

Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The portion of Scripture before us tonight is
found in the Old Testament book of Exodus the
twelfth chapter beginning at the first verse:

*Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in
the land of Egypt, saying, ² "This month shall
be your beginning of months; it shall be the
first month of the year to you. ³ "Speak to all
the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the
tenth day of this month every man shall take
for himself a lamb, according to the house of
his father, a lamb for a household. ⁴ 'And if
the household is too small for the lamb, let
him and his neighbor next to his house take it
according to the number of the persons;
according to each man's need you shall make
your count for the lamb. ⁵ 'Your lamb shall be
without blemish, a male of the first year. You
may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶
'Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day
of the same month. Then the whole assembly
of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at*

*twilight. ⁷ 'And they shall take some of the
blood and put it on the two doorposts and on
the lintel of the houses where they eat it. ⁸
'Then they shall eat the flesh on that night;
roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and
with bitter herbs they shall eat it. ⁹ 'Do not eat
it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted
in fire-- its head with its legs and its entrails.
¹⁰ 'You shall let none of it remain until
morning, and what remains of it until
morning you shall burn with fire. ¹¹ 'And thus
you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your
sandals on your feet, and your staff in your
hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the
LORD'S Passover. ¹² 'For I will pass through
the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike
all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both
man and beast; and against all the gods of
Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the
LORD. ¹³ 'Now the blood shall be a sign for
you on the houses where you are. And when I
see the blood, I will pass over you; and the
plague shall not be on you to destroy you
when I strike the land of Egypt.*

Heavenly Father, sanctify us by the truth. Your word is truth. Amen.

Dear Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb,

So much imagery and so many pictures are conjured up when I hear the words of the text before us this evening. Just like when I hear the account of Abraham preparing to sacrifice Isaac, I am drawn to my days of Seminary and of so many other sermons about a text like the one before us tonight.

The Passover, the lamb, the blood, the doors, being ready to flee, the judgment, the salvation... all of these play a very important role in our lives, as they also played a very important role in the life of the Israelites.

As we continue to come together to celebrate and talk about the meals of the Bible, no series would be complete without a discussion and, maybe, fuller understanding of the Passover and its importance to us as Christians. So this evening I pray that God would open our hearts

and our minds as we come to *the Lord's Passover*.

Fast forward about 1500 years from the Exodus, and thus the Passover, and we see a very familiar scene. On Maundy Thursday night, as we now call it, Jesus is sitting at table and celebrating the Passover with His disciples. He is partaking of His last Passover meal on this earth before He is set to die for all of their sins and all of our sins... and could there be a better final meal for Jesus to eat before He pays the ultimate sacrifice for our sins?

Thinking about the Passover, God gave Moses and Aaron instructions while the Jews were still in Egypt, that land of sin and of the devil Pharaoh. The first instruction was that the Jews were to take a lamb on the 10th of the month and bring it into their house and they were to keep it in their house for four days. They were to care for it and nurture it, make sure that all of its needs were met... and then they would slaughter it.

And thinking about that week for Jesus, He came into Jerusalem on... Sunday, Palm Sunday. He then spent His final four days in Jerusalem and the area thereabouts. Jesus spent His time in the “home” of the Jews and when the four days of His being there were up, He was slaughtered also.

And why was the lamb slaughtered? It was a sign that the people who were inside the home were believers in God. Though God would come and destroy all the firstborn of Egypt He would not harm the Israelites, His chosen people... so long as they took the blood of the lamb and painted their doorposts and lintels with it. So long as their house was covered with the blood of the lamb, then they would be safe.

And the same is true for us today, so long as we are covered by the blood of the Lamb, we too will be safe. Think about John the Baptizer who called, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.” John, calling out about Jesus knew the connection He was making, and wanted people to know it. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away sins... of

course if we are not painted, if our lives are not painted with the blood of the lamb, it is of no use to us.

Can you imagine if a family had sat down to eat the lamb, and just decided to not paint their doorposts... do you think that the firstborn would have survived? Of course not, without obedience to God there would be no survival. And what about you? If you sit in church but apply none of the teaching to your life, do you expect God to skip over you and let you into heaven? If you know God’s Word and you choose to not listen to it, do you suppose God owes you a spot in His heaven? If you know that the blood of Jesus Christ forgives you all your sins and you despise it by not coming to receive it and you mock and ridicule it by not properly examining yourselves... do you suppose God looks on you with favor?

Yes friends, the Israelites had sinned and the Egyptians had sinned also. And to His chosen people God gave a way out. To His chosen people God gave the instructions about how to protect from this coming wrath. Take a lamb,

bring it into your house, slaughter it, and put its blood on your doorposts and lintels... then God knows that you listen to Him, and if you don't, well then comes destruction and then comes hell.

And though we deserve destruction and though we deserve hell, God has given us a way out also; He has given us a lamb without spot or blemish. God has given His 'firstborn,' His only begotten, His Son to our atoning sacrifice for all of our sins.

Jesus came into this world to live a perfect life of perfect obedience to God. Jesus attended the Passover and all other festivals as God's law required. Jesus did not break any commandments as set forth by God. Jesus was the perfect Son of God... and like the lamb He would end up giving up His blood and His life to save His people.

And it is now through faith, that we, like the Israelites of old, paint our lives, or doorposts, with the blood of the lamb. Through faith in all that Jesus Christ has done for us, we now know

heaven is ours... not because of the great things that we have done, but because God passed over us and gave all of our punishment and all of our guilt to His Son Jesus Christ. And now for Jesus' sake we are redeemed from all of our guilt, we are saved from all punishment that is rightfully ours... God has given us a "Passover" so that we will not be destroyed.

And this lamb of God, Jesus Christ, still to this day gives us a more important meal... yes more important than that original passover meal. As Gerhard states, ***"...and just as the Passover lamb was not only sacrificed, but its flesh was eaten by the Israelites and its blood was smeared on the door posts; so also Christ, since He wanted to establish and empower the covenant of grace between His heavenly Father and us, did not only offer up His body and blood to His heavenly Father on the tree of the cross, but He also imparts them to us in the holy Supper to eat and to drink. Therefore, since by the reception of the body and blood of Christ in the holy supper we are assured that we are once more received into God's covenant of grace, from which we had fallen***

away through sin after our Baptism, it is right and proper that we do not once more become corrupt and break the covenant.”

And yes, dear friends, not only did Jesus celebrate the Passover with His disciples on that Thursday night, but He also instituted the Lord's Supper... the meal in which He gives us His body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins... the meal that we are coming together to enjoy every week this lenten season.

Dear friends in Christ, just as God passed over the houses of the Israelites who had the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintels, so He also passes over the Christian who has the blood of Christ over His life and His heart. Though we have many opportunities to fall away, we pray that God would continue to preserve us through His word and His sacraments so that the blood of Christ would be a constant reminder that God has passed over our houses, our souls, on this day and that through faith in His Son He will take us to heaven when this life is over.

Truly are those blessed who are redeemed by the blood of the lamb.

Thanks be to God. Amen.