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Jeremy Treat, Pastor for Preaching and Vision, Reality LA, Los Angeles, California; Professor of Theology, Biola University; author, *The Crucified King*; *Seek First*; and *The Atonement*

EVERYDAY GOSPEL

Easter Devotional

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PAUL DAVID TRIPP



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INTRODUCTION

I don't know if you've thought about this or not, but the whole Bible is an Easter devotional. From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture records the story of God's plan to rescue us from the death-producing tragedy of sin. This is the central content of the biblical revelation. With all its drama and moments of seeming defeat, nothing can stop the biblical narrative from marching forward to its crescendo in the birth, life, death, resurrection, and royal priestly ascension of the Messiah, Jesus.

Over thousands of years, God recorded and preserved this amazing story for us because he loves us. He wants us to know that this story is our story, and in knowing, he wants us to be left in awe and wonder, brought to our knees in adoration and worship, causing us to live lives of gratitude, love, and surrender. The cover-to-cover Easter story of the Bible was not meant to be thought of so much as religious information. It was not meant to be treated as abstract theological information. There is one reason God went to the extent he did to preserve his story of grace for us: heart and life transformation. This story has the power to give life and to change you at the deepest levels of human understanding, motivation, and functioning. If you can walk away unchanged from the cover-to-cover Easter story of the Bible, you are a profoundly blind and deeply lost soul. No story has the power to do what this story can do because no story has a central character like Jesus, the Son of Man, the Son of God, the Messiah, who is God Almighty but comes to earth to be a servant and to give his life as a ransom for all who put their trust in him.

The Easter story is meant to confront us, expose us, comfort us, identify us, motivate us, and secure us.

Confront us. The way the Easter story works is that unless you accept its bad news, its good news doesn't mean anything to you.

Introduction

This story confronts us with the inescapable truth that we are not okay. The words the Bible uses to describe us apart from God's grace are *lost, blind, wicked, rebels, idolaters, fools, and transgressors*, as well as other words like these. It is not a very attractive list! If you are any of these things, you are a danger to yourself, and your only hope in life and death is to be rescued from you. The Easter story is the story of that rescue. God confronts us because he loves us.

Expose us. This story serves as a great spiritual mirror. Like the mirrors we have in our homes, it is scarily accurate. Look into the mirror of the Easter story and you will see yourself as you really are. This story silences our ability to deny who we really are, silences our argument that we are okay on our own, and silences our hope that our righteousness is enough before God. God exposes us because he loves us.

Comfort us. A person who has been confronted and exposed needs to be comforted. The comfort of the Easter story is not rooted in flattery but in substitution. God doesn't work to make us feel good about ourselves; no, he comes to put himself in our place. He lives the righteous life we could never live; pays the penalty for sin in our place; rises again, conquering sin and death; and ascends to the Father to intercede for us. The comfort of the Easter story is a person, Jesus. God comforts us because he loves us.

Identify us. In the Easter story, God doesn't just forgive us; he gives us a brand-new identity. No longer known by our track record, our foolishness, our inability, our weakness, and our sin, we are now "in Christ." In Christ we are blessed with every eternal blessing, provided with everything we need, and indwelt by the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. We are his new creation and nothing can separate us from God's love. This is who we are. God gives us a brand-new identity because he loves us.

Motivate us. There is no more purpose-infusing, empowering, and motivating story than the Easter story. Think about the fact that by God's sovereign plan, your little story has been embedded in the most wonderful story ever. And because it has, everything in your life has new meaning and purpose. You are now part of the

grand army of redemption, and your choices, decisions, words, and actions matter in a way that they had never before. You can now live with courage and hope because Jesus has conquered sin and defeated death on your behalf. What is there to fear? God motivates us with his grace because he loves us.

Secure us. The first resurrection of Jesus carries with it the promise of a second resurrection for all who believe. This story will not end until all God's children have risen out of this evil world, with all its suffering and death, until every last tear has been dried, and until we are with our Lord in a world of peace and righteousness forever. God secures our destiny because he loves us.

So, this Easter, take time to meditate and luxuriate in God's grand story of redeeming grace. Don't just let it inform you; pray that it will once again transform you. It has been preserved for you because your Lord really does love you.

PAUL DAVID TRIPP

June 24, 2025

DAY 1

GENESIS 6:1–8

Redemption is where God's anger with sin and his grace toward the sinner embrace.

It is so easy for us to minimize our sin. It's so easy for us to be more concerned about or irritated by the sin of others than we are our own. It is so easy to argue for our own righteousness while being judgmental and condemning toward the sin of others. But if you minimize your sin, then you will no longer value, seek, or celebrate the forgiving, reconciling, transforming, and delivering grace of God. If you defend yourself in the face of conviction, you are defending yourself from the best gift that has ever or will ever be given: redeeming grace.

One particular passage powerfully depicts the sinfulness of sin. These are the words of a Creator who is grieved by what sin has done to his world and to the people he made in his own image.

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.” (Gen. 6:5–7)

What a devastating explanation of the horrible nature of sin: “Every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Since the heart is the control center of one’s personhood, for every intention of the heart to be constantly evil meant that the control of sin over people’s lives was both total and inescapable.

How bad is sin? It is an inescapable evil that lives in the heart of every person who has ever taken a breath. Stop now and permit yourself to mourn. Let yourself shudder at the power of the anger of God with sin, an anger so deep that he decides to wipe out humanity from the face of the earth. Today, remember how sinful sin is in the eyes of the one perfectly holy person—Jesus—who has ever existed.

It would be terribly sad if the biblical story ended here. The very first word that follows Genesis 6:7 is *but*. Judgment would not be the end of the story. God would not minimize sin. He would not turn his back on iniquity. Through Noah he would extend his mercy and gather a covenant people, and through them he would raise up a redeemer.

In the story of Noah, the anger of God with sin and the mercy of God toward sinners embrace. Here we get a hint of the cross that is to come. It is the anger of God with sin that drives Jesus to the cross. It is the grace of God toward sinners that leads Jesus to the cross. On the cross of Jesus Christ God's anger with sin and his grace toward sinners embrace, and still today that is the best of news.

REFLECTION

Is there sin in your life that you are currently minimizing or attempting to hide? If so, confess that sin to God and be reminded of the redeeming grace of Jesus.

PRAYER

Lord, help me not to minimize my sin. Show me the ways in which I have broken your law and transgressed your boundaries. I praise you that you have sent Jesus, our Redeemer, to save me and all those who place their faith and trust in him. In Jesus's name, amen.

DAY 2

GENESIS 22:1–14

When life seems to make no sense, we are not without hope or help because we are the children of God.

I was facing my sixth surgery in two years. For me, it was a moment of irrationality. Life didn't make sense anymore. This surgery was going to be much harder and more painful than the others, and it would require a much longer recovery. If you have a surgery every four months, your body doesn't have the time it needs to recover before the next surgery. My body was weak and worn down. I wasn't able to sleep well and had little energy to face the day. I had the most wonderful ministry opportunities I had ever had. I had more gospel influence than I thought I would ever have. I looked around and saw so many places that needed gospel explanation and application. But I simply had no strength. It made no sense that I would be in the moment of my greatest ministry influence and yet physically unable to do what I had been called and gifted to do. Where was God? What was he doing? What had he given me for this moment?

Such was the life of Abraham. The miracle son, Isaac, had been born. God had been faithful to his promise. But now, in a shocking turn of the story, God asked Abraham to sacrifice the promised son (Gen. 22). It seemed like the cruelest trick ever: Build hope and destroy it in a moment. Here is life seeming to make no sense at all. In recounting the story, Hebrews tells us that God was testing Abraham (Heb. 11:17–19). This was not a test where Abraham would get a pass or a fail. This was like the tempering of metal, heating it to a high temperature to make it stronger. In asking Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, God was not doing something to him but doing something wonderful *for* him. God was building the

faith of Abraham by proving his willingness to obey God no matter what and by giving Abraham the opportunity to experience the faithfulness of God's provision in moments of dire need.

You see, from the perspective of Abraham's covenant-making and covenant-keeping Lord, this seemingly senseless moment was a very sensible part of his plan for Abraham and all who would be blessed through him. And it needs to be noted that in this difficult moment Abraham was not without hope or help. Because he was a covenant son, Abraham possessed powerful, life-changing treasures. What did he have? He had the clear command of God, he had the clear promise of God, he had the blessing of the presence of God, and he was blessed to be the object of the infinite power of God. Abraham was not without help or hope because he was not alone.

The story of the near-sacrifice of Isaac points us to the sacrifice of another promised Son, Jesus. This Son died so that we too would be blessed in moments of need with God's presence, power, commands, and promises, always having the help and hope we need, even when life doesn't seem to make sense.

REFLECTION

In what way is this episode a “test” for Abraham? How did Abraham pass the test? Did God ever intend for him to kill Isaac?

PRAYER

God, help me to cling to your commands, your promises, and your presence. Remind me that I am never alone—envelop me in your Spirit's love. In Christ I pray, amen.

DAY 3

EXODUS 7:1–7

No story is more humbling, more beautiful, and more hope-instilling than the biblical story of redemption.

If someone were to ask you what the Bible is about, what would you say? How would you describe the content of God's word? What would you tell people to convince them that the Bible is the most important book ever written? The Bible is more than a history book, a theology book, a book of practical everyday wisdom, or a book of hope for troubled times. The Bible is essentially a grand origin-to-destiny narrative. It's God's story, accompanied by his explanatory and applicatory notes. One big theme holds together all the different parts of the Bible and all its different genres of literature. That theme is the theme of redemption. The Bible is the story of God's unleashing his power in order to provide the one thing that everyone needs: redemption. We need to be redeemed not just from the trials of life or our inadequacies or our weaknesses. No, we need to be redeemed from our sin. The main target of God's redeeming grace and power is not something outside of us, but something dark and destructive that lives inside of us.

The biblical story is marked by moments when God unleashes his redeeming power, so that his plan marches on until sin is finally and completely defeated and peace and righteousness reign on earth forever and ever.

The liberation of Israel from Egypt is one of those redemptive moments. The children of Israel cannot be exterminated in Egypt because the Messiah must come out of Egypt to provide final redemption for the chosen children of God (see Hos. 11:1). God demonstrates his lordship over every aspect of creation by unleashing his power in ten mind-blowing plagues. He is a

covenant-keeping King, and he will do whatever is necessary, in his incalculable might, to deliver his children. This demonstration of his almighty power makes it clear that he will not abandon his promises. His will will be done (Ex. 12:33–42).

You have to stand as a witness to this incredible physical display of the enormity of the power and rule of the Lord and ask, “Who is a God like our God? Who loves his children like our God? Who is faithful like our God?” As you stand in awe of this picture of the power of God’s redeeming mercy, it is vital to remember that in this moment God is not just moving to redeem Israel from its slavery in Egypt, but he is also moving to redeem us from our slavery to sin. If there had been no redemption from Egypt and no delivery to the promised land, there would have been no Messiah born in Bethlehem to live a perfectly righteous life, die a substitutionary death, and rise victorious over sin and death. All the redemptive moments in the Old Testament are not just for the people at the time, but they are for us too. In each moment God is fulfilling the promise he made in Genesis 3 that he would send a Redeemer to crush the head of the serpent, defeating sin and death. The story of the plagues is your story. The redeeming grace is not just for the Israelites back then but for you right here, right now.

REFLECTION

How has God redeemed you from slavery? What difference does this make in your daily battles against sin?

PRAYER

I extol you for your redeeming grace, oh Lord! I am in awe of your mercy and kindness to your unworthy people. Thank you for accepting me in Jesus, in whose name I pray, amen.

DAY 4

EXODUS 12:1–13

The radical, unexpected nature of the biblical story is that the hope for the Israelites in Egypt and our hope today rest on the shoulders of a Lamb.

It is a major understatement when the Bible says that God's ways are not like our ways and his thoughts are not like our thoughts (Isa. 55:8). No human being, no matter how brilliant, insightful, or experienced, would have been able to write the grand biblical story. The way God chooses to work and the instruments he chooses to use surprise us again and again. The apostle Paul expresses it this way: "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God" (1 Cor. 1:27–29). God intentionally does things in a way that defies human understanding, explanation, and credit-taking. He works in ways that cause us to step back and say, "Only God could have done this," and in saying this, humbly run to him for the help that he alone is able to give.

Such is the story of the final emancipation of God's chosen children from Egypt. Despite Pharaoh's resistance in the face of the terror of the plagues, God would not grow weary, and he would not turn his back on those who were the object of his covenant promises. He would deliver. No one would stand in the way of the divine and holy will of the King of kings and Lord of lords, not even the most powerful ruler on earth. But the way the people would be freed could never have been anticipated by any Israelite. By God's wise and holy plan, the Israelites would be saved from slaughter and emancipated from their bondage by the blood of a

lamb. That blood, sprinkled on the doorpost of an Israelite house, meant that God would pass over that house. God chose a lowly but spotless lamb to provide both salvation from death and liberation to a new life for his covenant children (Ex. 12:3–7).

Our hope, too, rests on the shoulders of a Lamb. Jesus didn't come as a conquering general, to throw down the kingdoms of men. No, he came to be a sacrificial Lamb. He, too, was a Lamb without blemish, who would be sacrificed for the salvation and liberation of all who believe in him. By the power of his shed blood, we are delivered from our bondage to sin and death and liberated to a new life of freedom as the children of God. We never could have written this story. We never would have anticipated that death would be the portal to life, that God would send a Lamb to do what kings, queens, and generals could never do. Now, that's a radical story, but it's very, very good news.

REFLECTION

Why was Jesus's death for our sins something "only God could have done"?

PRAYER

Lord, I seek you and call upon your name. Please forgive me of my sins and have compassion on me. I praise you that your thoughts and ways are infinitely wiser and better than mine. Thank you for sending your Son as the sacrifice for my sins. May he be my only comfort and hope. I pray to you in his name, amen.

DAY 5

EXODUS 25:1-9

True and lasting hope is found in these words: “I will dwell in the midst of my people.”

There are a myriad of websites and media series dedicated to home decorating. Whether we are conscious of it or not, we are all very particular about how we want our home to look. Some of us take the look of our houses seriously and invest time and money to get them to look like our dreams. Others are more casual about our surroundings. Some of us place a high value on neat and clean; others find a bit of a mess more comfortable. But all of us somehow, somehow express our personalities and our values by the way we design and keep our surroundings. That's why, when you are in someone else's home, it doesn't quite feel like home to you.

In Exodus 25 and the chapters following, we find directions for constructing and decorating a most important house: the house of the Lord. Read these amazing words carefully: “Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it” (Ex. 25:8-9). You should be filled with wonder as you read these words. How could it be that the great Creator, the Sovereign King, the Holy One of Israel would ever desire to dwell among these sinful, complaining, and often rebellious people? Here again we are confronted with a major theme in the biblical story. God pours out his love on his people not because of what is in them, but because of what is in him. Nothing argues more strongly for the amazing and undeserved nature of God's grace than God's commanding his people to make a tabernacle so that he could dwell with his people. The hope of Israel was to be found in one place and one place alone: the Lord of glory and grace who lived among them.

But there is more. I don't know if you noticed it or not, but God not only said he would dwell among his people, but he also communicated that he was quite particular about how his house would be built, furnished, and decorated. He wanted his house to communicate who he was and what he valued. God wanted his tabernacle to communicate two things: his unapproachable holiness and the mercy of his forgiveness. This means the tabernacle is itself a prophecy.

There would be another place where God's unapproachable holiness and his forgiving mercy would meet: the cross of Jesus Christ. Here in God's mercy plan, the perfectly holy Lamb would die, so that we would become the children of God and so that he would come and dwell with us. A holy God, dwelling among his not-yet perfectly holy children, is our hope today too. What amazing mercy that by grace we have become the house of the Lord.

REFLECTION

How does the tabernacle point to God's dwelling with us permanently by his Spirit?

PRAYER

Lord, how could you possibly dwell with me? I am always aware of my sin. But thank you for Jesus, who took that sin upon himself at the cross. I laud you for your glorious plan of salvation in him.

I pray in his name, amen.