

# Exodus 12:1-28

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[ 0 : 00 ] This summer has been filled for me at any rate, and I'm sure for many of you, with what are rightly considered one-time events, but of such magnitude that they bear repeated celebrations.

I'm thinking in particular of weddings. Two weeks ago, one son married. This summer, four nephews married.

Five men within the context of our family entering into matrimony. A one-time event with repeated celebrations.

Think of it in terms of those of you who might be celebrating a birthday. Your birth came on a day. But commemorated annually.

The celebration that comes in light of an event ought to be commensurate with the nature of the event.

[ 1 : 13 ] So weddings are usually followed by lavish meals, birthdays by cake. Weddings, at least in our family's tradition, dancing because dance befits the vows and the declaration.

We come to Exodus 12. A one-time event. Repeated celebration.

And the celebration worthy of the event itself. God, as it were, playing the part of host and event planner.

He has specific designs on what he is celebrating. And certain designations on the kind of party he wants to throw that would honor the event at hand.

You can see it simply laid out in the text. This movement of simplicity. First, the event itself.

Salvation is coming.

[ 2 : 27 ] 1 to 13. Followed by that celebration that would repeat itself through the years.

14 through 20. Salvation is coming. Look at the opening of the text. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, This month shall be for you the beginning of months.

It shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month, every man shall take a lamb according to their father's houses.

A lamb for a household. Literally, in one sense, this is a new moon. When the new moon rises, a new day is going to dawn. This is the beginning of what will be known for you as a calendar changing day.

The day that I take Israel as my firstborn. Salvation. Now remember, we have left last week the palaces of Egypt, the presence of Pharaoh, and the plagues that fell.

[ 3 : 39 ] And now we are off into the land of Goshen, huddled into the midst of what are provisional tents, into the tents and perhaps even hundred thousand in the center.

And God comes and speaks to Moses and Aaron and says, A new day is dawning. This is to be the marking of a new year. I am planning something for you.

It is a one-time event. Your deliverance from Egypt. It is nothing less than the salvation of his own people. And so he indicates the sign by which he will bring them out.

A lamb or a goat, a year old, chosen on the tenth day, sacrificed on the fourteenth day at twilight.

What an evening that would have been. And if you can imagine the aromas rolling through Goshen when thousands of lambs are being roasted on the open pit and the quietness with which it would have been celebrated.

[ 5 : 02 ] And then the eating of bitter herbs, reminiscent of chapter 1, verse 14, a reminder of their bitter service in all their years.

And the dipping of a hyssop that might take the blood, and in accordance with verse 7, the taking of it on the doorposts and on the lintel of the home.

Blood, according to the text, is the sign. And in this manner you will eat with it, verse 11, with your belt fastened, sandals on your feet, staff in your hand, you're to eat it in haste.

How does God save? He saves in the Old Testament, the same way He saves in the New, through blood.

Blood shed, wrath averted. The Lord passing over that people might have life.

[ 6 : 11 ] Verses 1 to 13. Salvation is coming. But the celebration, then, is the second half of God's own discourse to Moses and Aaron.

And while we normally spend most of our time in the text on verses 1 to 13, I would like us to consider in greater detail 14 and following.

This is the repeated celebration. Not merely that salvation is coming, but there is a festival to keep.

And the Passover itself signified a new day and the marking of a new calendar year.

And now we are given a seven-day-long festival that's to be commemorated every year. In the event we are saved by blood, here it is celebrated by bread.

Blood. Bread. By way of emphasis, that is the way the text has been given to us.

[ 7 : 23 ] It's interesting to note the kind of celebration, then, that God deems appropriate for the day of salvation. Seven times in these verses, we're talking about eating bread, and in particular, unleavened bread.

And for me, this has been a surprising text for meditation. God chooses to honor the hour of salvation by throwing what could only be considered to be a feast on the fly.

This is the original fast food drive-through meal, but so unlike our own.

Think of the way we celebrate large-scale events. Imagine a big sit-down dinner, black tie evening.

God chooses travel clothing, and in a sense, old carry-on luggage.

[ 8 : 45 ] For our biggest events, we celebrate in short two-hour windows, and we lay a spectacular spread, and perhaps even open the bar.

But when God celebrates His moment of salvation, He stretches it out to this lengthy seven-day episode, and interestingly, with only Spartan-like provisions.

It's all food and drink, but on the run. And it's not even good food. You and I take minor things in life.

It's astounding to me. We even have celebrations these days of folks who graduate kindergarten.

And in my house, that was an expectation, not a celebration.

We take minor things and blow them up. God takes the biggest of things and lays it quietly down. If these textual surprises aren't enough, check out what He does for those who decide to celebrate in a different fashion.

[ 10 : 08 ] Look at verse 15 for a moment. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses.

For if anyone eats what is leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. Or, repeat it again in verse 19, for seven days no leaven is to be found in your houses.

If anyone eats what is leavened, that person will be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he's a sojourner or a native of the land.

Cut off from the assembly. Disciplined, as it were. Sent home. And uninvited from now on.

Scratched from the invite list.

What a puzzle. What a puzzle. That bread was to be without this simple additive that brings so much more to it.

[ 11 : 20 ] That bread, something of mere physical properties, should be attended with such social and spiritual realities. and consequences.

This material diversion from God's way having massive social and spiritual implications among God's people.

So I have wondered this week, why would God find the eating of unleavened bread to be so offensive? What is it about the leaven that results in being left out of the community?

How does the mere addition of an additive into the celebration dishonor or spoil the event of salvation?

verses 12 and 39 give us some forward movement and understanding or 11 I should say and 39 in this manner you shall eat it with your belt fastened your sandals on your feet your staff in your hand and that's a reference back to verse 8 with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it they're eating the unleavened bread and the bitter herbs with belt fastened sandals on feet staff in hand or verse 39 and they bake unleavened cakes of the dough that they had brought out of Egypt for it was not leavened because they were thrust out of Egypt and could not wait nor had they

prepared any provisions for themselves let me stop on this for a moment leaven required lingering it's as simple as that and lingering was an offense to God imagine 430 years of waiting for God to act in salvific terms and now we have arrived on the night and to be an individual who says well me and my people have spent 430 years in slavery but I think I'd like to stick around for just a little while longer got grace and glad for it but before

[ 14 : 32 ] I get up and get out of here I think I'll sit down and get a little more after all it tastes better with leaven I'm going to take cover under the door but I really want to taste the cakes that I've come to enjoy that kind of celebration is not appropriate for this event of salvation that's the offense to God to be saved by God and yet to sit in the old world to have in one sense a foot in both worlds he couldn't imagine it and so unleavened bread for God is the perfect way to commemorate his day

I want you to turn to the New Testament I want you to take a look at 1 Corinthians 5 the apostle Paul grabs hold of our text and he applies it for us so we'll know how to handle it 1 Corinthians 5 the text that I'm referring to is verses 6 and following your boasting is not good do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump as you really are unleavened for Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed let us therefore celebrate the festival not with the old leaven the leaven of malice and evil but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth notice now he is grabbing hold of our text and referring to Christ as one who has been sacrificed one time event and now rather than a seven day celebration he views all of life in light of the sacrifice of Christ as a continuation of the festival almost as if the seven days that were repeated annually in Israel represent the fullness of life for all who follow

Jesus all of life every day a celebration of the feast of unleavened bread he takes our text and applies it in the midst of the New Testament church and in Corinth notice that's our text but look at the context of chapter five in first Corinthians it's reported verse one that there's sexual immorality among you and of a kind that's not tolerated even among pagans for a man has his father's wife and what he is wanting them to do is to put this person out of the assembly he's saying by the end of the chapter purge the evil person from among you that's the context there's an individual in the New Testament church I'll put it crassly in one sense because it is crass to Paul he can't believe the arrogance that it's going on in that is getting it on with someone they're not to be with and he basically says get them out it doesn't make sense it's an anomaly that we would have in the family people celebrating their freedoms of salvation in ways that imbibe the food of the old life God says if that's the case then get them out I've already got them out he said let me let me put it right here you and I are if we've decided to take up with salvation then we've decided that we need to refrain from bedding down with sin those two things are together so when you actually come back to Exodus 12 notice it's not merely a chapter on the Passover Lamb we normally look at chapter 12 and all we see is the act of salvation but a whole half of the discourse of God is given not to the act of salvation but to the implication of sanctification you are saved that you might get on with sanctification that you might get up and go that you might leave and it might be in haste it's not merely sexual immorality but take a look in

Paul's language there in 11 and following I'm writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of a! brother if he's guilty of sexual immorality or greed there it is not just to hang up on sexual sins and remember you don't have to have money to have greed this is a heart condition or an idolater now know that an idol is anything that you love more than you love God could be anything depending on the individual here or reviler or a drunkard we're not to return to escape the sins of escape that deaden our senses not if we've taken this cup or swindler figuring out how to cheat someone and get ahead no that those are all the old ways that those are leaven and guess what you and

[ 20 : 55 ] I are quite familiar with them we've we've tasted of them from from God's perspective you honor his salvation by getting on with sanctification we we drink from the cup just think of it this way looking back at Christ we drink from a cup looking back to a distant day by which we were saved and we eat the bread looking forward to a feast that is brought to us in a completely different realm and right now you and I are between two worlds but but our meal is all at the fountainhead of God and in heaven that's how we honor

God it is it is absurd for me for you for us to be on our way to the wedding feast of the lamb and to keep stopping along the way and bloating ourselves with the worldly fare of this life it's just it doesn't make sense and we know it doesn't make sense we know it doesn't make sense and we know it never satisfies and didn't you love the repast of that little phrase in our song today hearts always

hunger!

for even the way been through that last word forward hearts always hunger for God we know that you're the one our hearts always hunger for and yet and yet we take the blood come under the door but we want we want we want the bread that only leaven can bring I wonder sometimes if we're afraid I wonder if we're afraid that we'll arrive at heaven's gates and we're not quite convinced that the food and drink there will be as good as what I've got here why else do we do we do this to ourselves the unwinding of our lives is almost always the result of doing ourselves in that's what we do ourselves in and

I wonder if our hearts are afraid wow can the food there can the drink there be really as satisfying as what I'm experiencing here well okay I'm on the way there but believe me I'm not arriving at that gate you know empty I'm going to arrive full you know in need of a lot of grace with vices that I've never fought or laid down and what he's saying what God is saying is I've done something for you in Jesus that is so so immense so immeasurable it doesn't deal with 400 years or 430 years it deals it deals with the history and my plan for all of time for all of eternity and he came one time and he died one time and he shed his blood and through him under him you will find yourself in a relationship to me but when you come you are on the run you are not here you're!

here! but you're not you celebrate but you're longing for the celebration of the lamb and what happens to us is we get fixed with this fair we forget that there is a day according to the scriptures in Luke when it says he's going to serve us that just think of it all those who are saved in their seats not running that day nowhere to go no hurry and you're going to watch him make his rounds he's going to come by you're going to come over your left shoulder he's going to say welcome to the wedding feast of the lamb I have come to serve you life forever more and we will at that moment be so amazed we'll almost be unable to turn and look but out of love we know we will and his hand will hit mine and I will look at him

[ 26 : 29 ] I will see him face to face and he will be my portion forever more and on that moment I will lament I'm sure and regret that the amount of grasping for everything that came before there's nothing more lamentable to me than a man who is aging still grasping for all this world has to give so let us be done now I know we need grace this table is here I mean this is actually the meal you need so just remember this the church is for only two kinds of people first of all it's only for sinners pastor friend of mine has said this remember it it's only for sinners so we're all sinners but it's only for two kind of people sinners who are repenting sinners church church is not for people who be like give me the blood but

I'm going outside to get my bread no church is for people like give me the blood and the bread I'm done with this world that that's who it's for and we're not to sit here and judge the outsider that Paul's very clear on that in 1st Corinthians 5 and the voice of God is very clear on that to Moses and Aaron in Exodus 12 he's not concerned with the people who are outside we're not supposed to stay here and go look at all them look at all them what are you doing what are you giving!

your life too he's not concerned with that he says you're supposed to hang out with them you're supposed to live with them you're supposed to love them it doesn't matter what their behavior is like you are to embrace them but when you come in and when you come forward and when you taste this meal that's the one you look each other in the eye we got to call ourselves with having both worlds then we look at each other and say no no it doesn't work that way in here now we're going to discipline ourselves and that's mutual pastors and people we got to keep coming back to putting away sin you need this meal but when you take this meal I got to see if I can just put this simply! when you if you coming forward today for this meal if you take the cup you're looking back on Christ's blood and you're saying thank you for salvation and when you take the bread you are tasting something and saying this is enough all I need and you eat it fast because we're gone we don't linger I don't know how to emblematically put it to you but to say when you come forward today first of all coming forward is a good thing like am I in on this if I I I!

I I I I Willy kingdom. That's what I'm trying to say. The ethics are attended in the meal.

[ 30 : 27 ] When I taste this little thing, it's intentionally not big and blown up and tasty. I hope it's stale today. I hope it's been sitting in some back closet for three months and you take it and go, this is terrible. That's right.

That's right. So this is a big thing. I want to welcome you to the table.

Normally we don't, you know, I couldn't imagine preaching this text without coming to the table again. And I invite all of you who believe to the table.

And I invite all of you who are Christians, who are sinners, who will now examine yourself and repent to the table. Because this is your life.

And for those who will say, no, I'm not done yet. I got a few more places to hit tonight.

[ 31 : 42 ] If you're not done yet, then don't come. What an offense to your own conscience. I don't have to judge you. That would be foolish.

Why would you judge yourself? Or if you don't believe in Jesus and you don't believe that his blood is what covers you for sin, then why would you possibly want to take this? You don't owe us anything.

You don't owe me anything. You don't owe the person next to you anything. You reject Christ. You reject this meal. No. Just wait it out. And watch.

Because you're going to see a lot of sinners standing and kind of inching up and they're eagerly waiting. And they're going to take it and they're going to be quick and gone.

May God strengthen us as we give ourselves to him. For I have received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread.

[ 32 : 52 ] Now remember, this is the Passover night. And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way also he took the cup after supper, saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

Cup of salvation. Bread from heaven. Feed me. Till I want no more.

Amen. Our Heavenly Father, May we participate in faith, grateful, as our heads tip back and our eyes go to the heavens and we take this cup.

May this be a movement of gratitude for the blood of Christ. And as our mouths taste this bread, may it signal to us again that we are on our way to you and done with lesser things.

[ 34 : 16 ] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Thank you.