

Maundy Thursday Sermonettes: March 30, 2018

Sermonette # 1: Come and see the Perfect Passover Sacrifice

First Lesson: Exodus 12:1-14

For the Jews, the celebration of the Passover was the religious equivalent of Christmas and Easter rolled into one. This was the biggest religious holiday about the biggest religious event in the history of the Jews. But unlike the celebration of Christmas and Easter, God gave his people very specific directions on how he wanted the Passover to be remembered and celebrated.

This celebration was to be a physical and spiritual reminder, not only of God's deliverance of the Israelites, but also of how he delivered them and what that deliverance pointed to. God wanted them to celebrate the Passover every year to remember his love.

The sacrifice and the meal were the central part of this yearly celebration because it was the central part of the original Passover celebration.

The family was to select a special sacrifice. It wasn't just any sacrifice, it was to be a year-old male lamb or goat without blemish or defect. This would not just be the lamb or goat that would normally be butchered to eat. This would be the prize lamb that would have been the future of the herd and earnings for the master and his family. This was a special lamb that the people were supposed to care for and about.

The blood was the special part of the special lamb. When the lamb was killed the blood would be saved. This blood was to be spread of the doorframes of the houses. It was blood, connected to God's promise, that would deliver the people from their slavery in Egypt.

Butchering a lamb was not meant to be a pleasant job. It was meant to point out to people how terrible their captivity was and how wonderful the love of God was.

But, this sacrifice and this Passover was also about a much greater deliverance; the deliverance that God would bring from the captivity of sin. God had promised that he would send a sacrifice who would take away sin once and for all and would free people from their captivity to sin. This blood was to remind the people of how terrible their slavery in sin was. It was meant to show them that sin was a prison much worse than the captivity in Egypt. But it also showed them that one day God would send that sacrifice to deliver them from this captivity to sin.

God's deliverance from sin would come in the same way that his deliverance from Egypt did. It would come with the blood of the Lamb. God would save all his people who believed the blood of his Messiah was shed for their forgiveness. Someday there would be a perfect Passover sacrifice that would bring this deliverance once and for all.

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, ² "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. ³ Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. ⁴ If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. ⁵ The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. ⁶ Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. ⁷ Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. ⁸ That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. ⁹ Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire—head, legs and inner parts. ¹⁰ Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. ¹¹ This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover.

¹² "On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. ¹³ The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

¹⁴ **“This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance.**

Sermonette #2: Come and See the Perfect Sacrifice

The Gospel: Mark 14:12-26

God gave his people the perfect steps for the Passover sacrifice and celebration. You would think that God’s people would have had no problem remembering to celebrate this yearly meal. It was one of the greatest signs of God’s love. God even commanded that it should be remembered. But they did not. There was a time of over 500 years where the Passover was not celebrated according to God’s command. During this time God’s love was taken for granted and not commemorated and remembered.

This was a very dark time for the Israelites. A time that was filled with their own sinfulness and a rejection of the God who loved them and promised deliverance. It was during this time that God could have destroyed these people forever because of their unbelief and rejection. But he didn’t. Instead he called to them to repent of their sin and return to him. Finally, after over 500 years, king Josiah reinstated the celebration of God’s love and deliverance and the people began to praise and thank their Lord again.

There would come a time when the Passover would not need to be celebrated any longer, but it would not be because the people forgot about it or got too lazy to do it. There would be a day when the Passover would not need to be celebrated because the perfect sacrifice would come and show God’s greater love and deliverance to the people. This would be the perfect sacrifice that would take away the sin of the world.

When Jesus and his disciples sat down to eat the Passover meal, all was done in the way that God has said it should be: the lamb had been chosen and slaughtered and the food had been cooked in the right way. But this was not the perfect the sacrifice.

It was not by accident that Jesus chose this night to institute his Holy Supper. He was using this night filled with the symbolism of a blood sacrifice that delivered the people from Egypt to teach his disciples and us about his perfect sacrifice that would deliver us from sin and death forever. Jesus would offer himself as the sacrifice for sin. He would offer himself to pay the price to deliver us. He would be the perfect sacrifice to deliver us from sin, death and the devil and bring us forgiveness once and for all.

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus’ disciples asked him, “Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?”

¹³ **So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. ¹⁴ Say to the owner of the house he enters, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ ¹⁵ He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.”**

¹⁶ **The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.**

¹⁷ **When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. ¹⁸ While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, “I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me.”**

¹⁹ **They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, “Surely not I?”**

²⁰ **“It is one of the Twelve,” he replied, “one who dips bread into the bowl with me. ²¹ The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”**

²² **While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take it; this is my body.”**

²³ **Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it.**

²⁴ **“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,” he said to them. ²⁵ “I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God.”**

²⁶ **When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.**

Sermonette #3 Come and See Your Savior Given and Poured Out For You 1 Corinthians 11:23-29

On this night that is filled with blood and sacrifice and God's love for his people, we see Jesus telling us that God was going to love us more than he had loved the Israelites so long before. God's love in delivering his people from Egypt was momentary, it was one earthly event. But the love that God was showing us in Jesus was one earthly event that would have blessings that would last forever for all who believe.

It was no accident that Jesus said, **This is the new covenant which is made with, made in, my blood.** The reminders of the old covenant were all around them. Here was the lamb, here was the blood, there was the reading of the deliverance of God. But even with the reminders of the old covenant all around them, Jesus established a better covenant, a new covenant, sealed, not in the blood of an animal, but in his own blood. He brings Jeremiah's prophecy to life. By his body and blood poured out on the cross Jesus would fulfill this important prophecy and promise of God. **I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more.**

The sacrifice that Jesus made was for us. When he said **do this in remembrance of me** he did not intend that this supper would only be eaten once and then forgotten. This would be a supper that was to be more important and be celebrated more often than the Passover. This supper was to be the living reminder of the New Covenant that Jesus would and did fulfill. It would not only be a reminder, it would bring to us the forgiveness that Jesus won on the cross.

Jesus shows us the importance of this meal. He shows us how important it is by placing a wonderful invitation and blessing for all who believe. **Do this, whenever you eat or drink this.** Come all who need forgiveness, come to my table for a visible reminder of my love. Come all who are repentant of your sins, and eat this meal so that you will know your sins are forgiven.

Jesus also shows us how important this meal is by placing a warning and restriction on it. ²⁷ **Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.** ²⁸ **A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.** ²⁹ **For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself** This meal where we join in such a special way with our Savior is not meant for all people. Jesus says, "Do not come to my altar if you do not believe that you are sinner. Or if you do not believe that sin is serious and separates from God and damns to hell. Do not come to my altar if you are uncaring or unrepentant of your sins. Do not come to my altar if you do not believe that you are receiving my true body and blood poured out for you. Do not come to my altar if you do not believe that I am pouring out my forgiveness on you. Do not come to my altar if you do not believe all that the Bible teach about salvation, forgiveness and eternal life.

Jesus shows us that it is important to come to his altar in faith, with repentant hearts, to join with him and those who share our faith, in a communion of faith where we declare what he has done for us in forgiving our wickedness and remembering our sins no more.

This meal is important, Jesus' own words make it important, but do we treat it that way? Are we being tempted to view the Lord's Supper as just another part of a church service that happens twice a month and makes it 15 minutes longer? Are we tempted to think that our sins are not that big or that they do not matter to God? Are we tempted to believe that what the Bible says about holding to the truth is not as important as making people happy?

When we feel the sting of sin in our life, when we realize that we are not as good as we thought, when we need to know the love that Jesus has for us, Jesus himself says to us, **Come and See, I am given and poured out for you for your forgiveness.**

In a few moments, we will have the opportunity to come to our Savior's table. At that table, we will remember what our sins cost, but we will also rejoice because our Savior was given and poured out for us so that we know that we are forgiven now and forever.

²³ **For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,** ²⁴ **and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."** ²⁵ **In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This**

cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

²⁷ Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.²⁸ A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.