

## **“A Blessed Passover” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Maundy Thursday April 17, 2025**

- I. **Luke 22:19-20** – <sup>19</sup>“This is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me.” <sup>20</sup>And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.”
- II. **The Passover is all about redemption.**
  - a. Jesus and His disciples set up the Passover Seder, or a ritual meal that started the weeklong Feast of Unleavened Bread... just as the Israelites had done for centuries to remember God’s deliverance from the hands of the Egyptians.
    - i. God outlined the specifics of the Passover in Exodus 12, as He gave His people a model for how remember His redemption from Egypt.
    - ii. So, the Passover Seder was a ritual meal that went through the same things the Israelites did on the night God set them free from the Pharaoh.... The night God passed over the Israelites’ firstborn children in the tenth plague.
    - iii. The remembrance included a lamb that was sacrificed, and a portion was to be eaten.
    - iv. Now, in Jesus’ day, people were called into Jerusalem to carry out this ritual meal, and by some estimates 200,000 pilgrims would come to the city for a week.
      1. With that many people, it became like a commercial operation... many would buy a lamb from the vendors or surrounding area and 10-20 people might share it... so we are talking about more than 10,000 lambs!
      2. The lamb was sacrificed in the temple area, and its blood would be thrown on the altar... and all of this would happen before sundown so people could gather in the places prepared.
        - a. I’m not sure how Jerusalem could accommodate all those people in spaces, but Jesus had the disciples go and prepare a place for the Last Supper.
  - b. Again, the Passover was more of a ritual than an actual meal, as each part was meticulously carried out just as God had instructed them...
    - i. If you can imagine the Israelites on that night of the Passover in Egypt, God’s instructions were imperative for their survival!
    - ii. In remembrance of the seriousness, the rituals were followed each year in the same ways... except on this particular night.
    - iii. The normal meal would have unleavened bread, bitter herbs, cups of wine, and the sacrificed lamb.
      1. The unleavened bread represented the haste to get ready to leave Egypt, and they didn’t have time to let their bread rise...

so the rest of the week included remembrances of this by eating unleavened bread.

- c. At the point in the meal that bread was to be eaten, Jesus broke it, gave it to the disciples and said, “This is My body...” – and then He took the cup of wine and said, “This is the new covenant in My blood...”
  - i. Consider how shocking this must have been to the disciples... they had observed this ritual all their lives with no variation – and here, Jesus alters the program.
  - ii. This unleavened bread is My body... broken for you... this wine is My blood, poured out for you as the New Covenant.
- d. The Old Covenant was based on sacrificing animals as their blood and death represented the power to cleanse people so they could be near God... however, the New Covenant or Testament is a one-time sacrifice for a true cleansing of sin... through Jesus.
  - i. What was Jesus specifically pointing to when He said these words?
    - 1. Within 12 hours or so, He would be hanging on a cross... body broken unto death and blood pouring out for you... for me...for all people.
  - ii. God’s redemption story of bringing His people out of Egypt with a mighty hand from the bondage of slavery was fulfilled in the New Testament of Jesus – through faith in Him we are delivered from the bondage of sin, death, and the devil.

### III. **Tonight is a reminder of our redemption story.**

- a. As we gather to remember the period of time called the Passion (or suffering) of our Lord... we are brought together around the redemption that freed us from the bondage of sin, death, and satan.
- b. The power of sin in our world is very real... the power of death is all around us... and the devil is happily behind it all as he watches the brokenness and bondage to sin that is everywhere.
  - i. No one can deny that sin impacts them – as sin in the world touches every part of our lives – sickness and disease... natural disasters and destruction... wars and crime... injustice and tyranny... suffering and affliction.
  - ii. All these things are part of the sin that was unleashed by our first ancestors, Adam and Eve... and from that point forward all humanity and even creation itself has been longing for the redemption and restoration that is found in one place... in one Person... Jesus.
  - iii. When each Israelite family’s firstborn did not die in the tenth plague, a blessed Passover occurred... and it was a sign that sin, death, and the devil do not win... only God wins.
    - 1. Injustice, slavery, affliction, brutality, death, evil, and satan do not win... as God redeems and delivers His people.

- c. We also received a blessed Passover when God called us into faith by the power of the Holy Spirit.
  - i. In that gift of faith, we have all the benefits of being called a child of God, and the redemption story is now ours!
  - ii. We don't have to be an Israelite... or our ancestor doesn't have to be Abraham as we look at our family tree just so we can be the chosen people... We have been chosen by grace through faith.
  - iii. As Jesus would observe the Passover with His disciples, He prepared them for the gift that God would give them in the sacrifice of His Son... Jesus would become the Passover Lamb.
    - 1. The gift of His body and blood were for us to experience in the generations to come... not only as a remembrance, but as a participation in the forgiveness, life, and salvation that Jesus won on the cross as the final sacrifice.
    - 2. Certainly, there is symbolism that Jesus was the Lamb, but more than just a symbol or a representation, the bread and wine are His true body and blood given for us.
      - a. Just as Jesus is both 100% God and 100% Man – a mystery that is true... the bread and wine are both 100% bread and wine, while 100% body and blood as we receive Christ in this Supper.
    - 3. It's not necessary to fully understand... it's a matter of faith that Jesus really did give us the gift of His body and blood to take what He won on the cross and give it to His followers who believe.
- d. The gift of the Lord's Supper is much more than a reminder of the Passover story as God delivered them out of the bondage of slavery...
  - i. The Lord's Supper is a great exchange... as you come with the burdens of the world upon your shoulders... and Jesus Himself hands you forgiveness, life, and salvation.
- e. Now, you might be thinking that this sounds wonderful, but when you leave here the troubles are still impacting you – and the burdens are real.
  - i. Yet, Jesus never promises us that the struggle in a sinful world wouldn't continue... but none of these things have real power over us.
    - 1. No sin can overtake us and separate us from God.
    - 2. Death is not final – but just a passage into eternal life.
    - 3. And satan cannot destroy or take us away... he is powerless against Almighty God.
  - ii. The trials we face are met with faith and hope... as we trust in Jesus as our Redeemer... and we hope – with eager expectation – we set our hearts on the Last Day when all is made new again.

- f. The Lord's Supper is our strength to live in faith and hope... the gift of forgiveness that God passes over us with His wrath... the gift of life... as death cannot hold us... and the gift of salvation – as God redeems us from hands of the devil.
- g. Thanks be to God that Jesus went the way of the sacrificial Lamb, so that we receive all gifts He won for us. Amen.