

*Delivered from Sin and Death*

**Exodus 12:1-13**

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After spelling a long series of obscure words in last week's national spelling bee, the winner finished by spelling correctly the word *koinonia* (<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/fourteen-year-old-karthik-nemmani-of-mckinney-texas-wins-the-scripps-national-spelling-bee/ar-AAy2QWr?OCID=ansmsnnews11>; <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2018/june/koinonia-scripps-spelling-bee-winning-word-christians.html>). It's a Greek word that's used in the New Testament. We usually translate it fellowship, sharing, or *communion*.

Passover fellowship—the whole community/congregation of Israel—every family

Passover regulations set in context of plagues against Egypt  
Pharaoh and the Egyptians are Israel's oppressors, keeping them in slavery.  
Other Old Testament passages talk about Pharaoh as representing an evil power that seeks to destroy God's people.

The plagues are also described as defeating the gods of Egypt  
The LORD God rescues his people from slavery, redeems them and makes them his own, defeats the enemies that oppress and would destroy them.

To help them remember and celebrate this, God gives Israel the Passover.

blood on the doorframes—covering, protection from the destroyer  
bitter herbs—remembering the pain and bitterness of their slavery  
and oppression

unleavened bread—no time to let the bread rise  
no leftovers—they are to leave behind their life in Egypt  
eat it dressed and ready for travel, in haste—be ready for what God  
will do, ready to move and follow the LORD, no lingering in the old place  
and way of life

This event—Passover and Exodus—was the main event in Israel’s life. They always looked back to it. Still today, Jews observe and celebrate and remember Passover. They retell God’s story and their story as people of God.

Every Jew sees herself or himself as participating in the Passover. “Participation” is another translation of *koinonia*. Their story is ours too. This is why we pray things like this in the Great Thanksgiving for Communion:

You formed *us* in your image and breathed into *us* the breath of life. When *we* turned away, and *our* love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered *us* from captivity, made covenant to be *our* sovereign God, and spoke to *us* through your prophets....

The prophets looked back on Passover and Exodus and saw the deliverance from exile in Babylon as a new exodus. Once again, God would rescue and restore his people, reform them as his people. This new passover, deliverance from exile, would be characterized by the forgiveness of sins.

All of that was in mind as Jesus and his disciples gathered for a Passover meal the night before his death. Everything was set up like the traditional meal and they probably followed the traditional ritual. But Jesus changed the script. Instead of looking back to what God had done in Egypt and Babylon, Jesus uses the meal to look forward to what God will do in Jesus’ death on the cross and resurrection.

Jesus is the Passover lamb who protects from the destroyer those who rely on him.

Jesus is the sacrificial Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Jesus is the deliverer, redeemer, rescuer who delivers us from the enemies that oppress us and would destroy us. He delivers us from sin and death. He delivers us from sin by providing forgiveness for sin. He delivers

us from death by dying for us, absorbing into himself all that death and the enemies of God's kingdom could do to him, and then being raised from the dead in a glorious transformation and victory of life and love.

This is part of why we remember what Jesus said to his disciples at the Last Supper. And we find ourselves at that same table. Again, we're part of the story. So we pray something like this:

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us....

The apostle Paul draws on the Passover-Exodus story to tell the story of Jesus and of God's people the church. In Romans, he tells the story of salvation as the story of the new exodus. In chapter 8 he includes this statement: "through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free [delivered you] from the law of sin and death (8:2).

1 Cor 5:6-8—dealing with a case of sexual sin in the Corinthian church:

*Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened.* Leaven or yeast here represents sin and evil. Sometimes it's a symbol of God's kingdom, but often it shows how evil works—a small amount working its way through a whole batch of dough, affecting and influencing the whole.

*For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. "Paschal" refers to Passover. This says that who Jesus is and what he accomplished is like what Passover was about. He fulfills the meaning of Passover and includes us in it.*

*Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* Jesus delivers us from sin through forgiveness but also through holiness. He's cleaning us up. He's removing the old influences of sin and evil. He calls us to be intentional about ridding ourselves of the yeast of sin.

*The Wesley Study Bible says here:*

The fulfillment of the passover feast within the Christian community centers around the self-giving sacrifice of Christ ("our paschal lamb"), and is celebrated through the removal of boastful and hateful talk (leaven), and its replacement by sincere truth-telling (unleavened bread) about sinful activity in the community.

The ancient Jews had *koinonia*/sharing/participation/communion/fellowship in being delivered from slavery in Egypt, exile in Babylon, and destruction by their enemies.

Jesus and his disciples had *koinonia*/sharing/participation/communion/fellowship in their life together, in the meals they shared, and, especially, that Last Supper they ate together.

The early church had *koinonia*/sharing/participation/communion/fellowship as they gathered together and lived life with God together.

We have *koinonia*/sharing/participation/communion/fellowship with all of them, all the faithful people of God who've gone before us, all the people of God everywhere, and with each other here and now.

We have *koinonia*/sharing/participation/communion/fellowship with God the Father through Jesus in the Holy Spirit.

Where do you need to be delivered from sin? Maybe it's a specific sin you struggle with. Maybe it's a general sense of separation and alienation. What breaks communion/*koinonia* in your life, with God, with people? God wants to deliver you through forgiveness.

Where do you need to be delivered from death? Does something feel dead inside? How do you long to be vital, fully alive in God's Spirit? What dead places in you need to be touched by God's resurrecting power? Can you trust that death will not have the last word for you if you're alive in Christ now and forever? God wants to deliver you from sin and death.

And "Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him and earnestly repent of their sin and seek to live in peace with one another. ..."