

Meet Jesus: The Passover Lamb

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[0 : 00] Dear Heavenly Father, we give you thanks that you have enabled us this day to gather together as your church, as your family.

And what a privilege that is to assemble here. Many of us may meet elsewhere on Sundays, yet here we are, brother and sister.

Father, we thank you, Father, for this time of year, for the enjoyment of the summer months. That different dynamic at home if we've got children and they're off school.

The change of environment if we travel away. The pleasures that we have as we see the changing seasons in nature all around us.

Father, we pray, Father, for folk who be away on holiday. Perhaps we know family members who are away or colleagues or friends. And we pray that you'd be with them, that they'd have safety in travel.

[1 : 10] That it would be a time of meditation on you and your plans for their lives. For families away, Father, we ask for harmony.

That there wouldn't be any bitterness or difficulties when, as sometimes happens, things don't go as planned. We ask, Father, that these days would be formative and memorable.

That relationships would be soaked in love. And that you would be amidst these folk each moment of their holiday.

We think now of those close to us. Those struggling with one thing or another. Those who are unwell. Those who are feeling lonely.

Those depressed, not knowing where to turn. We lift them to you now, Father, in a few moments of quiet reflection and prayer.

[2 : 16] Father, our prayer is that you would comfort these folk.

That you would use these days to remind them of your love. We ask that you would give skill to medics. And that you'd give us speedy recovery where granted.

And we ask, Father, now that you'd guide our thinking as we come to your word. We ask that you'd help us to set aside those distracting thoughts that so often break our concentration.

Father, as you authored scripture through your spirit, we ask for that same spirit to lift that same word into our minds and hearts.

So that our whole lives are in harmony with your ways. To the end, Father, that you use us as your vessels for your glory and purposes.

[3 : 25] We draw our time of prayer to a close with the Lord's Prayer. And we use the word debts and debtors as we ask for the forgiveness of sin.

So together, our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

The Lord's Prayer is the kingdom, power and glory forever. Amen. Amen. Well, you might like to take one of the Bibles, it'll be on the seat, and turn up Mark's Gospel.

We're in Mark chapter 14, and the page is 850. Amen. Amen. So, Mark chapter 14, and I'll read from verse 12.

[4 : 46] And on the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover? And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you.

Follow him. And wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, The teacher says, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready.

There prepare for us. And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it, just as he had told them. And they prepared the Passover. And when it was evening, he came with the twelve.

And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me. They began to be sorrowful.

And to say to him, one after the other, Is it I? He said to them, It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me. For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him.

[5 : 59] But woe to the man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would have been better for that man if he had not been born. And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it, broke it and gave it to them and said, Take, this is my body.

And he took a cup. And when he had given thanks, he gave it to them. And they all drank of it. And he said to them, This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day, when I drink it new in the kingdom of God. We all make our plans, don't we?

Am I right? The government has a big plan, doesn't it? To reduce the budget deficit. And we plan our lives, our careers. We plan our retirement. I don't know if you see sometimes the programs on TV, when there's a house renovation project.

Have you ever seen those sorts of programs? I always think it's quite exciting. It sort of grips us, doesn't it, as you see the plan coming together. You know, the builders turning up on site.

[7 : 13] All the various meetings that have to take place. The financial difficulties that usually crop up along the way. This lunchtime, friends, we're going to be looking at the ultimate plan.

This lunchtime, we'll see God's plan of salvation edging towards fulfilment. And we've got two points. Our first point is two Passovers.

And our second point is two plans. So first of all, two Passovers. And we'll look at this particular point with two subheadings, if you can follow that so far.

The first subheading is liberation from Pharaoh. And then the second subheading is liberation from Satan. So first of all, liberation from Pharaoh.

Have a look at your Bibles, if you would. Verse 1, chapter 14 and verse 1. It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

[8 : 16] Two days before Passover. And we go back, friends, now with God's people to Egypt. And we'll remember the original Passover, the exodus out of Egypt.

God's people, they were in slavery, weren't they? And Pharaoh refused to let them go. God said through Moses, let my people go.

But Pharaoh refused, didn't he? And so there was all these various plagues. And there was a plague of darkness, for example, wasn't there? Let my people go, said Moses.

But Pharaoh's heart was hardened. And then finally there came, didn't there, the penalty of death. Death was to visit Egypt.

Overnight, the firstborn of each family would be killed. But Israel are in Egypt, aren't they? How can they avoid this judgment?

[9 : 20] How can Israel avoid this death? And the answer is, through the sacrifice of lambs. A lamb was a substitute for the firstborn in that family.

And Moses said, didn't he, he said, mark your doorposts with the blood of the lamb, do you remember? Incidentally, blood in the Bible is just simply the evidence of a violent death.

There's no magic in it at all. It's just the evidence of a violent death. So Moses tells God's people to mark the doorposts with blood.

And it was to show that God's people were participating in their liberation. And this lamb had been the substitute in that household. And so as sun sets, God's people know that liberation is underway. It's almost like the blackouts in World War II. March the 13th and 14th, 1941.

[10 : 30] And the Clydebank area was as black as coal because of the blackouts. And there was bombers rumbling overhead. And there was blackout police, wasn't there, to ask people to turn the lights out.

And I know at least one person could remember such things because my mother is here somewhere and she's told me about that. If you kept your lights on, think about this, the bombers

would have a clear target, wouldn't they?

So it was lights out. And back in Egypt, each household had to mark their particular house. Death was to visit that night. And the only way of escape was to kill a lamb instead and mark your doorposts with the evidence.

You need to participate, says Moses, in saving yourself. And so the angel of death, what did it do? It visited Egypt, didn't it? Killing all the firstborn.

Yet God's people, they'd marked their houses, hadn't they? And the angel of death, it passed over these houses. Just imagine the scene as dawn broke next morning.

[11:43] It's not the sound of cockerels crowing, is it? On this particular morning. But parents screaming. It's like all the buildings in Egypt have been bombed.

Devastated families wailing. Chaos. And through the confusion, God's people, they hot-footed out, don't they? Destination, the Red Sea and the Promised Land.

And each year, said Moses, you're to remember these events. Exodus chapter 12 and verse 14.

You're to revisit these events of the great escape.

It's your history. And so it's Passover time. As Jesus enters Jerusalem. Hundreds of thousands of people converging in.

Thousands of lambs bleating. The air would have been thick with dust. And there's this sense of anticipation. It's just two days away, says Mark.

[12:52] So we've thought, friends, about liberation from Egypt. In our first point. And our second sub-point is liberation from Satan.

So we've thought about liberation from Pharaoh in Egypt. And now we'll think about liberation from Satan. So Mark says Passover is just two days away.

And among the crowd, two of his disciples are scurrying along. And God, think about this, is fulfilling the Passover, isn't he?

Not this time liberation from Pharaoh and Egypt, but something infinitely bigger. From Satan and mankind's enemy, death.

So God is taking the Passover symbolism, are you with me, and is loading it with freight. No longer a lamb, but the lamb, the lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

[13:56] What we have before us, friends, here in this passage, it's huge. It's God's purposes since before time began. began erupting into history.

Let's just think about Satan's influence for a few moments. God said, didn't he, to Adam and Eve, if you eat of the fruit, you will surely die.

And it's like God says, here's the deal. Live my way, on my planet, and you've got eternal life. Reject me, and you will die.

And Satan said to Adam and Eve, do what you want. You will not, surely die. And so they disobeyed God, didn't they?

We disobey God, don't we? Yes, we do. And our world is, consequently, friends, enslaved by Satan. And the penalty death is there, isn't it?

[15:01] Waiting for us all. But he is Jesus. This is good news, says Mark, chapter 1, verse 1. He casts out demons.

He raises the dead. He forgives sins. He's liberating people, isn't he, from bondage and Satan's grip. And listen, he's living, friends, he's living how we should live on planet Earth.

He's not like Adam and Eve in that respect. And so listen, there's no death penalty, is there, on Jesus' head. Yet he came, friends, to take the penalty of others.

Look down at verse 24. Can you see it? And he said to them, Jesus said, this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

So can you see what's going to happen here? Jesus has come to experience death and hell for the sake of others, to liberate us from the dominion of Satan and death.

[16:11] And Paul says, doesn't he, where, oh death, is your victory. How glorious this is, friends, isn't it? Don't you think? It's the most awesome thing to be had in life.

The world's got nothing comparable, has it? You know, you ask the world what it's got to offer and it will say cars and a nice house and holidays and everything.

How small? Yet you can ask a Christian what they've got and they've got a relationship with Jesus Christ and they've got eternal life.

Isn't that awesome? So, we've thought about two Passovers. Firstly, liberation from Egypt and then secondly, liberation from Satan.

And the question is, what are we doing about it? What are you doing about this good news? If you do nothing, your obituary is the end of verse 21.

[17:16] You might like to look. It would have been better for that man or woman if he had not been born. And so, the thing, friends, to do, I plead with you this lunchtime that if you've not yet turned to Jesus to ask him to forgive your sin, then do it right away.

Don't leave it. There's some wee booklets here which are on the glass tables as you leave and these go through the gospel and there's even a wee prayer in the back.

Do let me commend these. Take one with you, they're free. So, we've thought about two Passovers and then finally two plans. We'll think about two plans.

Jesus and his disciples, they enter Jerusalem, don't they? And it doesn't look very impressive. A carpenter's son, a bunch of fishermen, a tax collector.

Isaiah said, didn't they, 700 years previously, we esteemed him not. He had no form or majesty that we should look at him. And yet, Father, what's going on here is so big that the earth itself is going to be recreated.

[18:33] But it doesn't look like that, does it, friends? The religious, they want Jesus dead, don't they? Look at the end there of verse 1, chapter 14, verse 1. The chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him.

And they've even recruited Judas. So this is a plan of humankind. And it seems like the plans of the religious leaders are prevailing.

But there's this man, isn't there, carrying a water jar. Just look there at verse 13. Can you see verse 13? And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, go into the city and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you.

Follow him. It was normally the women that carried the water back in the first century. And so think about this, this man would have been conspicuous, wouldn't he?

Am I right? It's almost like saying, walk up Buchanan Street and you'll see a man carrying a sheep on his shoulders. Well, it would stand out. You couldn't miss it. And it's the same.

[19:48] A man in the first century carrying a water jar would be very conspicuous. You can almost imagine him, can't you, queuing up at the pump to fill it up.

And he's in the queue with some ladies and they're all looking at him, quite curious. One of the ladies says to him, is your wife unwell? And he says, no, no.

So you're a new man then? And then all the other ladies are giggling in the queue, chuckling to themselves. Another lady says, we've got a house husband here.

And then he slowly gets along to the pump, doesn't he? I don't know if he was embarrassed, but he fills his water jar up. And then he trundles off up the road. Doesn't he?

And two disciples spot him. And don't you just sense, friends, that there's something big underway. Doesn't your heart long for something like this?

[20:50] It's a bit like a wartime covert operation, isn't it? Or something on James Bond, but it's just infinitely bigger. A group of us in a room on Buchanan Street, it doesn't look very much, does it?

our local churches, they might not seem that impressive. Our brothers and sisters, not very impressive in the eyes of the world. Your own life.

You might look over your own life even and think that it's not been very productive for the Lord. Yet in Christ, friends, our lives have great significance.

Significance far beyond what we know. And think about this, nothing done for the Lord is in vain, is it? A carpenter's son and a bunch of his followers, they enter Jerusalem and all is not what it appears.

Yet we look through scripture, friends, don't we? And there's something glorious happening. God's carefully sliding his plan into place.

[22:08] Just turn back in the Bible to Psalm 41. Psalm 41. It's on page 469.

Psalm 41 and verse 9. Can you see that? Even my close friend in whom I trusted who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.

And we turn back to our passage and verse 17. And when it was evening, he came with the twelve, and as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, truly I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.

And they began to be sorrowful and say to him one after the other, is it I? Is it me? Could it be me, Jesus? He said to them, it is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me. And Psalm 41 verse 9 had been waiting about a thousand years for its fulfilment. and Judas dips his bread.

[23 : 25] Two plans. Judas and the religious leaders, they have theirs, but God, God has his, doesn't he? And the question is, friends, which one are we in on?

When we look at our lives, you and me, whose plan are we ultimately trusting? The plan of the world or the plan of God?

Who do we trust? We'll finish by looking at verse 24 in just a little bit more detail. Look at verse 24. I'll read from verse 22.

And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, take, this is my body. And he took a cup. And when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank of it.

And he said to them, this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many. Blood, verse 24.

[24 : 30] And it's not this time the death of the lamb, is it? But the lamb of God, my blood, says Jesus. Covenant, verse 24.

And so friends, think about this, salvation is absolutely certain, isn't it? God's covenant. It's not like the made-up religions of the world that depend on you.

It's all from God's end, isn't it? We're too bad, aren't we, to depend upon ourselves? Now, this is how good it is, friends.

Jesus has entered our creation, hasn't he? The creator of the universe. and he says, my blood, my covenant, poured out for many.

That's his church, isn't it? Through the ages. That's us today. And God has entered our world to save us. It's a done job.

[25 : 35] It's complete. It's past tense. And friends, his blood is his signature, isn't it? on the contract, on the covenant.

Think about that. And so, friends, we're suddenly set free, aren't we? Liberated. Liberated from Satan, from death.

And friends, Jesus asks his church, doesn't he, to use visual aids, because we're all fickle. We've all got poor memories.

Our feelings fluctuate. And so, he gives us some visual aids, doesn't he? Look at this. My body and my blood.

Doesn't he look after us as a church? So, here we have it, the Passover. Shall we pray?

[26 : 35] Amen. dear heavenly father, we thank you for sending your son into this world in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy and in order to save us.

Please help us father to grasp the magnitude of what you've done on our behalf. And indeed father, what you are still doing through your people, the church.

Help us father to be properly orientated to your purposes, not deceived by appearances. And to these ends, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us this day and forevermore.

Amen.