

1Corinthians 18-04-01a

This is Sunday, the 1st of April, 2018, and we continue our study in 1 Corinthians, although this is Easter Sunday, and as we look at our letter from Paul to the church at Corinth, we're going to backtrack just a bit to examine a little bit more fully something that we saw a few weeks ago, and that is in chapter 5, verse 7. 1 Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 7. So we'll be starting there and taking a look more fully in recognition of this Resurrection Sunday of Christ our Passover. Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us. 1 Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 7. Let's take a moment as we begin to go to the Lord in prayer, focus our attention, concentrate our thoughts and cultivate the presence and the ministry of God's Holy Spirit, both individually and collectively, as we look at this portion of God's Word.

Shall we pray? Father, we are especially grateful on this morning for all of the work that you did to accomplish our salvation. We know that it was work. It was perhaps the greatest miracle you have ever performed beyond creating the universe and this planet and the living things that are upon it to rescue us from a lost and fallen condition, to incorporate the results of our choices, fallen and corrupt and led astray, and yet accomplishing your purpose, sending your Son, the Lord Jesus, to be the atonement for our sins, making it possible for us to be restored as a people and to be brought into relationship with you as individuals, not only in the present but for all eternity to come.

It's such a wonderful manifestation of your love and your grace and your power. We thank you for the Lord Jesus for the example that He set in being willing to be that sacrifice and to show forth for us what a life of faith and obedience looks like, both in its daily operation and in its culmination and in its fruit and its outworking, as He has been raised up to sit at your right hand, and we raised with Him to enjoy the wonderful benefits that come from close fellowship with you. We pray that as we look at this portion of your word this morning and the concept of the Lord Jesus in this role as our Passover, that your Holy Spirit will be our teacher, help us to understand and to see the pertinence and applicability of these truths from your word as we move forward in the time that you have allotted to us in this life and prepare ourselves for the eternal future that lies before us.

We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen. Well it is always fruitful to begin by reading a passage in its context and making sure that we don't do violence to it by separating it from the occasion and the audience that brought its existence into being. So as we look at 1 Corinthians chapter 5, we know that Paul is addressing this issue of sin in the camp, if you will.

It reminds us of Achan who took of the spoils and the booty in the sacking of the town of Jericho and there is sin in the camp and it has to be dealt with. So what happens when there is corruption in the course of achieving victory? You remember this story in Joshua chapter 7, Achan takes an ingot of gold, some silver and a beautiful Babylonian garment from Jericho and Joshua had prohibited and forbidden that saying that all the silver and gold, brass, iron are consecrated to the Lord and shall come into the treasury and to take of the things that were

dedicated to God caused their next military effort to fail and this had to be identified. You remember the lots were cast and God enabled Joshua to determine where the problem was, notice that there was an appeal to God to find that.

So as we look at Paul's identification of sin in the church at Corinth, he says it is reported that there is sexual immorality among you. This is the pornia that we spoke of and defined. You are puffed up and have not rather mourned that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you and you can't help but think of the Babylonian garment.

Why would you get a really fancy suit of clothes except to be seen in it? You wonder if this is in fact booty and a few days after the battle Achan suddenly is parading around in a fancy robe. He probably didn't and it was hidden in his tent as we're told. But what is the thinking there? Is it the pride of possession? Is it recognizing its value? Certainly the gold and the silver unquestionably are that.

But Paul is the one who tells them what they need to do about this and he says deliver this one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. And this is something that we took some time to explore. It's not an easy passage to understand.

Do we just have Satan outside the gates waiting to take out the trash? Anybody that fouls up we send them out and he destroys their flesh. It's not that concept at all. But he then continues in verse 6, your glorying is not good.

Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? And his point here is that in the material world if you take bread dough and just put a little bit of leaven within a relatively short period of time it will multiply and spread through the entire lump of dough. And when he says you all are glorying and you're proud and you're saying well we're not judging, we're proud of ourselves in being tolerant, it's the law of love and it's a misapplication of a lot of things that Paul probably taught them. And they're saying well we're not going to judge and we're not going to be heavy handed and we're not going to frown and we're not going to make somebody feel unwelcome and we're not going to recognize negativity, let's keep everything positive, let's stay on the happy side.

And he says your glorying in this supposed love and tolerance is not good because of this tendency for iniquity to spread, for sin to infect and to metastasize if you will. And he figures that with this idea of leaven. And from leaven he then moves in verse 7 to say purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump since you truly are unleavened.

You truly are unleavened. Purge out the old leaven because you are unleavened. If you have to purge out leaven it means there is leaven, but he says you are unleavened.

You're unleavened, purge out the leaven. Remember the man who said Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief. And you get a similar idea here that it's true and it's not true at the same

time.

For indeed, and here's our passage for this morning, our topic, Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. So I wanted to explore this a little bit more fully than we did when we crossed paths with this verse a few weeks ago in 1 Corinthians 5. First of all, Paul begins by introducing leaven. He then uses leaven as a bridge to the Passover and from Passover because that was of course the custom in preparation for Passover.

One of the requirements back in Exodus 12 is to purge out of the house everything that is unclean, purge out the leaven. So he alludes to leaven and then to Passover and then from that, and it's like a set of stairs. Step one is the leaven, step two is purging leaven at Passover, and step three is Christ our Passover.

He is our, because Passover was of course a Jewish feast, an Israelite observance in the law of Moses, and he's talking to a Corinthian church that is largely Gentile. So if he says purge out the leaven, they're saying, but why? I like my wonder bread that builds strong bodies twelve ways. I like it fluffy and foamy.

I don't like that hardtack unleavened bread. And he says Christ is our Passover, and when he says our, he is talking to the community of believers. So that's our context, that's the background.

We want to be sure to keep that in mind as we move forward, but as he builds the climax of this little short set of stairs is Christ our Passover is sacrificed, was sacrificed for us. So, you have the idea of Christ, of his many facets. It's also interesting to think about the fact that Christ is the Lamb of God.

He is so identified in John chapter 1 verse 29, and again in verse 36, John the Baptist, the forerunner, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And then he says it again a few verses later, behold the Lamb of God, he tells the first disciples this. But who is the Good Shepherd? You can say it out loud.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He is the Good Shepherd, but then he is also the Lamb. The Good Shepherd gives his life for the sheep, but then he is a sheep who gives his life for the other sheep.

So he is both. And it takes two images related to sheep and shepherds to fully describe, and I've been on this theme somewhat the past few weeks, looking at Ruth with the two Redeemers, looking at the bird in Leviticus 14 for the cleansed leper, looking at Azazel the goat, one is slaughtered and the other is set free in the wilderness. And the Lord Jesus is so fulsome and so multidimensional in his work as the God-man.

I spent some time editing a sermon recently called, in fact it's going to be broadcast in Korea in a bilingual format, and that's a real challenge to take material and get it down to six and a half minutes of audio that can then be alternating English and Korean and complete a thought in

that amount of time. It has to introduce it, it has to document it and support it from Scripture and come to a conclusion and an application in six and a half minutes. I have a challenge getting it done in 35 minutes, 45 minutes.

Try doing it in six and a half, especially when somebody else is doing the talking and you're stuck with audio that was recorded 30 years ago. But the one I did for a week from Thursday, or actually this coming Thursday, is Christ the God-man. Try summarizing he is absolute deity and true humanity in one person forever in that amount of time, but he is both.

He is both God and he is man. And so he is the suffering servant and he is the conquering king. So here we have Christ presented as the Lamb.

Well, there are really two different kinds of Lamb in Israel, and Paul chooses one of those two, and I want to talk about that just for a moment. You will remember, and you don't have to turn there, but in Exodus chapter 28, verses 29 through 31, one of the first ordinances established in the newly birthed nation of Israel, remember they just came out of Egypt in Exodus chapter 12, you don't have the fulsomeness of Leviticus and Deuteronomy and all of the detailed law yet, but in Exodus 28, God says you will sacrifice a Lamb, one in the morning and one in the evening, every day. Every day there is a Lamb sacrificed in the morning and a Lamb sacrificed in the evening.

What is that Lamb for? This has nothing to do with Leviticus chapters 1 through 6, it's not a whole burnt offering, it's not a meal offering, it's not a trespass offering, it's not a sin offering. It is one Lamb for the whole nation, right? One in the morning, one in the evening, every day. Two Lambs a day.

When you start the day, when you end the day, there is a Lamb giving its life on behalf of the nation in the hands of the priests. So that's one kind of Lamb. It's not a calf, it's not a goat, it's not a bull, it's a Lamb.

The second kind of Lamb is the one that Paul refers to here, which is not every day, it's once a year, once a year. It is the Passover Lamb. The daily Lamb is one Lamb for everybody.

The Passover Lamb, everybody has their own Lamb. You see the difference, right? How easy do you think it would be, I mean I know that down here at Rogers County Courthouse somebody goes down every morning and raises the flag, and every evening somebody takes it down. When you're on a military base, they play music over loudspeakers, every activity on the base stops, people stop their cars, they will get out and stand at attention, at least they used to, I hope they still do.

For colors, there's a bugle call that alerts everyone, and you stop, and wherever you are you face whatever the nearest flag is, and in uniform you salute. They do colors in the morning, they do colors in the evening. Everything stops while that takes place.

Well, in Israel, everything didn't stop. They didn't have loudspeakers and trumpets, and the

land is large, and who knows what's going on down in Jerusalem. How easy do you think it would be to forget, unless you're asked, quietly, invisibly, in the background, in the morning, the lamb was sacrificed.

Near sundown in the evening, that lamb was sacrificed. Whether you knew it or not, thought about it or not, were aware of it or not, cared about it or not, every day without fail, the faithful priesthood was sacrificing a lamb. So it could be impersonal, it could be distant, it could be invisible, but yet it is necessary for God's approval, God's continuing blessing and pleasure with the nation and the land.

That lamb, every morning and every evening, represents God's merciful overlooking of sin for the nation. Now think about the second kind of lamb, the Passover lamb. Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

If you look at the text note in your New King James, the for us is not in all manuscripts. If I had to choose, I think it probably was added for clarity. It doesn't hurt anything, but I don't think Paul actually wrote for us.

He says Christ, our Passover. Once he says Christ, our Passover, for us is sort of superfluous, and Paul tends to have kind of an economy in such things. Christ, our Passover was sacrificed actually has a little bit more punch to it than the for us.

Either way, it doesn't hurt. But that Passover lamb is different. Instead of two lambs a day, you have one lamb a year on 14 Nisan.

Instead of an impersonal single lamb for the entire nation in the morning and another single lamb for the entire nation in the evening, you now have an individual lamb. Every household is to acquire a lamb. Now, most of the people in Israel, from the time they marched out of Egypt, are not shepherds and don't have flocks.

Most of them do other things. There are weavers. There are potters.

There are industries and activities of all sorts. There are people who once they got into the land and got set up with agriculture, and many people have many different occupations. So when it is time to have a lamb for Passover, what did people do? Why are there temples of money changers and so on set up at the temple? We don't raise animals.

We need an animal. We will what? Purchase an animal. You have to purchase the animal yourself.

So people, faithful Israelites who observe Passover according to God's ordinance, would purchase the lamb. Now, there were three feasts a year that were assembly feasts. Right? Remember that? Three times a year the men of Israel were supposed to go to the place of God's name.

Do you remember what they were? A little pop quiz. What are the assembly feasts? Passover is one. Let's just review our feasts.

What's the first feast? Passover. Hard on the heels of that is first fruits and unleavened bread. Right? That's the following.

Then you wait seven weeks plus one day, and you have what? Pentecost. Is Pentecost an assembly feast? Yes, it is. Remember that thinking about the hardship of going to Jerusalem, and then you got to go right back, you know, just something measured in weeks later.

Less than two months, really. Seven weeks. Eight weeks would be two months.

So, assemble. Hop, skip, and a jump. Assemble again.

And then what is the third assembly feast? The head of the year, Rosh Hashanah, Feast of Trumpets, which is hard on the heels then the Day of Atonement. So, you go there, and you celebrate, and you stay for 14 days because you start at the Feast of Trumpets. Ten days later, you have the Day of Atonement, and four days after that, five days after that, you have what? Booths.

Tabernacles. So, there's a spring cluster of feasts, basically three, right? You have Passover, unleavened bread, first fruits is the beginning of unleavened bread, and Pentecost, you have the three spring feasts. In the fall, you have the Feast of Trumpets, Rosh Hashanah, head of the year, you have the Day of Atonement, and you have tabernacles or booths.

Three spring feasts, three fall feasts. And so, they would assemble for those. So, back to my Passover lamb.

Where is everybody going to purchase this lamb? Where are they going to be when it's time to purchase the lamb? In Jerusalem. That's why the tables of the money changers are at the Temple, because everybody who is faithful, they're not having localized Passover observances up in Galilee, or down in the Shephelah, or off to cross the Jordan or any place. It's celebrated in Jerusalem, certainly in Jesus' day.

And by the time they're in the land, that's where it happens. So, there's not like little localized, you know, the synagogue is having a raffle for, you know, win a free Passover lamb or anything like that. It's, you go to Jerusalem and you purchase the lamb.

Now, you think about this idea, Jesus is the good shepherd, but then who gives his life for the sheep, but then he is the sheep who gives his life for the people. You go and you purchase the lamb, but the lamb's blood is going to purchase you. Right? Remember Peter, 1 Peter 1, 28-29, you're not purchased with corruptible things such as silver and gold, with the precious blood of Christ.

You were purchased with the blood of Christ, our Passover. You purchase the lamb, the lamb

purchases you. There's a nice turn of phrase in Mark Lowry's *Mary Did You Know?* Where he said, you know, the baby that you deliver will soon deliver you.

And you have this same idea here. Nearly everybody had to buy the lamb. Even if you raised it, you basically had to do all of the investment to have a lamb, but that lamb then is going to purchase you.

So, Jesus is identified as the lamb, other than using his given name, in terms of figures for him. Thanks to John in the Revelation, the most frequent allusion to Jesus, beyond Savior or anything else, is the lamb. It's over 25 times in the book of Revelation.

You can get a concordance and look it up, but it begins in Revelation chapter 5, verses 6-8, and extends through, it's four times in chapter 5, it's two times in chapter 6, it's four times in chapter 7, it's in chapter 12 and chapter 13, chapter 14 three times, chapter 15, chapter 17, chapter 19 twice, chapter 21 is like five times. Revelation 22, 1-3, over 25 times in Revelation, Jesus is alluded to as the lamb. So, and you think about the Revelation in the future, how is he going to be looked upon and remembered? There is no sun and moon in the kingdom of the Father, so how do people see? Remember peace in the valley? The lamb is the light.

The lamb is the light. So from beginning to end, in Revelation, this is the common designation or appellation for the Lord Jesus. So it's important.

He is the lamb. When he first comes on the scene, he's identified as the lamb by John the Baptist. At the end of time and into the eternal future, he is the lamb, identified by John the Revelator, who is John the Apostle.

So it's important. And here in the center, the Apostle Paul says, Christ our Passover. Well, there's only one kind of Passover that is sacrificed for us, and that is the lamb.

So it's very important. And he says, in that light, we should take action. You think about the impersonality of the morning and evening lamb sacrifice, and you think about how personal it is to have purchased this lamb.

Now, how far ahead did they have to purchase it? Did they just buy it over here and take it down and sacrifice it over there? Have it prepared? How did that work? What is the timing? Do you remember? How long did the lamb have to be examined to ensure that it was without blemish? Four days. Four days. So what does this do? To avoid, perhaps, the idea of this impersonal lamb morning and evening sacrifice, you purchase this lamb four days ahead of time, and you have to keep it yourself for four days.

You don't designate that or delegate that to somebody else. You keep the lamb. You get to know the lamb.

Your kids are going to give the lamb a name. It's going to be bleating and making its presence known because it's separated from its mama. And it is going to be a presence, an immediate

presence, a personal presence.

You're going to know this lamb. You spend four solid days with it. You can spend one day with an animal and really have a personal connection with it.

Well, this goes on for four days. Now, how many days Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed? This is on Passover that He is sacrificed, right? Just before the going down of the sun where everybody has their sandals and the house has been purged of leaven and all that. Right before that, in the afternoon before that, is when the Passover lamb is sacrificed because it is roasted and eaten.

I wish we had time this morning to go through the whole process that is detailed in Exodus chapter 12. But you can read that. But you remember this.

We've been through it enough times. But the lamb is sacrificed, and then the meat is roasted, and then it is eaten. And you have your sandals on your feet, your staff in your hand.

Jews to this day have a lengthy and more detailed ritual. They're always adding things, hiding the bread, and so on. But this animal has been kept up for four days.

Christ was sacrificed on Thursday, 14 Nisan, right? What happened four days before that? What's four days before Passover in Jesus' life? Palm Sunday, the tragic entry, remember? So did the people get the chance to see the lamb? Was the lamb introduced in a very pronounced and fulsome way, in the same way that bringing a lamb into your otherwise lambless household would be notable? And the next four days are some of the most detailed in Scripture. So much happens during that time. I don't even have time to recount all of the conversations and the teaching points that are made in those four days.

But you look it up in your Gospels, starting with that, and between the withering of the fig tree, and the giving of the law of love, and answering the questions of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and all of the things that happened, and that there was plenty of examination of the lamb during those four days. From the time he comes in from Bethany, that's the four days of examination of Christ, the Passover lamb. So this is why everybody knows what's going on when he is led before Pilate.

And Pilate says, you want me to let go of this guy or Barabbas? And everybody knows who he is. He is known. It is personal.

So when you think about the Passover, Christ our Passover, he's not, or should not be to us, the lamb sacrificed off in the invisible courts of the temple while I'm going about my business. Christ is not our daily lamb. He is our Passover lamb.

And that's how much more meaningful his presence should be to us than just a picture on a forgotten wall, or a loose identification that we make as a cultural Christian. And if you're listening to the sound of my voice, you've already passed that bar and are much more

interested, and Christ is much more of a presence and an issue in terms of daily life. But it's important to remember, Christ is not our abstract lamb.

He is our Passover lamb. But Paul got there by talking about the leaven and both before and after this pinnacle. It's sort of a little miniature construction here with Christ our Passover on Mount Calvary right in the middle.

He leads up to it with leaven and he follows it with leaven. And he says, you are unleavened, so purge out the leaven. Now, in the real world of bread dough, once you put leaven into the dough and you've got leavened bread dough, if I said, well, you've got to purge the leaven out of that dough, that needs to be unleavened.

You goofed. This is Easter bread. It's supposed to be unleavened.

It's Passover bread. Get that leaven back out of there. Can you do it? Once the bread is leavened, can you unleaven it? But what is Paul saying here? Purge out the leaven because you are unleavened.

You're supposed to be unleavened, but you're leavened. So, we can do the supernatural. It would be a miracle if you could take leavened bread dough and unleaven it.

No human being can do that. Science, I don't think, can unleaven it. Even if you killed it with a microwave or something, there would be residue.

You can't get that yeast back out of there and its byproducts and the signs of its presence. Do you think that you could leaven bread dough, do some scientific process on it, and then give it to the forensic lab and they would say, well, as far as we can tell, this has never been leavened? Not humanly possible. God can unleaven leavened bread.

It's a miracle. We are leavened. And day by day, we come in contact with things that leaven us, but by the grace of God, we can follow Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians and we can purge out the leaven.

Not just find the little containers of leaven in the house and remove those for Passover. Day by day, we can unleaven our bread. It's a miracle.

It's available to us because Christ, our Passover, is the God-man. He's not just a lamb and He's not just in the material world. So it's an amazing thing to think that in a Passover that occurred once a year in Israel, that figure is put for our daily experience.

The daily lamb sacrifice in Israel could easily be ignored or forgotten or laid aside. Once a year, all of Israel's attention was forced to the Passover lamb. And it was personalized for them and made meaningful to them.

Christ is our Passover. Do we have Christ our Passover once a year? It's every year. It's every day of every year.

So Paul doesn't say, remember that morning and evening lamb. He says, remember the Passover. That's our experience.

And our unleavening is every day. Our Passover is every day. You remember in John chapter 6 where Jesus said, Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you can have no part with me.

But the one who does eat my flesh and drink my blood abides and remains. Keep your finger here in Corinthians. Just turn real quickly to John chapter 6. And as you do so, think about what else happens with the Passover lamb.

It is slain and we typically remember that. Then there are two things, two main things that happen after the slaying of the lamb. What is the first thing? It has to do with its blood.

What happens to the blood of the Passover lamb? It is collected. For what purpose? Think about the first Passover and this will come clearly to your mind. What did they do? Why is it called Passover? What happens to the blood of the lamb? First thing.

Splashed on the door posts, right? On the lintel. You know what the lintel is? That is the cross piece above your head when you walk through. Door posts are on each side.

Not sprinkled on the threshold. What happens to those who trample underfoot the Son of God? Remember over in Hebrews 10.29? Those who trample underfoot the Son of God and do despot to the Spirit of Grace? We do not trample underfoot the Son of God. His blood does not go on the threshold.

You do not step on His blood. It is above. It is over your head.

It is as a picture of the cross where the crown of thorns and the nails through His hands are. That is what counts. It is going to drip from the top down to the bottom probably all by itself.

But you do not apply it down on the threshold. Remember when Dagon fell over and broke his hands off when the Philistines stole the Ark of the Covenant and tried to put it in the temple of Dagon as a trophy. For the next couple of days he would come in and Dagon kept falling over in worship to God's presence in the Ark.

And he fell over and his hands and stuff broke off on the threshold. And then it says to this day the priests of Dagon will not step on the threshold because that is where Dagon's statue got broken. Anyway, the threshold is a part of the door but it is not implicated in the celebration of Passover.

It is the lintel. It is what is above your head, not what is beneath your feet. We do not yet see all things beneath the feet.

We are lower than the angels. We are lower than God's heaven and God's thoughts and God's ways. But the blood of Christ is between us and God.

When God looks down at us as we come in or as we go out on that Passover night, He looks at the door and He sees the blood. For us, every day is Passover. And every day as God looks at us coming in and going out, what is interposed between our thoughts and intents of the heart that need judging? What is interposed between us and our fallen and sinful nature? What is interposed? It is the blood.

It is to our right hand and it is to our left and it is over our head. So Jesus, now in John chapter 6, you remember beginning in 53, Most assuredly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

This is life associated with the flesh and the blood of the Lord Jesus. Being raised up is what? Life. Death is overcome with life.

Instead of being dead, you are alive. What does the blood of the Passover lamb do in Israel on the first Passover? As God passes through the camp and the destroyer is going in and slaying the firstborn in every household, God says, when I see the blood, I will pass over. And the destroyer will not enter.

I will pass over. The blood interposes itself and prevents judgment. It isn't like the Israelites were any less sinful or any less corrupt or any less deserving of death, but they have done one thing that the Egyptians have not done.

They believed the Word of God and they applied it. When Moses says, God's coming, put some blood on the doorpost, and then go inside and eat the roasted flesh of the lamb. That's the second thing.

Remember I said there are two? The blood of the lamb after it is slain is immediately applied to the doorway, and secondly, the meat is roasted and eaten. People didn't eat the lamb morning and evening sacrifice, but this lamb that they've been personally acquainted with for four days, they do. They eat that flesh.

And here Jesus says, drink my blood, but the idea is that this blood is a source of life. It overcomes death and it overcomes judgment. And the two figures are different, but they have the same point.

They make the same issue clear. Well, this is quite a bit to process, even up to this point. Let's pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we'll see a few more points about Christ, our Passover, and we'll come back down the stair step looking at what it means to purge out the leaven and what significance that has for us. But let's pause here and take our break.