

Epiphany: Wk 2

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Preacher: Fr. Caleb Evans

[0:00] Amen. Amen.

So I somewhere remember reading a story about a young preacher. I think I read it in Martin Lloyd-Jones, but don't quote me on that.

But anyway, who had just preached a sermon and was pretty satisfied with what he had said, how he had handled the sermon. After the service, people lined up to congratulate him on a job well done, on preaching that great sermon.

But then he asked a wise elder of the church what he thought about the sermon. He was told that it was in fact a very poor sermon.

Ouch. He asked why, and this is what he was told. The sermon was missing Christ. He responded by protesting that Christ was nowhere to be found in his text.

[1:36] And that the preacher must find him there. Amen to that.

So it is. Christ is always in the text. Christ is always in the text.

We see him there in the covenant promises that God made to his people Israel. We see his coming, we're told, in the prophets. Christ is always in the prophets. And sometimes we see him in the Old Testament in the form of types.

Does anyone know what a type is? Okay, so I'm going to do something that I almost never do. This will get you docked points in public speaking class. I'm going to say this.

Merriam-Webster defines type as... Yeah, I know. Go ahead and groan. Merriam-Webster defines... You threw me off. As a person or thing, as in the Old Testament, believed to foreshadow another, as in the New Testament.

[2:51] In other words, the accounts that we read in the Old Testament often contain things, ideas, people that foreshadow Christ. So it is with this morning's Old Testament reading.

This morning's reading points us to Christ. Now, to be clear, what we see in this morning's Old Testament reading really did happen historically.

God really did save his people from slavery in Egypt. But as the scriptures indicate that he did just that, they also point forward to God saving his people and his son, Jesus Christ, the Lamb.

So a little bit of background here. I think it's helpful. I know that you guys know the background of the Exodus, but I want to point out something very specific. God's people, Israel, were held in slavery by the Egyptians.

And of course, God was going to rescue them from slavery. The Egyptians, for their refusal to let Israel go, got hit with a series of plagues sent by God.

[4:07] And the final plague was that the firstborn of each household of Egypt would die. Well, that's a bit intense, isn't it? Here's the thing that we need to realize when we're thinking about this account.

God's holy wrath and anger at sin is a real thing. The Egyptians were enslaving the Israelites, treating them horribly.

And guess what? God was not okay with that. In our culture, the notion of a wrathful God is not a very popular one.

But here's the thing. The Israelites were enslaved. Again, do we really want a God who is okay with that? Our God's anger is not like ours, which is so often reckless, so often uncontrolled, and so often selfish and sinful.

His anger is a holy expression of his utter opposition to evil and his determination to do something about it.

[5:24] God cares about the evil things that happen, and he means to deal with it. So what happens in this morning's account?

Let's look at our text in Exodus chapter 12 together. Our passage this morning describes the Passover on the ground as it happens, so to speak.

Starting in verse 21, we read, If you think that there might be something to that mention of a Passover lamb being killed, If you think you might have heard that before, if you think, indeed, that that might be a type of Christ, then you would be right.

What does John the Baptist say of Jesus in this morning's Gospel reading? Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The New Testament purposely identifies Jesus with the Passover lamb.

As we go on this morning, we will think about why, but the first thing to notice is that the first step in protecting the Israelites from God's judgment was the death of the Passover lamb.

[6 : 58] So what happens next? Moses directs them to take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood, and touch it onto the door frame.

They then warned, None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. He says, Cover the entry places where you dwell in the blood of the lamb, in other words.

And don't leave the places that are under the cover of the blood. So, the blood of the lamb covers the door frames in the places where they dwell.

That's the next step. Moses goes on, For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you.

Excuse me. God's wrath is coming. God's judgment is coming. We see this in the text. But here's the thing. If God sees the blood on the door, His wrath is going to pass by, and those within will be unharmed.

[8 : 25] So we see a transition in our text then. This is something that will be observed in the years to come. Moses continues, You shall observe this rite as a statute for you, and for your sons forever.

And when you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as He has promised, you shall keep this service. So it's an ongoing thing. And then Moses says something very interesting.

And when your children say to you, What do you mean by this service? You shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover. For He passed over the houses of the people of Israel and Egypt, when He struck the Egyptians, but spared our houses.

Thank you. And the people bowed their heads and worshipped. All right, there's an assumption that the kids are going to ask.

Why do we observe this Passover thing every year? What's this about? And the answer that is given, that they are supposed to say, is that we do this to remember when the Lord rescued us from slavery, that His wrath and His judgment did not fall on us.

[9 : 55] Our passage for this morning closes with this. Then the people of Israel went and did so, as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

If we were to go on, we would see that it happened just as they were told. The Egyptians, without the blood on their door frames, were struck down. And the Israelites, with the blood on their door frames, were spared.

Now, what does all of this mean for us? Well, the truth is that before we see ourselves in the Israelites, we see ourselves in the bind that the Egyptians were in.

They had sinned against God, and they had sinned against their fellow man. In Romans chapter 1, the Apostle Paul writes this, So if we've sinned, that is bad news for us, because that puts us under God's wrath.

And God is right to be angry at our sins. We've rebelled against God, and we've hurt other people. And here's the thing, God means to take care of sin.

[11 : 26] He's going to do just that. He means, when it's all said and done, for sin to be destroyed. But let's remember, He is patient.

He is loving. He is kind, even to the undeserving. God loves the sinful.

And even the rebellious. So much so that He gave His only Son to be the Lamb of God. He gave us His only Son so that He could destroy sin without also destroying us and our sins.

The Passover Lamb was killed. And Christ, our Passover Lamb, was killed to take away our sins, to die in our place, to fall under God's wrath and judgment in our place, so that we would never have to fall under it.

The Israelites put the blood of the Lamb on their door frames, so that God's wrath against sin would pass over them.

[12:49] In Romans chapter 3, we see that we have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood to be received by faith.

His blood shed for us, the Lamb of God, justifies us, restores us to right relationship with God, washes away our sins, removes God's wrath from us.

It's a free gift received by faith, that is, by trust in Jesus as our Savior and as our Lamb of God. In Romans 5, we read, For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die. But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God. Amen. Israelites' Passover Lamb, whose blood was used to spare them from God's judgment that fell that night, points forward to our Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ.

[14:44] Because, outside of Christ, when God's judgment falls, we would each die in our sins. But in Christ, we have eternal life.

And every year, the Israelites were commanded to observe the Passover. They were told to let their children know what it was about. God passed over them.

God spared them. He would go on to set them free from bondage. Every year, they remembered their story. Throughout the generations, they remembered that it was their story.

And they gave thanks to God. But, we don't do that, right?

Oh, wait. We remember that we show up here together every week. To do what?

[15:47] Well, the same thing, every week. Why do we do that? If our children ask why we do that, what do we tell them? And they typically do ask.

Well, again, it's the same thing week after week. We open up the scriptures. We have a sermon about Christ and Him crucified.

My plan is that it is always a Christ-centered sermon that's going to be the focus week after week because I'm wasting my breath and your time if I'm preaching about something else.

And then we gather around the table. we break the bread, we drink from the cup to proclaim the Lord's death as the scriptures put it.

In work and in sacrament we gather every week for the same purpose. What is it? To see Jesus.

[16:57] To proclaim Him and His death and His resurrection. resurrection. To remember that we were in bondage and we have been delivered.

To remember that we have been saved from the wrath of God and not only that but are now His beloved children in Christ.

When we think about it that way, well, I spilled my water, sorry about that. That was not for dramatic effect, I promise.

When we think about it that way, we realize that we are remembering our story. The story of a Savior who gave His life to save us.

And when our children ask us why do we do this, we answer, because our loving Father in Heaven gave His only Son to be the Lamb of God to take away our sins.

[18:10] That is the story of our lives. So no wonder then, week after week, and year after year, we gather to remember our Passover Lamb, our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Amen.