

Daniel

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[0 : 00] 1 Corinthians chapter 5, we'll begin reading at verse 6. 1 Corinthians 5 at verse 6.

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. The Corinthians had many problems that Paul sought to address with this letter. Among the many problems they had were problems of relationships and personal behavior, personal morality or immorality, you might say too, as you read through these passages.

Sexual immorality, sins related to fleshly appetites, and Paul, in addressing these, frequently mentions the arrogance of the Corinthians and their boasting.

[1 : 28] It might seem strange to us that he could say of such people that they were arrogant, that they were boasting, despite what he points out was wrong and sinful in their behavior.

But as you realize the background to the Corinthians as a church, as a people of God, that they came from a pagan background, a pagan environment, and practices which really exalted such debased forms of behavior.

Some of that followed them into the church that they had become, as God had called them, to be his people. And here in this passage, he addresses that issue of their boasting.

It seems that the Corinthians were, in fact, in allowing such sins, as he mentions here, to go unchecked amongst them, or certainly undisciplined, that they were actually boasting in the fact that they were such a congregation as could allow for such a wide range of behavior, as if it was inclusive, and as if it was something to be proud of, in relation to being a gospel church.

That's one of the things that makes 1 Corinthians such an appropriate passage for the kind of generation and society that we belong to today.

[2 : 55] Because a lot of the things that Paul denounces and deals with and wants these Corinthians to grapple with and to overcome and to learn about is something which characterizes our modern society so much.

Aspects of behavior, relationships, sexual immorality, all of these things are themselves so much commended in our generation.

And it's so important that we as Christians and as a gospel church realizes what the Bible has to say about these things and how much Paul is concerned here in this one instance to deal with the celebration of the festival or the feast.

It may be that they were coming up to the time of the Passover as it had been in the Old Testament, which is maybe why he's using this language here, Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival. In any case, as he's addressing these issues in the congregation in Corinth, he is taking them back to the practice of the Passover and what was related to keeping the Passover and to the unleavened bread that accompanied the Passover and the days of unleavened bread that followed on from the killing of the Passover lamb.

[4 : 18] And he builds all that together in such a way that draws from that practice of the past in the Passover days and applies it spiritually to our casting out of the leaven of sin, malice, and evil is what he mentions there.

But every aspect of sin is really included. As you know from the past, from what we read in Exodus and other places too, you could refer to, in relation to the Passover, the people of Israel had to put leaven out of their houses.

Now, leaven was something which was not just yeast. Leaven was like a little lump of dough that had already been leavened or had yeast in it in the making of bread and they kept a little of it over

to add to the next batch of dough so that the little lump with the leaven in it, with the yeast in it, would then permeate through the new lump.

And that's why he's using this kind of language here. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. If you leave a little bit of sin or the way that sin multiplies and grows, it very quickly spreads and affects not just parts of the individual, but what he's dealing with here is parts of the congregation and spreads through the people themselves.

That's what really Paul is dealing with. He's concerned for individuals. He's concerned that the person mentioned at the beginning of the chapter there has not been dealt with. But now he's concerned, you see, to say, well, leaving these sort of things means the whole lump of the people is affected by unchecked sin as it ought to have been dealt with on your part, he's saying to them.

[6 : 08] And that follows on to the teaching that Paul has elsewhere about the cross of Christ and the death of Christ and our relationship to Christ in his death being itself the very ground, the very foundation from which our casting out of leaven, the leaven of sin, is to be carried through in our lives as Christians.

Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us, therefore, therefore, seeing that is the case, it is inappropriate that anything other than the casting out of sin, the pursuit of holiness, should follow on from that.

Now, we're going to really just look at three ways in which the Passover relates to the Lord's Supper and looking at it in the context also of how Paul is here addressing the issues that were present in Corinth at the time.

First of all, let's think about the Passover Lamb itself and the relation of that to the Lord's Supper. Secondly, the Passover redemption, which was, of course, deliverance from Egypt and how that relates to the Lord's Supper and what we do in keeping the Lord's Supper or observing the Lord's Supper.

And thirdly, the Passover meal and the Lord's Supper and what the Lord's Supper is and what it's for. The Lamb, the redemption, and the meal of the Passover as against what you find in or related to corresponding to what we do in the Lord's Supper and how we think of the Lord's Supper.

[7 : 57] The Passover Lamb, first of all, we read in Exodus 12 how the Lord Himself set out by His appointment how they were to take a lamb and a lamb for each household or certainly going by the number of people exactly as to what they were able to eat.

So the lamb had to correspond to the number of people that were to be delivered from death. From the death, the plague of death. And the first thing to note about the Passover lamb and also with Jesus as we commemorate His death in the Lord's Supper is that this was appointed by God. The lamb was appointed by God. It wasn't an invention of Israel. It wasn't something that Israel thought would be a good idea and that this would be central to their life as a people that they would then keep this as a commemoration of what they themselves had decided was a good thing to keep throughout their generations.

The Lord came to Moses. The Lord said to Moses, this is what you will do. This is my will for you. This is my dictation to you of how you are to observe this night and all that's associated with it in the sacrifice of the Passover lamb.

Now the Bible, the New Testament tells us about Jesus as well that Jesus was also set apart by God in order to be the sacrifice for the sin of His people.

[9 : 26] Hebrews chapter 5, for example, and verse 5 where He says about Aaron that God appointed Aaron to be the high priest. No one takes this honor for himself but only when called by God just as Aaron was.

So also Christ. He did not exalt himself to be made a high priest but was appointed by Him who said to Him, You are my Son. Today I have begotten you.

That is God the Father. So you realize from this itself that Christ was appointed specifically by God the Father to be the sacrificial lamb whose death we remember in the Lord's Supper.

You have the same thing in 1 Peter chapter 1 and verse 20 where Peter is dealing again with Jesus as a sacrificial offering and where He puts it this way in 1 Peter chapter 1 and at verse 20 where again He's been dealing with God the Father in that particular context but He says you are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in these last times for your sake who through Him are believers in God who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory so that your faith and hope are in God and the relevant part of that is that He was foreknown before

the foundation of the world.

[10:55] Now to be foreknown foreknown in that context means to be really set upon or set apart by God the Father. You see the Lord's Supper is not an invention of the church. It's not something that the apostles thought was a good idea after Christ had died and risen from the dead any more than the people of Israel thought it would be a good idea to have something like the Passover meal celebrated throughout their generations.

God appointed as He appointed the lamb in the Old Testament for the sacrifice so He appointed Christ in His death.

Christ came as someone appointed by God the Father not that He Himself didn't have a role in that and a willingness and in the exercise of His own will to do that but it is God that chose and set Him apart.

It's not that God came to someone already in this world and said to His church now I want you to actually single out this man I'm going to look at him specially and he's going to actually be someone that will be a godly man and through the eminence of his godliness and also his obedience I'm going to use him to reveal myself and my salvation.

That's what some theologians will tell you because they don't believe in the pre-existence of Jesus Christ. They don't believe that Jesus was in existence as God before He ever appeared on earth and in eternity the Bible is telling us what we're doing in the Lord's Supper is observing something remarkable not just something that took place in the process of time in the history of this world and of God's church but something that begins and has its root in the decree in the mind and the will of God who set His Son apart from all eternity to be the sacrificial lamb that would take away the sin of the world.

[12:57] He is appointed by God and you come to the Lord's Supper and one of the things that you have in mind is that as you take the cup and the bread and as you partake of it you come with thankfulness that this is no less than God's appointment.

There is a sureness about it there is a certainty about it because it's not an invention of human beings not even of sanctified human beings it is God's appointment of this person whose death we commemorate in the Lord's Supper.

The second thing about the lamb in relation to the Passover lamb in relation to the Lord's Supper is that he was not only appointed but appointed to be killed appointed to be put to death.

It was specific to God's purpose in appointing his son to be the sacrificial lamb that took away the sin of his people that he would be appointed to take our nature our human nature in order that he might die.

It's not something that happened or was purposed or was decided upon subsequent or after his coming into the world after he had appeared in the world as a human being and taken our nature.

[14:18] No, he took our nature specifically so that that itself would be the means that would enable him to die. And again you've got that in the letter to the Hebrews that he was appointed as Hebrews 2 says not only just appointed but appointed to die because Hebrews chapter 2 there and verse 14 puts it like this since therefore the children share in flesh and blood that means ourselves those he was going to come to die for specifically he's now saying since therefore the children share in flesh and blood he himself likewise partook of the same so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death that is the devil we'll come back to that part of the text in a moment but you see it's saying to us here is the person that God specifically appointed to be the sacrifice for our sins so that the appointment is really an appointment in eternity that appoints the son to come and take our nature so that he might die the great purpose is his death his death as the lamb of God

B.B. Warfield great American theologian of the past has some played in his writings this comment how amazing a thought it is that before the world existed before anything existed that God created there was in the depth of the trinity this resolve on the part of the son I will go and I will take human nature and I will die for sinners remember that as you come to take the bread and the cup or as you observe it if you are not going to be actually at the table remember this is by God's appointment not just the Lord's Supper itself but what it commemorates what it signifies what it sets out the Passover lamb and the Lord's Supper the Passover redemption and the Lord's Supper two things also in that security and liberty imagine that you were living in the 1500s that you were living in the 1560s to be precise in the city of Rotterdam where a

Spanish army had invaded and come to actually walk through and through the city of Rotterdam as well as other parts of the country they had come to slaughter many people of that city and people started trying to find refuge and one small group found themselves in a house on the corner of a street near the marketplace as the soldiers were coming nearer and nearer and as they knew they weren't leaving anybody alive men, women, children just slaughter it came to be known as the house of a thousand terrors and one young man decided that a possible way of escape for them was to kill a goat and to let the blood of the goat flow out under the door onto the street the soldiers came eventually to that door and when they saw the blood flowing out onto the street they immediately thought there's nobody left alive in that house we don't need to bother they're all dead so they moved on how reminiscent that is of what happened in Israel in Egypt rather in Israel's experience these thousands of years ago take the blood of the lamb as God said to Moses and sprinkle it on the doorposts and on the lintel and when I see the blood I will pass by you and the angel of death will not come into your homes security safety deliverance by the blood of a lamb but in this case by Jesus Christ in his death Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed it's taken place his blood has been shed the death is now accomplished it's interesting that the tenth plague the plague of death was the only plague in Israel in which they themselves had something to do that doesn't mean that we contribute to our salvation any more than they did but in all the other plagues they were simply bystanders they had to watch what happened as the plague of death or the plague of flies or the plague of frogs whatever other plagues there were in the previous nine they were bystanders they were observers but when it came to the tenth plague they had to take the blood they had to apply the blood they had to kill the lamb they had to eat that Passover lamb they had to take its blood and apply it to the doorposts and to the lintels there was an activity on their own part to ensure their security and that shows you that really they were on the same level as those in

Egypt as far as death was concerned they were no more deserving as a people of not being taken by the angel of death than the people of Egypt were it wasn't because they were any better as a people or any more worthy to be spared the only thing that made the difference and what a great difference it was was the blood of the lamb that's what God saw that was the means of their security it wasn't Abraham's name that was on the door it wouldn't have been of any use to them simply to have carved his name on the door post and said we're the children of Abraham we're people who are anticipating leaving this place as was promised to our forefathers therefore the name of our forefathers is our protection it was the blood of the lamb when you come to the

[20 : 56] Lord's table that too is your security security you're commemorating something that is your security in itself the death of Christ it's not your faith it's not the quality of your life it's not the frequency of your prayers it's not how strong your faith is or how weak your faith is it's not how often you are in the means of grace all of these things are hugely important it's the lamb himself it's the blood of Christ it's the redemption that's in his blood as Paul puts it elsewhere so security is part of what you're aware of and commemorate and appreciate as you come to take the bread and the cup you say to your soul this is my safety this is my refuge this is my hope for eternity it's not how good a person I am it's not what I am in relation to other people it's nothing at all in me or in anybody else but Jesus the lamb of God and you see that encourages you to come to the

Lord's table even if your faith is weak face even if you find yourself so unworthy of being there take your eyes away from your own unworthiness and as your faith is genuinely faith in Christ and loves Christ for what he did for you and if you say that you find all your hope in Christ alone and nothing of what you are able or unable to do yourself then you place this at the Lord's table because you are not coming there depending on any aspect of your worthiness or the worthiness of your past or of your ancestry or anything else of that kind you are coming and you are saying nothing in my hands I bring simply to thy cross I cling there is security and it's in the blood of Christ Christ our Passover Lamb has been slain and then there is liberty as well and the liberty is liberty especially from sin and from its effect and especially from death as the wages of sin remember back to Egypt and Paul is making this link of course with the

Passover 400 years these people had been in Egypt and for most of these years they were in bondage they were in slavery they were held by the Egyptians as slave laborers they were persecuted and mistreated by the Egyptians to such a great extent and in one dramatic night that was all over what happened on that one night of the Passover and the slaying of the Passover Lamb and the application of its blood to their doorposts and lintels that was the end of their

bondage Egypt was at an end behind them from the moment that they were then ushered through that door and on into the wilderness to walk with God onwards to the promised land and that unleavened emphasis the unleavened bread that they were to eat and as they observed in the years to come the

Passover and the feast of unleavened bread that's so closely attached to it leaven or that little lump of dough is not something simply that symbolizes sin but it really means they are no longer attached to Egypt the bondage is at an end they are no longer captives and so it passes all on into what is signified in the Passover in the Lord's Supper as it connects with the Passover where you find therefore let us celebrate the feast not with the old leaven of malice and evil but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth we've been delivered from the wrath of God we've been delivered from the power of sin as the dominant power in our lives as Christians that's what Romans 6 is all about God has come and in coming into our lives by his spirit he has actually brought a very definite break with sin and the dominance of sin which is why you want to actually fight with sin instead of as previously be dominated by it and not be too bothered about it nobody fights against sin but somebody who's been delivered from its power already because you want to get rid of the vestiges of it the remaining parts of it the remaining aspects of it in your life which itself is confirmation that you know what it is to be delivered from its power as the dominant force in your life

Christ the Passover lamb has been sacrificed for let us therefore celebrate the festival let's come to the Lord's Supper with the celebration that Christ has overcome death another great text in Hebrews which we haven't time to really open up but it's just to refer to it which relates to this as well and it's that text we mentioned part of it already Hebrews chapter 2 and at verse 15 where he took our nature he says there so that he might destroy him that had the power of death that is the devil and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery who are they those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery commentators of different ideas as to what precisely the writer to the Hebrews was mentioning but whatever you can say of it precisely this is at the very heart of it that as human beings even though we find many people that will say to you they're not terribly bothered about death or anything beyond death because they don't believe there's anything beyond death at all nevertheless there is in every human being a fear of death nobody goes to death naturally of their own accord in such a way that has no fear whatsoever in regard to it but for the

[27 : 22] Christian for those who have come to trust in Christ as the Passover lamb whatever things about death may still cause us some concern as to the circumstances of our death and what that might involve death itself has been conquered and we could not have that same attitude to death that we have but for the fact that Christ has died the death we deserve to die we're no longer held in fear of death in bondage wondering if somehow somewhere this terrible thing called death is going to be overcome and vanquished and spoiled and defeated it's happened friends it's happened in the death of Christ and because it's happened in his death all who trust in him have been delivered from the fear of death because it no longer has a hold on their lives liberty and therefore he says cast out this leaven celebrate the festival with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth really accepting the fact and believing the fact of what

Christ has done so there's the Passover lamb and the Lord's supper the Passover redemption and the Lord's supper moving on briefly to the Passover meal and the Lord's supper wasn't enough for Israel to take a lamb of the sheep or the goats put the lamb to death and use its blood on the doorposts they had to eat that lamb they had to roast that lamb in the fire and then eat it they were not to let any of it remain until the morning if any of it was left over they were to burn it in the fire but the point is this they had to actually eat of the Passover lamb and that really is a brilliant illustration for us of what it is to live by faith in Christ because that living relationship you have with Christ is a relationship whereby you actually spiritually partake of the death and the resurrection of Christ it is something to put it in physical language you eat spiritually by faith of the death of Christ or Christ in his death which is why the sacrament of the

Lord's Supper sets this out so graphically so wonderfully it is not that there is bread and a cup with wine set before you as if the Lord is saying look at these and look at how well they represent the Lord's death on the cross and just study it look at it think about it no he says take eat this is my body take this cup share it among yourselves our very eating of these elements and drinking of the element of wine is itself a physical representation of what a believing soul does in feeding spiritually

upon Christ that's why our catechisms and the confession of faith put it in that way that we spiritually not physically but spiritually receive and feed upon Christ crucified and the benefits of his death you see that's why it is such a serious thing not to be at the Lord's table if we should be there you're missing out on something absolutely vital to your spiritual health and nourishment that's not the bread itself or the wine itself it's what you receive of Christ by faith through an obedient observance of the supper that he himself set forth to that very end you're not doing it so that by doing it you'll be saved you're doing it because as already saved you want to grow in your knowledge in your spiritual life in your vitality you want to feed upon Christ in every way that he himself not just in the word preached and read but through this specific ordinance of the

Lord's supper so that's why we so often say to people as I've already mentioned it's not about yourself it's not about the strength of your faith it's not about comparing yourself to others who have maybe been there before you and are further on in the Christian life that you look up to it's not for an elite group of Christians so that you don't actually think of coming to the Lord's table until you've made it and graduated to the level of those elite people you do it as someone who knows the value of Christ's death for yourself who maybe has to complain every day how little you find yourself doing for him or understanding of what he's done for you complaining how small your love is how weak your faith is who knows that every day you're not what you should be well the

[33 : 32] Lord's supper is for such believers it's for such Christians it's for their strengthening it's for their nourishment and of course they ate as travelers as well the Passover meal was eaten ready to travel and the supper the Lord's supper is a supper you partake of knowing that you're on a journey that you're stopping just for a moment and taking this time to observe the Lord's supper to come to the Lord's table to spiritually eat and feed upon him because you need strength for the journey you need more support and building up against temptation and the Lord's supper is one specific means the Lord has given you to do that by take it eat it he said take this cup it's for sinners sinners saved washed by the blood of Christ the Passover

Lamb who has been sacrificed for us if we're hesitant believers but hesitant believers if we're believers but fearful afraid believers but unsure believers listen to the words of William Cowper famous hymn writer man who himself was often beset with mental health issues depression yet this is what he wrote it's called welcome to the table this is the feast of heavenly wine and God invites to sup the juices of the living vine were pressed to fill this cup oh bless the savior you that eat with royal dainties fed not heaven affords a costlier treat for Jesus is the bread the vile the lost he calls to them you trembling souls appear those righteous in their own esteem have no acceptance here approach you poor nor dare refuse the banquet spread for you dear savior this is welcome news then I may venture to if guilt and sin afford a plea and may obtain a place surely the Lord will welcome me and I shall see his face this do in remembrance of him let's pray Lord our God and our father in heaven we thank you this night as we anticipate in obedience observing the Lord's supper that you indeed sent your son into the world on this great mission of redemption that he accomplished all that you gave him to do even to the extent of pouring out his soul unto death we thank you oh Lord our savior for the accomplishment with which you so fully and accomplished salvation for us Lord we thank you for all that is now provided for us by means of your sacrifice help us to honor you by observing what is commemorated in the Lord's supper as your death on the cross help us to come Lord complaining perhaps of our own weakness and yet certain of your strength and especially of your worthiness to receive such unworthy people as we are continue with us now we pray and bless us in the remainder of this week and in the days ahead bless those we anticipate to come to conduct the services we pray that you bless them and make them a blessing to us hear us now we pray for

Jesus sake amen let's sing a final psalm this evening psalm 135 on page 176 psalm 135 on page 176 we're singing verses 8 to 14 he struck down all Egypt's firstborn man and beast alike were slain mighty signs he showed in Egypt frowning Pharaoh and his men down to verse 14 Lord your name endures forever your renown is ever great for the Lord sustains his servants and his folk will vindicate these verses to God's praise peace of God all Egypt's firstborn and beast alike were slain mighty signs heaven a nation

Luke and King Sion All the kings of Canaan's land All were lands he gave to Jacob To his people Israel As the heritage he gave them Lands where they might safely dwell Lord, you name endures forever You bring our lives ever great For the Lord sustains his sermons And his hope will be

gained

I'll go to the main door after the benediction Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ The love of God the Father And the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you Now and evermore Amen Amen