Deliverance is the overarching theme of Exodus

– deliverance from circumstances that were threatening the faith of God’s people and their relationship with the Lord

who promised them life and land and a future.

* Deliverance from the consequences of sin.
* Deliverance from the evil of outside forces that overwhelmed them.
* Deliverance for pursuit of the fullness of life in God’s presence.

**Deliverance means being brought out from under the burden of difficult circumstances to stand upright and live freely.**

* A baby is delivered from the confines of the mother’s womb.
* A prisoner is delivered when the handcuffs are taken off.
* A person who owes something is delivered by the forgiveness of the debt.

**Deliverance is the restoration of life and hope for the future.**

What are the burdens in our lives that prevent us from living fully and freely?

--take a moment to write one or two down for yourselves.

What are the burdens you carry that you yearn to be free of?

…

God’s people were overwhelmed by the demands of the Egyptians.

They could not make the bricks fast enough,

When they cried to the Lord for deliverance, the Lord God answered them with hope.

**But that deliverance took time.**

The plagues inflicted upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians took weeks to accomplish.

These mighty acts of God that destroyed the means of life for the Egyptians

 Had failed to turn their hearts to the Lord.

Instead of acknowledging the power of God, the Egyptians continued to rely on their own power.

And God’s people waited for the deliverance God had promised.

There was one last opportunity for Pharaoh to submit to God

– one final plague:

– **the destruction of Pharaoh’s future by the death of the first-born male of humans and livestock.**

 The heirs would be destroyed.

 The studs would be no more.

**And this final act would be the occasion for Israel’s deliverance.**

There are three aspects of the story of the Passover to look at today:

1. New beginnings
2. Readiness for deliverance
3. Thankful remembrance

For the Egyptians, this death of the future was the end of a chapter.

**But for God’s people, it is the beginning of a new chapter.**

 The Passover begins a new month, a new year – the year of deliverance.

**Out of death, God brings life and new beginnings.**

The death of one future was the beginning of another.

Think now of the burdens you wrote down.

Is it possible that God is putting something to death to bring forth something new in your life?

Is God asking you to let go of something so that you can move forward into new life? Write it down.

Sometimes the way forward is by letting something die – even something good.

God’s deliverance is a new beginning.

**It comes through the death of humanity,**

**Jesus on the cross**

**– and through the resurrection of humanity**

**Jesus risen from the dead.**

**The new beginning of God’s deliverance is the risen Lord Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit**

 **present among us.**

It is the death of our own will and the acceptance of God’s powerful will for our lives.

…

Second, deliverance requires readiness.

We can’t just wing it.

We need to be prepared by God’s Word for something new.

Without being ready, we would just do what we’ve always done, not what Jesus asks us to do.

Without being ready, we want God **to deliver us from the present to go back to the past.**

 But that is not what God desires for us.

**God delivers us into a new future – a future of life.**

We get ready by

* Trusting beyond all reason that God is faithful
* Listening to God’s Word
* And Doing what the Lord says
* We eat of the perfect Lamb that gives his life for us
* And we are ready to go with Jesus at any moment.
* We can’t even wait for the bread to rise – we have to eat it unleavened.
* We paint our doors with the blood of the Lamb so that the Lord identifies us as those whose lives are being saved.

And how do we do this?

* **We are painted with the blood of Christ in Holy Baptism, marked forever as his own people.**
* We eat the body and blood of the perfect Lamb of God in the Holy Communion,
	+ being united with Jesus who died and rose from the dead to forgive us.

We live each day ready to spring into action to live the life God gives us.

**Those who are not ready do not recognize their Deliverer.**

* + They pursue glory and riches
	+ and fame and security and
	+ comfort and popularity
	+ and the absence of suffering,

And miss out on true salvation.

**Jesus is leading in a new direction, and it is important to be ready**

…

Finally, we remember our deliverance with **thanksgiving**.

It is important to remember again and again how God delivered us and restored us to life.

 So, each week on Sundays we do that great thanksgiving that rehearses God’s mighty act of deliverance by raising Jesus from the dead.

 And each day as we awaken, we remember our baptism into Jesus that gives us power for the day.

God’s deliverance was accomplished on the cross, **but we live it out daily in our lives.**

* We accept change and newness in our lives.
* We are made ready through listening to God’s Word.
* We remember what God has done with thanksgiving.

In the Name. .. Amen