

"The Sacrifice of the Lamb"

Maundy Thursday

1)

Exodus 12:1-14

2)

April 1, 2021

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to him be glory both now and forever. Amen. (2 Thess. 3:5)
Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In the past I've brought up the aspect of sacrifice here in a sermon and we talked about it in terms of giving up something for another. Tonight we want to think about **the sacrifice of the Lamb**.

This really is a story that takes place throughout the history of the Bible. There are a couple of occasions where it is referenced, and we can come to the conclusion of why the Biblical story is painted – b/c it is a type (biblical foreshadowing) of Christ. It is no more evident than it is tonight – the night that we celebrate Maundy Thursday; the night that Jesus had instituted the Lord's Supper. And what you heard me read here just a few moments ago is the aspect of that institution of the Passover that God had handed down to the Israelites as they were getting ready to leave Egypt .

The questions that we want to answer tonight – why is the sacrifice of a Lamb important? Not only for the Israelites, but also for you and me.

Let's think about this **offering of the Lamb**. If you were to take a look at Exodus 12, it focuses heavily on the preparations of the meal. It goes into great detail. If you're a baker or a cook, you follow a recipe of your favorite dish written down on a recipe card. It helps you get all the right ingredients so you can enjoy your favorite meal. This is what God did for the Israelites. He didn't spare any information. He told them in great detail exactly what they were to do and how they were to go about doing it. But that begs the question – why did an offering of a lamb need to take place in the first place?

This is where there are many chapters in the bible dedicated to the sacrifice of the lamb. The first chapter of this story begins with the life of Abraham. God had asked Abraham give up his son whom he dearly loved – and sacrifice him to God. It really was a test of Abraham's faith to see how much he trusted in God and how he trusted in God above all things. What Abraham do it would he

follow through with this test? Abraham believed and reasoned to himself that could bring his son Isaac back from the dead.

Abraham took Isaac up the mountain. There was wood for the altar but they did not have the lamb for sacrifice. Instead, he did as God commanded and placed his son on the altar.

Chapter 2 of the story – Fast forward to the time of the Israelites as they had spent hundreds of years in slavery in Egypt. God's patience – if you think it was running a little bit thin, with plague after plague on the Egyptians as judgment; yet, what did Pharaoh do? He hardened his heart and said, **I will not let your people go.** Pharaoh didn't want to give up this relationship with the Israelites – he had slave labor – to bake all the bricks and to build cities for the Egyptians. Pharaoh hardened his heart over and over again until we reach the last plague – the plague of death on the firstborn. You hear a few details of it here in our lesson tonight. No one in Egypt would escape this plague – every firstborn both man and animals would be put to death.

In ancient cultures, so much emphasis was placed on the firstborn. Life wasn't about individualism, like we have in our society. All the hopes and dreams a person might have was placed in the firstborn. He would carry the torch and the family name. The firstborn sitting at the table would have sat at the table and said, "There's the lamb...I'm glad that's not me."

So, when the plague of death came on the firstborn, it was a potential death knell to individuals and families. God was providing a way out. He told Moses and all of Israel –

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.

V 12-13 – God will pass over the houses where the blood is painted and death will not enter that house.

If you read through Exodus 12, all the details of how they were to eat the Passover were quite interesting –

v. 5 – year old males w/out defect

v. 6 – take care of them for four days (why four days?), then slaughter them at midnight

- v. 7 – paint in the door posts and frames
- v. 8 – eat it roasted over the fire w/ bitter herbs – perhaps to remind them of the bitterness of slavery in Egypt
- v. 9 – don't eat it raw or cooked, but roasted over a fire
- v. 10 – if any of it is left until morning, you must burn it
- v. 11 – **eat it w/ 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.**

Why did God pay attention to detail? Could it be that he wanted them to remember what needed to be paid – the sacrifice of the lamb?

Chapter 3 of the sacrifice of the lamb – is what Jesus celebrated w/ his disciples in the upper room. Traditionally the Passover would have had a leader presiding over the meal explaining all the aspects of the meal and Jesus was doing that with his disciples. But there were a couple of shocking things that took place that night.

Jesus is there saying to his disciples – **Take and eat. This is my body. Take and drink. This is my blood given and poured out for you for the forgiveness of all your sins.**

Now, why would that have been relevant for the disciples? Yes, there would have been unleavened bread there on the table like any traditional Passover meal. There would have been that cup of wine. But one thing isn't mentioned in the gospels – the traditional lamb. (Note: Scholars differ in opinion on the presence of a lamb at the table for the meal. The point is that this was not the important part of *this* meal, this last Supper of Jesus. Jesus is the lamb of sacrifice.)

As mentioned before...Every firstborn would have sat there at the table and looked at the lamb and said The lamb is there so that I don't have to die. Because in Moses day, the only thing that was going to happen was either the death of the firstborn or the death of the Lamb.

What is Jesus' point to the disciples? Jesus did this for his disciples – He tells his disciples. The lamb of sacrifice as

traditionally done at the Passover celebration is no longer needed – “I am the lamb of sacrifice.” It’s not about the lamb on the table. Rather, the importance is the lamb at the table here with you. Jesus is telling his disciples take and eat...take and drink...this is my body...this is my blood...for you and for me for the Forgiveness of all of our sins.

Jesus is the lamb of sacrifice. He’s giving himself to his disciples. Jesus’ is doing the same thing when we come forward to the Lord's table.

We get to experience by touching and tasting the very forgiveness of sins that Jesus won for you and for me. We look at that aspect of the sacrifice of the Lamb. It should be you and I who are there on the cross paying for our own sins – every sin that we commit – whether in thought word or deed. All these sins separate us in our relationship with God.

God tells us here this evening through the meal that Jesus had instituted with his disciples. Your relationship w/ God is restored – your sins are forgiven. Jesus is saying, “Take and eat...take and drink. This is me giving myself for you.”

The sacrifice of the Lamb when we think about here on Maundy Thursday and as we make these final preparations here in Holy Week, we continue on that journey with our savior and we see the sacrifice that he made for you and for me. it wasn't an easy sacrifice. It was most difficult. As We Gather in church tomorrow, we'll hear the words from the cross of our Savior. Jesus faced the ultimate punishment of being forsaken by God himself. He did that for you and for me.

When we see the great lengths that Jesus went to pay for our every sin, we remember that it was his holy and precious blood – it won our forgiveness – for you and me and all people! Take and Eat. Take and drink. Jesus is the Lamb of Sacrifice. Continue to proclaim the Lord's death until he returns.

Let's pray – Dear Lord, Jesus...we thank you for giving us and instituting this meal here in the Lord's Supper where you give us your body and blood in with and under the bread and wine for the Forgiveness of all of our sins. Continue to bless us and strengthen our faith in this meal knowing that we proclaim that our sins are forgiven through your sacrifice and payment for sins once

and for all every time we partake of this most special meal. Bless us as we continue on our journey through Holy Week, as we see you as the Lamb of Sacrifice – the payment that you made for me and for all people. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. (Phil.4:7)

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. ⁴If 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. ⁶Take 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.