the Lord did for me, when I came out of Egypt.”***

It was beautiful... to watch this tender moment with Moses and his sister and brother. And so, I leaned back from the tent just a bit and started to say those words myself. “It’s because of what the Lord did for me, when I came out of Egypt.”

I said it to myself as I began to think about the Egypt’s I’ve been in in my life... and the circumstances where God has come and taken me out of my own kinds of slavery...

those places where I was trapped... and maybe didn’t even know how trapped I was...

or those times when I’ve felt a deep kind of oppression in my own soul;
those seasons of life that brought a profound uncertainty about the future...

It’s because of what the Lord did for me, when I came out of Egypt.

And as I thought about those things... the voices in the tent grew a bit more distant... and I felt dizzy again... and before I knew it, I found myself on the floor of my study, next to my desk with that book on the ground next to me.

True story.

In fact, I'd show you the book, but I've decided to keep it secret for now. So don't go telling anyone. This is just between me and you, OK?

Besides, you don't need to see the book to know I'm telling the truth. All you need to do is look over here at this table... with ordinary breads from all over the world.

Because over a thousand years after that conversation in the tent, Jesus was sitting in an upper room with some of his disciples. They were celebrating this same meal... this same moment, saying "It's because of what the Lord did for me, when I came out of Egypt."

They were being re-membered with the ancients, living into God's great salvation for them that had happened over a thousand years earlier.

And it was on that night that Jesus took the break and broke it... but this time he said something a bit different, "**This is my body, broken for you.**" he said.

And then he took the cup. "**This is my blood poured out for you.**"

Do this and re-member me.

Do this and bring me back into your presence.

Do this and become one with me.

And for another two thousand years since, people have been doing that all over the world. We come to this table today to be re-membered... with them all... and with Moses and Aaron and Miriam... all of us are re-membered back together, in the body of Christ.

We eat this bread and drink this cup today, "**because of what the Lord did for us, when we came out of Egypt.**"

because of the salvation that has been given to us.

So, we're going to sing the song in your worship guide, and as we do, I want to invite you to ready yourself... to be re-membered back into Christ.