

Passover

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Preacher: Derek Lamont

[0 : 00] I want to carry on our theme this evening from this morning from Exodus and we looked kind of broadly this morning at the plagues, an unusual Sunday morning theme maybe.

But this evening we're going to look at the Passover and the Passover is a really important meal in the Old Testament and it's important because it's linked to what we do every Sunday when we have communion because the Lord's Supper is instituted at the Passover meal.

So Jesus sits at the last Passover meal in the New Testament and institutes the Lord's Supper and that's why there's this amazing link.

So when you take a passage like this you immediately think of Jesus. You immediately think that this is linked to us and it's linked to us through what Jesus has done.

So it speaks to us about what Jesus has done and it's significant for us just to remind ourselves of this. And what's really great about it is it just makes so clear that God had a plan come as we looked this morning about the seed that we crushed Satan's head from Genesis 3.

[1 : 22] From then on and indeed from way before that God had a purpose and a plan and he's beginning to gradually unfold it and this is the one of the times he unfolds it so clearly for us long before Jesus comes and because of that it remains significant and important for us.

You know John the Baptist at the beginning of the Gospel of John says, Behold, look when he sees Jesus and he says the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and that's kind of meaningless unless it fits in with this Passover and with what the Passover meant for the people of God right through the Old Testament.

And then later on Paul when he's speaking about what Jesus has done for us says, For Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed.

So you've got that amazing link in absolutely clear terms that in 1 Corinthians 5, 7 Paul says that Christ is our Passover Lamb who has been sacrificed.

So 21st century sophisticated, urbanized Christians like you guys are immediately transported back into the unsophisticated Old Testament world of sacrifice and it becomes hugely significant to us.

[2 : 59] It's important for us to look at a passage like this with New Testament eyes and what was in many ways in shadows for the Israelite people is absolutely clear to us.

So what's it telling us? What's the sport we reminded of this evening? Well just to kind of remind ourselves of what we said this morning, it does remind us of the reality of divine judgment that God came to a place where he could no longer allow Pharaoh and the worship of the gods that Pharaoh and his people worshiped continue to smother and to destroy and to brutalize his own people and to as it were stick his two fingers up at the reality of the living God.

I was a reminder to them, a very solemn and serious reminder having been given many opportunities to turn away from that. It was a very solemn and serious reminder that sin separates the people from God and indeed sin separated his own people from God.

Remember they needed a sacrifice, they needed an atonement, they needed a sacrificial lamb to take to cover them to pay the price for their sins and for avoid death at this stage and the ultimate reality of judgment.

And that true nature of sin remains. The reality is that death remains an absolute stonewall reality for every single person and that is a spiritual reality, it's a physical death that speaks about a spiritual death that there already is in our lives.

[5 : 01] It opens up as it did for them a terrible night and it opens up for people today a terrible night unless we trust in God's ultimate Passover lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ and that's significant for us.

And for you as you arise from your seats this evening and you'll befriend the people you befriend, you will love the people you love who don't know Jesus and you will want them to trust in the same Jesus that you trust in because he has transformed our future, our present and our future.

You'll want to pray for them, you'll think about keeping a prayer diary for the people closest to you, people that you influence most or that are influenced by you or that you're influenced by even, you'll pray for them, your mums and your dads, your children, your neighbours, your friends, your colleagues, your workmates because this speaks of ultimate realities.

And it also speaks of new beginnings, it speaks of new beginnings because when Jesus initiates this Passover meal he says, this month is to be for you, the first month, the first month of your years, to be in new beginnings and they were not even to use the bread that they had, they were to remember it wasn't to have leaven in it because the leaven was a link to the past because what they would do, they would take an old lump of bread and they would stick it in the new bunch of dough and there'd be enough leaven in that to leaven the new bread.

So God was saying to him, no make a fresh start, don't take any of the old leaven but start a fresh with unleavened bread and he goes on to explain about clearing, the feast of unleavened bread, clearing your house from all of the evidences of past leaven that was used because it just pointed to the past that they were forgetting and so they said there's going to be a new beginning, you're going to move from slavery in Egypt and you're going to begin a journey towards the promised land, you're moving from death to life, so much that I'm going to give you a new calendar, a new experience of God's grace and provision.

[7 : 20] Now that kind of happened in the New Testament as well, that happened when Jesus rose from the dead so that the day of worship was changed in the New Testament from the last day of the week to the first day of the week because it was a new day of worship because it was something really new that had happened so we come together on Sunday morning and Sunday evening and we worship on this new day because it reminds us of something great and important and great new revelation and salvation for us and for us in Christ also there is that same newness that was spoken of here and then again the New Testament links back, see if we read the New Testament without any knowledge of the Old Testament we really miss out so much of what God is trying to teach us.

First Corinthians 5, you can look it up if you want but don't need to, 1 Corinthians 5, 6 to 8 says your boasting is not good and he uses this picture absolutely identically, he says don't use, don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough, get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast as you really are, for Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed therefore let us keep the festival not with the old yeast the yeast of malice and wickedness but the bread without yeast the bread of sincerity and truth.

So he makes a spiritual analogy of that physical reality and he says you've got to get rid of sin when you follow Jesus and follow him by serving and being new and by being obedient to him so for us in Christ there is also newness, there's newness every day for us, there's grace every day, we have an ongoing responsibility to get rid of the old and encourage the new.

So tonight you've got to think about getting rid of the old and getting involving yourself in the new as a Christian, every day you've got to do that, so think about that for a moment, okay I'll just have a break, I'll stop and think about that just for a moment because you will all fall asleep if I don't stop, so you wake up and think about it for a moment, the heat is overwhelming, it's too hot, sweating, just think a little bit for a second about the yeast, about the things in your life as a Christian that you may need to be dealing with and getting rid of because of Christ our Passover lamb and the way that he wants us to live, just think about that, okay you've thought enough, don't think too much, it's too hard, right the Passover lamb, just for a moment I want to speak about the Passover lamb, there's great parallels between this Passover lamb and Jesus, our Passover lamb, verse 3 tells us that the lamb was to be personally chosen, take a lamb for each man is to take a lamb for his family and for his household and if the household was too small they were to join together and then they were to work out how much each individual person would eat, okay so everyone had to eat some of this lamb, that was very important, personally chosen and personally eaten, every household was involved, every individual was involved in eating, it wasn't a priestly act, it wasn't the minister from the front doing it all, everyone was involved, now the parallel to that for us is twofold, one you must personally take Jesus as your saviour, it's not good enough just to be, have a family saviour, a link to a kind of second degree link, you take Jesus for yourself, you involve yourself in his life as taking

him as your personal saviour and at the Lord's supper everyone individually eats the bread, that's why we eat the bread, that's why we take a bread and we break it and we each eat the bread because it's a symbol of us taking Jesus for ourselves and it's an individual thing, there is a corporate community element, family, households being together and the people of God being together but the provision is for all and the provision is personal, it's personal, it's also perfect, this lamb symbolically anyway was to be perfect, the animal in verse 5 and 6 you choose must be year old meals without defect, one year old without defect, it's to be young and strong and it wasn't to be the runt of the flock, it wasn't to be the worst one, we're not going to get anything for this one, there's not much meat on this, we'll just go fire that on to the Passover feast, it was to be their very best, the absolute pinnacle of their choice, fully grown but the very best and then it was to be kept from the 10th day to the 14th day, in the house, we should be kept in the house, so the kids would get to love this little one year old lamb, probably name it and they would feed it and it would be in the house with them and they would be able to check that it was a perfect lamb, it was just right and they would almost get to know it, become friend of the family for these four days, it was to be a perfect lamb yet marked out right from the beginning for death and that would teach even the children the element of cost that was involved, they didn't go to the supermarket for it, it didn't come shrink wrapped, it was a lamb that they had personally got to know and then they were going to lose it and it was costly to see that and then on that, after that 14th day then it would be slaughtered, clearly substitutionary, clearly a life for a life, it was to be slaughtered, it was to be eaten and it's blood was to be taken and was to be painted on the door frames of the houses, so when the angel of death came destruction wouldn't hit that house, the price would be paid, sin would be atoned for, they'd be protected, the blood would seal the door, they would have participated in what God told them to do, it was a sacrificial lamb, it was a substitutionary lamb, it was an atoning lamb, now all of these things point very clearly, unequivocally to Jesus, to Jesus as our Redeemer, now there's only one Redeemer isn't there, it hasn't become modernised beyond

[14:28] Jesus so that we've now got another Redeemer, this Old Testament picture was pointing towards Jesus who's your Redeemer and mine, the Redeemer you need and I need, you may think the Old Testament and the situation of the Jewish people in the Old Testament is very far from my life, very far from my understanding, very far from my existence but it's absolutely not because there's no other Redeemer than Jesus and you need and I need Jesus Christ as our Redeemer and when we have taken Him as our Redeemer then this Old Testament picture helps us to understand why it's so important to God and if it's important to God then it becomes important to us to understand about what He's done, so as it points to Christ it points to this personal Redeemer that I mentioned, that the lamb was to be taken personally and so we take Christ personally and therefore we need Christ personally to be our Saviour and we need to take Him to be our Saviour, now He's sufficient for all mankind, for everyone and everyone needs Him but He is the Saviour ultimately only of those who choose

Him and who He chooses to mention the paradox of Scripture, personal provision and that is why for us that personal testimony is such a valuable thing, get people up the front, give their testimony about Jesus, what Jesus has done for them in their lives and in their situations and that's really significant and a personal testimony, thing that you and I want to hone, want to mature, want to develop so that when people say, well what were you doing on the weekend and they say, oh you were in church or whatever or do you believe in the Bible, yeah I'm a Christian, they say, well what is it to be a Christian?

That you're able to tell them what it is for you to be a Christian, you have a personal testimony of Jesus coming into your life and changing that life, we don't start about and fumble and say, well I don't know, I let the Bible and I don't know, we work at it, you go and stand in front of a mirror and you talk about your testimony to yourself, share it, make it so it makes that kind of sense to ordinary people, get rid of all the biblical lingo and stuff that people wouldn't understand, the atonement and all the stuff that I use here, just use ordinary think of illustrations that would make it significant for people who would understand it, if you're working in some kind of profession, see if there's anything in your profession that can be used to help illustrate what it means to be a Christian, because personal testimony is so significant and if we're not sharing our testimony then what are we doing, you know?

Are we living our lives to the glory of God which we were speaking about this morning? If we never are sharing our testimony, if we're never giving God the glory for our life and for what we're doing, not on a kind of pretentious or unnatural or proud way, absolutely ordinarily, humbly, gently sharing our faith, it doesn't need to be polished, it needs to be you and it needs to be your personal testimony of Jesus and what he's doing in your life.

You know, it's a personal provision as we've seen and God, Jesus is for us God's perfect substitute, isn't he?

[18:09] He's God's perfect substitute. In 1 Peter, I just want to, the New Testament writers so often use these pictures, in 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 19 we're told that this is very important for us this evening when we think about this.

You know, it's not with silver and gold that you've been redeemed from the empty way of life handed down from your forefathers but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

That's taken exactly from this passage. Is a lamb without blemish or defect? And then you go on to chapter 3 and verse 18 what it says, for Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous to bring you to God.

Christ died once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous. So he died, we're unrighteous, he's righteous, he dies and is our perfect substitute.

And the lamb was in the home for four days, whatever, it was under the microscope in the house, it's the perfect lamb that maybe they got to love it, the children especially.

[19:26] Well Jesus had 30 years under the microscope, he came among us, lived among us, right from the beginning also marked for death, like the lamb, under the microscope.

And he's been under the microscope for 2,000 years since then by everybody. Perfect. Absolutely perfect. What a cost to God to give His only beloved Son.

And for us to remind ourselves of that, that He lived this life, the life that we couldn't live in order to redeem us, helps us to accept His grace, to live a life of gratitude and not to grumble.

The three G's is that we can, because of what Jesus as our perfect substitute is the one who enables us to take His grace, live with gratitude and not grumble.

And then we're reminded that His death is the death that is for us. Ephesians 1,7, and Him we have redemption through His blood for the forgiveness of our sins.

[20:45] It's very simple, but He takes that judgment that we deserve, that death that we would otherwise face, every one of us.

And He takes that for us and we are protected by Him. When we put our trust in Him. And it's interesting, I'm not sure if this is a biblical parallel, if it's a right parallel to make in terms of the links, but the door, you know, the door was covered in the blood and that protected the Old Testament people from the angel of death.

And then John, Jesus in John chapter 10 verse 9 says, I am the door, you know, I'm the door. And He speaks about Himself as the way the entry into the kingdom.

He takes that picture on Himself. And so there may be a link there in a sense, when we recognize Jesus, the door that as we walk through that door and go behind that door as it were, we're protected by Him, by the blood of the Lamb.

We're safe. Death holds no fears for us. It remains an enemy, but it's the last enemy and it's defeated and destroyed because Jesus died and He paid the price for our sins and He rose again over the grave.

[22:10] Which means that physically we will die, but we will rise again. But more importantly, from the moment we believe spiritually, we're alive.

And so if you're a Christian tonight, you're spiritually alive. You're a child of God. You're adopted into His family. You're part of His family.

And as part of God's family, you can never die. Isn't that great? That's what makes it so great to be a Christian, is that because we've been given spiritual life in Him, He is the author of life and therefore we can never die.

We're always alive in God, in Jesus Christ. And that's a great thing for us.

So just as I close, can I remind you that this passage points very powerfully to Jesus, written hundreds of years before Jesus.

[23 : 15] And it reminds us that God was saying to His people, this is not the real thing. This is pointing forward to something better.

The blood of bulls and of goats and of lambs, the New Testament says, will never ultimately take away sin. They were simply pointing forward to a greater redeemer to Jesus.

But it does remind us of the urgency of dealing with our souls. It's unpopular, I think. It's un... I don't know what it is.

Unsophisticated to talk about urgency in church these days, as if urgency only is for those who are unintelligent and unsophisticated and that we need to spend years and years working through things intellectually.

Well, maybe so. But I think there's an urgency in the Gospel. There's an urgency because we're not guaranteed another day.

[24 : 14] There's an urgency because He doesn't want us to be lukewarm. He doesn't want us just to tread water spiritually. He wants us to be urgent about our Christian life because of sin and death and all that brings into our lives.

And He wants us to be urgent about other people's lives. I can't stress enough how significant and important each of you are as believers and the opportunity you have to share the Gospel with others, to pray.

You can't convert anyone. You can't change anyone's hearts. God hasn't given us that responsibility. You don't need to lie awake at night worrying about others, but you have the privilege, you have the privilege of sharing it and committing people to God who might otherwise never be prayed over.

And that should for us instill a sense of urgency into our prayer life, if nothing else. We're only here for a short time.

It might not look to that. I'll say, Ross and Declan at the front there, they might think that it'll be absolutely years before they're as old as me.

[25 : 24] But can I tell them, I remember like yesterday when I was their age, and it goes like that. And we're halfway through our appointed years and however many or few God chooses to give us.

But it passes just in a flash. And we don't want to spend our lives being not urgent and saying, well, tomorrow, spiritual manana all the time.

But recognizing the privileges of the message and the truth of God. And I suppose connected with that really is the very last thing I want to say, which, and I've often said this year where the Passover says, eat it in haste.

It's the Lord's Passover. Eat it in haste. It was a meal to get ready for redemption that they were to eat it because very shortly after that they were to move to leave Egypt and slavery and move towards the promised land.

It wasn't to it wasn't the end game feast. It wasn't the feast at the end of the journey. It was the feast to prepare them and to enable them to start the journey.

[26 : 39] And for us coming to Christ is only the beginning of the journey for us to the promised land, to heaven, to glory.

And the Passover meal, which then Christ instituted the Lord's Supper. I think we should eat the Lord's Supper in the same way. We eat it in haste, not physically.

But we eat it with that sense of urgency that it's preparing us for being on the move in His kingdom. We're not yet at the marriage feast of the Lamb where we will celebrate and relax and enjoy heaven forever with all its bounty and all its exploration and all its beauty and all its creativity and all its company and all its fellowship and all its glory and all its perfection.

We're not there yet. We want just to live our lives in haste as it were strangers kind of passing through, recognizing that we've got active service to do.

The often as with the Passover meal, sometimes the Christian life has to be eaten with bitter herbs and that sense of battle and struggle and difficulty and sin that we're dealing with and getting rid of.

[28 : 01] But it should also be peppered with the sweetness of grace all the time. So the Lord's Day, Sunday, which happens every week, breaks into our everyday cycle to remind us of eternity, is also a reminder of the passing of time.

Another week has gone. Another seven days are past. Another seven days nearer our end in this life and our entry into eternity in a real way.

And so there's this definite sense of aliveness and urgency and importance that we get when we read a passage like this and relate it to the New Testament.

So maybe that we crave God's Spirit, we pray for God to work in our lives. We long and ask for urgency, pray for forgiveness when that hasn't been the case.

We wouldn't be resting on our laurel Christians, that we wouldn't be those Christians who simply look back to an event that once happened and that nothing, there's no progress and no development and no growth and no discipleship and no commitment and no urgency.

[29 : 13] But maybe we take something like this and renew as it refreshes and revive us. So let's pray briefly before singing together.

Lord God bless and pity us, we pray, look on us with your face. The earth may know your saving grace and maybe that you bless us and that Sundays for us in worship, especially in worship together, but also in fellowship together, maybe times when we are equipped.

We're equipped in God's house with God's people and under God's word and in worship equipped to go and to serve and to follow and to testify to Jesus and to follow him and love him.

Whatever we are, whatever we're doing, whether we're in holiday or at work or unemployed or in school or whatever it might be, Lord help us to know that we have been called and redeemed and brought back and have good news to live and good news to share and that we would know that that comes in the midst of a world of so much bad news and a heart that is also peppered with the bad news of sin and separation from God and the reality of a lost eternity if it is undetected.

So Lord bless us and go before as we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.