

# THIS WEEK

## THIS SUNDAY 11/12

All Church Brunch, 11:30am-1:30 RWLG

## UPCOMING

### SATURDAY 11/18

Saturday Morning Ministry Prayer,  
8am RWLG. Contact Tina Anderson  
in the office

### SUNDAY 11/19

Introducing River West, 12:30 at Pastor  
Guy's Home @18123 Westview Dr, LO.  
Lite lunch provided. RSVP to Mary  
Halvorson in the office

2007 Israel Trip Info Meeting, 7:30pm  
RWCC. Contact Tina Anderson

## WEDNESDAY 11/22

Thanksgiving Eve Service, 6:30pm &  
8pm at RWLG

## SUNDAY 12/17

All Church Service, 10am  
at Lakeridge Performing Arts Center  
No Sunday evening service

## SUNDAY 12/24

No morning services  
Christmas Eve Service, 5, 7, 9 and 11pm  
at Lake Grove. Childcare provided for  
5 & 7pm services.

## Week of 12/25- 1/1

River West Office Closed

*Cover Photo: River West Greentree praising God during a  
Sunday morning Worship Service*

**RIVER WEST GREENTREE:** 1595 Greentree Road, Lake Oswego, OR 97034  
**RIVER WEST LAKE GROVE:** 15751 SW Quarry Road, Lake Oswego, OR 97035  
**OFFICES/COMMUNITY CENTER:** 16148 Boones Ferry Rd., Lake Oswego, OR 97035  
**phone** 503.699.2226 / **fax** 503.697.9663 / **email** info@riverwest

# NOTES

## RIVER WEST CHURCH

Building a Community  
of Christ for the World



next  
step | 11.12.2006

[www.riverwest.org](http://www.riverwest.org)

# WELCOME

Open your heart. Engage your mind. Together with others, reach for something real, deep and lasting. Come with your hurts, hopes, joys and fears. Expect something good, challenging and different. Here's why: Jesus Christ is alive and present with us as we gather to worship, pray and love one another in his name. That's what we believe! That's why we have come today.

At River West our mission is to build a community of Christ for the world. As we focus on Him in worship and the teaching of the Word, our prayer is that we will sense His presence and respond to His love. Life flows from this! To be in community means to share something in common with others. It is our shared faith in Jesus Christ that creates our sense of fellowship with Him and each other & from that flows our desire to share His love and grace with our community and world.

Our worship gathering is an important expression of our shared faith and life. But true community is built in other important ways as well. At the heart of our mission is what we call our Community Groups. These groups allow us to build relationships and grow deeper in our faith in Christ. For more information about various Community Groups call Pastor Adam at the church office.

Contact Pastor Josh regarding Student Ministry & Youth Groups for kids from 6th grade through High School. Our Children's Ministry Director, Lindsie Bailey would love to talk to you about fun stuff for kids at River West!

# RESPOND

Visitor? Need info updated in the directory?  
Want to sign up for something? Give us your info:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Children's names: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Best contact phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Which service do you attend?  8:45am  10am  11am  5:30pm

Sign me up for \_\_\_\_\_

Comments, questions, interests \_\_\_\_\_

Add/Update me in the directory

## A Heart of Faith in the Struggle for Freedom

Exodus 7 / Pastor Guy Gray

### The Reality of the Struggle

In Exodus 7 the struggle for freedom unfolds in its full fury. It is real and intense. It is violent, disturbing and extremely messy. In this chapter we encounter the first of the great plagues of the book of Exodus. These plagues will continue through Chapter 12 and will ultimately lead to the freedom of the Israelites from their bondage to Pharaoh and the beginning of a new life in relationship with God. But before the freedom comes the struggle. And it seems to go on and on. It seems relentless and overwhelming. The point is clear—there is no real freedom without a struggle. This is the nature of life in a broken world. We can sit around and think or talk about freedom all day long, but before freedom becomes a reality there will always be a struggle—a battle. Exodus 7:12 causes us to “feel” the reality of the struggle. It reminds us that there is a very real enemy that does not want God’s people to be free. In the Gospel

of Christ we are made to see the very same reality, right from the beginning. (See Luke 4:1-28).

### Different Dimensions of the Struggle

As the story unfolds it becomes clear that there are several different dimensions to this struggle for freedom. On the surface there is the whole reality of Egypt itself. Egypt is a giant earthly kingdom. Egypt is a political, economic and social system that is shot through with sin and oppression. Israel is caught in this very real, tangible and powerful worldly reality. But then there is something deeper still. As Pharaoh calls out the magicians, we see that there is a spiritual power and reality behind the earthly system. In fact, in Exodus 12:12 God says that in the plagues he is actually bringing judgments on the “gods” of Egypt. In this we recognize the “supernatural” spiritual dimension that is involved in this struggle. There is something powerful and sinister beyond that which lies at the surface of

things. And then there is Pharaoh himself. Pharaoh’s role is central in the struggle. But what is emphasized is the heart/will of Pharaoh as it relates to the struggle for freedom. More on this next week, but take note that there is an inner dimension to the struggle that takes place in the heart/will of a human being. So much of the battle is really about the response of the human heart, Pharaoh’s heart/will, – but also yours and mine. (See Ephesians 2:1-4 for different dimension of the struggle in our own experience).

### God Will Fight for You

Exodus 7:4 is a key. “Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out my division, my people the Israelites.” Ultimate victory in the struggle for freedom is going to depend on the mighty acts of God. And the awesome thing is that God has pledged himself to fight for Israel’s freedom –and for ours too. Israel is not alone in this struggle. If they were, there would be no ultimate freedom, identity or purpose for their lives. Neither are you alone in your struggle for freedom, identity and purpose in life. Exodus 15:3 looks back at all of this and declares, “the

LORD is a warrior, the LORD is His name.” This is one of the great truths of Exodus – and of the Gospel of Christ as well.

### The Extreme Measures of God

God will indeed fight on behalf of His people. According to Exodus, God fights for His people through “mighty acts of judgment.” This sounds extreme. It IS extreme. But then the situation calls for extreme measures, for the dimensions of the struggle are vast and powerful. The extreme measures take shape in the plagues. The first plague is the plague of blood. The last plague is the judgment of death of the firstborn. Blood and death are the extreme measures of God in the real struggle for freedom. What a preview of the reality of the Gospel of Christ, the cross of Christ –the ultimate victory of God.

### A Heart of Faith in the Struggle for Freedom

As the story unfolds we notice a crucial change taking place in the life of Moses. Moses is still aware of his own weaknesses and limitations (6:28-30). But even so, he is willing to go by faith and obedience before Pharaoh and speak God’s Word by faith. This is huge. And when Moses and

Aaron have success before Pharaoh (their “snake/staffs” swallowing up the magicians “snake/staffs”), they don’t gloat or boast or do a victory dance. They just stand and believe and obey. Moses seems to be off the roller-coaster of emotions & self doubt or triumphant gloating. He is developing a consistent heart of humble faith in the struggle for freedom. This is the way forward for each of us.

### Questions for Further Personal Reflection & Group Discussion

Take some time to respond to what we have been learning in Exodus. What is the Lord doing in your heart and life? Was there anything from Sunday’s sermon that was particularly helpful to you? Read Exodus 7: 1-24 again.

### Freedom & Struggle

“Before the freedom comes the struggle”. What does this statement mean in light of what we’ve been learning in Exodus? We talked this week about some of the different dimensions in the struggle for freedom. What examples of “struggle” do you see in this passage?

For further investigation, read Ephesians 2:1-4 and observe the levels of struggle in the passage. Can you think of an area of your life where you need victory or freedom? What kind of struggle is involved?

### It’s a Spiritual Battle

The magicians were able to imitate the trick of turning staffs into snakes (7:8-12). What does this tell us about the spiritual nature of the struggle? However, what do you think it signified that Aaron’s staff swallowed their staffs?

### Proper Focus

Verse 6 states that “Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD commanded them”. How is this response of Moses and Aaron different from the past? Why the change of heart? Or was it a change of focus? Explore this.

What happens in your life when you focus on yourself or on the challenges before you? What happens when you focus on the LORD?