



Christ Our Passover Lamb

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Exodus 12:1-28

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12 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ² "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. ³ Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. ⁴ And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, ⁶ and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

⁷ "Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸ They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. ⁹ Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. ¹⁰ And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. ¹¹ In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover. ¹² For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. ¹³ The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴ "This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast. ¹⁵ Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶ On the first day you shall hold a holy assembly, and on the seventh day a holy assembly. No work shall be done on those days. But what everyone needs to eat, that alone may be prepared by you. ¹⁷ And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day

I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as a statute forever. ¹⁸ In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. ¹⁹ For seven days no leaven is to be found in your houses. If anyone eats what is leavened, that person will be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a sojourner or a native of the land. ²⁰ You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwelling places you shall eat unleavened bread.”

²¹ Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb. ²² Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. ²³ For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you. ²⁴ You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. ²⁵ And when you come to the land that the LORD will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. ²⁶ And when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ ²⁷ you shall say, ‘It is the sacrifice of the LORD's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.’” And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

²⁸ Then the people of Israel went and did so; as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

(Pastor Prays)

If today you went home and decided to read in the New Testament, you would get through the Gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. You would find the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. And then after that, Luke wrote us a little book named Acts. It's the acts of the apostles. It really is the story of the church. You could find out the history of the church, and after Acts, you would get to the book of Romans. There, you would get all of this great theology. And then after Romans, you would get to a letter that the apostle Paul wrote to a church in a town named Corinth. That book is First Corinthians. He writes to a church in a terrible town named Corinth. It's kind of a Sin City like Las Vegas. The church was established there in this terrible town, and that church became a light in the darkness. But if you read First Corinthians, you find out that some of that darkness was getting into the church. So, Paul wrote to that church, addressing things like serial adultery, how to do the Lord's Supper, and a number of other issues. And the way he addressed their problems was that he took them to Exodus Chapter 12. In fact, here's what he does. He tells the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 5 that Jesus Christ is our Passover Lamb. He takes this story and applies it to the hearts of his people. Now we're

sitting here at Hickory Grove today with hundreds and hundreds of different people right here, with all manner and walks of life, all ages, with all kinds of problems, and my intent today is to do what Paul did, take you to see Christ, our Passover Lamb. I want to take this passage, and have you apply it to your heart, regardless of what your issue is, and to be reminded today that...

Our God is a Saving God

Here's what I want to do. We'll go to Exodus 12. Let's understand the passage first. So then, after explaining it, let's apply it. So let's learn what it means and then learn what to do with it. We'll go quickly. We'll begin in verse one. I will walk through some of the things that I'd like for you to see. **12** *The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ² "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.* So we're looking back to what happened in the land of Egypt, and then in verse 2, we find out that when the Passover is established. This is the very first Passover that takes us to Jesus and the Gospels. When you read the end of the Gospels, you find out that Jesus is in Jerusalem during the time of Passover. He is there, at that time, on purpose. This is his last Passover, but he is what all the other Passovers are pointing to: Jesus. So when the Passover is established in verse 2, we are told that God tells Moses and Aaron that the Passover will be the start of all the months. He takes their calendars and throws them out. From this point forward, this is what demands your time.

Now you can take that principle and bring it forward to where we are today. Here we are on a Sunday, man, it's so good that God has given us one day that is different from the other days. I got up today, came into church, and the sun's coming up, and it's going to be a beautiful day, even if it is a billion degrees outside. But it's not just a beautiful day. What makes this day good for us is that this is the Lord's Day, and it has reoriented our lives.

You find another word in verse three. That is the word congregation. Let me read it to you. ³ *Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household.* That's the very first time you see the word congregation. It starts there, and it means assembly. It's more than just Israel or the Hebrews. The word "congregation" is used throughout the book of Joshua. We find out that

there are people who are not Hebrews who become part of the congregation. Rahab the Harlot was one of them. So, you'll find that something else is going on here.

There is something else about verse 3. You'll find that there is a sacrifice. ³ *Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household.* Every man shall take a lamb, according to their father's houses, one per household. We are reminded, as it has always been in the Bible, that there must be a sacrifice in order for this holy God to communicate with sinful men and women. There must be a substitute.

When you open your Bible, in Genesis Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, you read the creation story. You find Adam and Eve. When they fall into sin, God comes to meet with them in the cool of the day. They hear him coming, they are hiding because they were afraid, and they were naked. And in order for them to be in the presence of God, he kills animals and covers them with skin; that's a blood sacrifice. Cain killed Abel because Abel's sacrifice was received by God; it was a blood sacrifice. Abraham was told to sacrifice his son, Isaac. They get to the mountain, and there is a ram caught in the thicket. God provides a blood sacrifice.

So, we get to Exodus Chapter 12, and the way that we escape from death is that we are under the blood of the Passover. When you get to Leviticus, you're told of the Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, when one sacrifice would be made for the nation of Israel. And then you look all the way into the Gospels, and there you hear John the Baptist say, as he stands on the banks of the Jordan River, Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. It's always been like that. We find it right here, a picture of Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb.

Now, from verse 4, and coming all the way down to verse 8, you have all of these very precise instructions about worship. We'll talk about that in a moment, but when you read from verse 4 to verse 8, you find the bitter herbs. They are to eat bitter herbs and unleavened bread. This is not sourdough bread, the kind you can grow the culture and give it to your homeschool friends. This is not that. This is something quicker than that. The bitter herbs are there to remind you how terrible sin is, the taste, so that you don't get off in the desert and think, I wish we were back in Egypt, which is what they'll do. Passover is there to remind you of how terrible that was, and how good God is.

When you get down to verse 11, we are told to do this, to eat it in this manner. ¹¹ *In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover.* Do you see that? That's a phrase that Jesus will use to talk about being ready for the Kingdom. It's something that Paul will use to gird up your loins, to talk about being fit for the Kingdom. Peter will use the very same phrase. And then you find out that this is the Lord's Passover. God has made the way. We are reminded that our God is the God of grace. That's what he calls for; he provides.

And then verse 12 and 13 is the description. Let's go back through it again. ¹² *For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD.* ¹³ *The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are.* So that's all of the Egyptians and Israelites. And then is the description of the Passover. The blood shall be a sign. The Angel of Death is coming, the blood on the post is a sign.

Think of the cross of Jesus. How are you saved, when God looks at the cross of Jesus and sees your sins atoned for. *And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.* Here is an Old Testament picture of the New Testament truth: Christ is our Passover, and our God is a saving God. When we look back at this passage, we are reminded of the goodness of God in the gospel. That's why it is here.

So, that's what it means. If that's the case, then how could you apply this in some everyday thoughts that might be helpful for you? I'll try to give you a couple. Here's the first one, number one. One thing we learned from this passage is that...

God is the priority

God is our priority. Or maybe you want to say it like this? God is the priority. Here's where I get that. In verses one and two, we are told that when the Passover is given to the people of Israel, it completely rearranges their calendar. When they were living under Egyptian rule and slavery, every day was the same. Every single day was just like the day before, all drudgery. When God gives them grace and pulls them out, now God takes the calendar and makes it something worthwhile. God becomes the very first month; God becomes the priority in their lives. I mean,

we feel a remnant of this. Christmas time comes, even if it's been secularized and everybody makes it materialistic, it's different than every other season. We go to Easter. Easter is the time we celebrate the resurrection. It's different. Or maybe on a more granular level, when we think about the days of the week, for Christians, the Lord's Day has been set aside as a different day. Every other day is work. Saturday can be different, but for us, Sunday, the day when God raised Jesus from the dead, that day has been set aside for us to gather together and worship.

And now living in 2025, when nobody else respects that, a lot of ball games, if you have kids, you have to make a decision. And that decision is before us. Will Christ and his day, and knowing him, will that be the priority? Being with the congregation, will that be the priority? Or I'll make it even on a smaller level. Tomorrow morning, why don't you set your alarm about half an hour earlier than you normally do and get up and read in God's word and see what it does to your heart? If you don't know where to start, go to the New Testament, to the book of John. It's easy to read. Start with the first two or three chapters, and read a couple there. Roll over to the Book of Psalms, right in the middle of the Bible. Open it and just read. Make that your priority. Say a little prayer. If you don't know how to pray, just use the old ACTS method: adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. Tell God how much you love him, confess your sins, and claim the grace of God found in Jesus at the cross. Thank him for all the great things, and then pray for something. If you don't know what to pray for, pray for me. Spend some time tomorrow just praying for the preacher. Lord, help that preacher. Do you know what's going to happen in your life? Your life priorities will begin to shift, and you will see that Christ is primary. My life is to be lived, to honor God in all regards.

I think this should be the truth at our church. God has given us this sense of momentum and renewal, and even people here who are visiting are sensing that. Look, this is a church that is built on the gospel that points to the truth and seeks to honor God with our lives. And from this passage, you can see right there in the middle of verses one and two, God is the priority. Let me give you a second point, number two.

God has a people

Do you see that in verse 3? They're not Hebrews, not Israelites. It's the word, congregation. The very first time, when the Passover comes, the Lord says to Moses and Aaron, Go tell the congregation. That word will be used over 100 times from Exodus to Joshua. Here it's used for the very first time in the Bible, and it is a description of God's people that are not just ethnically Hebrews or Israelites; they are a community, a congregation brought together under the Passover Lamb. This idea right here will extend all the way through the Old Testament into the New Testament Church, up to this very moment. This congregation is not based on ethnicity. It is not based on shared ancestry. It's not even based on shared experience. Some of us have a shared experience. This congregation is based on the redeeming grace of God found in the blood of Jesus. That's what binds us. This is what Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus. Remember that church? It was filled with Jews and Greeks. They are of different ethnicities. They weren't just different culturally. They were of different ethnicities. And this is what he said in Ephesians 2:14-16. *¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility. ¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.* That's the church. You know what the cross of Jesus does? It's how we're saved by Jesus; his perfect life, his atoning death on the cross, and his resurrection, and you trusting that Jesus did that for you. So the cross saves us. And the cross reconciles us to God and to one another.

Look, it doesn't erase where you came from or any shared experiences you might have in your past that inform your culture; it doesn't erase those. It overrules those, so that it is the blood of Jesus. God has a people, related to one another through the blood of Jesus. That's something you learned from this right here. That God is our priority, and that God has a people. Let me give you something else you might learn when you read this. Here's the third thing, number three.

God cares how you worship

It's not just that we worship; God cares how we worship. There used to be a time when if you were a parent, and you had children that didn't want to go to church with you, and they wanted to go to church somewhere else, and you might say something like this, Well, it doesn't really matter where they go, as long as they are going to church. There could have been a day like that. That day has passed. It does matter because we believe that God actually cares how we worship. If you start in verse 3 and you read all the way down to verse 11, you're gonna find all of these commands, like 8 or 9 of them, showing how to worship God. Let me just put out a couple of things that you might see when you read verse 3, and also in verse 7. We find out that sin must be dealt with in order to worship God. One of the truths of the God of the Bible is that our sin must be somehow dealt with. Verse 7 tells us there is a Passover Lamb. There is a substitute that has to be killed in our place. We take this truth. It runs us to the New Testament. There we find the centrality of Christ, his perfect life, his atoning death, and his resurrection. That's what informs Christian worship: what makes our worship service Christian is the centrality of Jesus Christ, who not only saves you, but sustains you. You keep reading, and you find out that not only does the sin have to be dealt with, but you'll be reminded that this is a holy God. All of these peculiarities should inform how we worship. That is to say, here at Hickory Grove, we don't think you should be flippant about worship or shallow about worship. You can be serious about worship and be joyful at the same time. Being serious doesn't mean that you're not joyful and happy in the Lord. Being serious means we understand that we are dealing with a holy God, and outside of Christ, we have a problem and can't worship him.

That's why I hate to see churches go the route of selling their souls to attraction. I hate to see churches do things like this summer series at the movies. So let's do a summer series at the movies, and we can base the worship service on a movie so Super Mario Brothers will be our theme this week. And we'll decorate it like Super Mario Brothers, and we'll sing those songs and try to use Super Mario Brothers to somehow bend it around to something Christian that will point you to Christ. And I think that's just dumb. We've been given a Bible to point you to Christ. Use that. You're never going to find your preacher ever dressed up like Super Mario Brothers. And maybe because I'm an angry old man, I don't know. Maybe that's my problem. I think that it has more to do with the fact that we actually want to take what we do here together seriously. It's not that we're not glad about it. We're joyful about it, but we're reminded that worship is actually approaching a holy God, and in order for us to approach a

holy God, it took the cost of his son Jesus to pay for our sins, to raise us from being spiritually dead, that we might be acceptable to God.

Paul looks back at this story and says Christ is our Passover Lamb. I think God cares how we worship. I think you learn from this passage that God is the priority, that God has a people, the congregation, that are together in the blood of Christ. God cares how we worship. Let me give you a fourth thing I think you might learn from this passage, number four.

God is sovereign

If you are new to Hickory Grove, when I say that God is sovereign, what I mean is that God is in direct, clear, complete, and intimate control. I feel like this needs to be pounded into us. When you walk through defeat, what happened? God is in control. When you look at the story of Pharaoh, Pharaoh's hard heart, God is in control. When there is a tragedy that you feel, a loss, run here to the sovereignty of God. I'll show it to you in verse 12 in just a second, but it must be pounded into our souls because so many of us are so easily influenced by what's happening around us right this moment, we forget that God is in real-time control right now, right now. Show where I get that is in verse 12. *¹²For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD.* Do you see all the I's? I will pass through. I will strike the firstborn. That's his right to do, he is sovereign. He's showing that he is the one true God, and at the end of that, you'll notice what he says there. I am Yahweh, sovereign. We need to be reminded of that. What does it mean that God is sovereign for you? Here's what it means: that nothing that happens to you happens by accident. God is in control. That he is greater than any problem you have brought to the table, or any tragedy that you've walked through, he's there. If he's sovereign, it means that you can trust him.

So, you've trusted him with your eternal soul. You've been saved by the grace of God found in Jesus with your salvation. You're trusting him that he's sanctifying you by using all of these events in your life to sanctify you. He's giving you assurance, he's keeping you sane. You can trust him that his ways are higher than ours. If your life is a tapestry, what you see is the underside of that tapestry, and it looks like a mess. What you don't see is what God is doing. What you can do is trust Romans 8:28. Memorize that. Romans 8:28. He's working all of this for

good. For those of you who are aging and wondering what has happened? Sometimes God takes us through these kinds of things to get our grip to let go a little bit. Let go of things on earth and get your mind on heaven. Sometimes it feels so terrible, just so you can start thinking about how good heaven is going to be, and you are almost home. You might want to put it on the mirror in your bathroom. God is in control. Maybe in your car, God is in control. Be reminded that God is an active, immediate, and in real-time control. I think you learn that from this passage. Let me give you a fifth thing, number five.

God saves his people

That's what the whole book of Exodus is about, to exit his people. That's what it's all about. Look what the text says in verse 13, there's the whole breakdown, we're going to learn some theology here today. There's a whole breakdown in verse 13 of what this Passover means. I'll show it to you. ¹³ *The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.* The blood is there for you to look at.

So let's take this one category. Why is that there for us? I'd like to introduce the word. Expiation. That is the word to cleanse, expiation, to cleanse. What does God's word say in First John 1:7? ⁷ *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.* You were dirty in sin, and God in his grace by the blood of Jesus cleanses you. Maybe that doesn't help. You need another word for expiation, the word is remove. The psalmist writes it like this, Psalm 103:12, *as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.* Or maybe that you can't conceptualize that. Maybe it's better for you to think about your exposed sin. Everybody sees it. And what does God do when he expiates your sin? He covers it. This is what Paul says in Romans 4:7. ⁷ *"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.* Or maybe you think economically. Maybe you need to hear that your sin has been canceled. Colossians 2:14 says, ¹⁴ *by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.* And my favorite, when I think about the expiation, it's good for my soul to think about how God has forgotten your sin. Hebrews 8:12 says this.

¹² *For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."*

That blood on the doorpost in verse 13 says it was a sign for the people to know that they had been cleansed, an expiation. But that's not all that's going on over in verse 13. There's something else happening. If you read the rest of the story in verse 13, the Lord says, *And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.* So we've dealt with the word expiation. Let me give you the other word. It's the word propitiation. What does that word mean? Propitiation. What it means is that we are under the condemnation and wrath and anger of God, and that wrath and anger, because of the blood of Jesus, has been turned aside. It means that God, who hates sin, and those who are covered in sin are under his hatred and due punishment. We were enemies of God, and the blood of Jesus turns us from being enemies to being sons and daughters of God. Propitiation. Propitiation means to pacify all of the claims of justice. Our God is a just God, and we have committed crimes against him. We are criminals in his court. We have been sentenced to death, and on the day of execution, Jesus comes in and takes our place, and justice is satisfied, propitiation. Propitiation means to meet the demands of the laws of God. All that we owe, all of the restitution we were supposed to pay back, Jesus, our substitute, took our place.

You know the passage in Isaiah 53. But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. It's with his wounds we are healed. We are all like sheep that have gone astray. Everyone turns to their own way. And the Lord, here it is, substitution, the Passover Lamb, the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. All of that, I bring this to you to tell you, our God is a saving God. He saves his people who are under the blood of Christ, who is our Passover Lamb. Yield to him today. Come to him today, and receive the Grace of God found in Jesus. Turn to the love of God found in Jesus. Give your heart and life, come under the blood of the Passover Lamb, who is Jesus.

(Pastor prays)