

Remembering Redemption

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 August 2019

Preacher: Andrew Price

[0 : 0 0] Our Father, thank you again for your word. We do pray, Father, that you would help us to put aside distractions and to focus on your word, what it means for us and how we might live in response.

For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, there are certain events which are so significant in our lives that they shape our lives and we remember them because of it.

The obvious one, the obvious event is probably your birth. It was a pretty significant event. It gave you life. It shapes who you are today. And so you remember it each year.

You celebrate it each year, don't you? You get presents and you have cake and you go out and so on. Though I realise the older people get, the less we like to remember it.

But nonetheless, there it is. But it's the same for nations as well. So for America, the day they threw off British rule, which gave them new birth as a nation, was what date?

[1 : 0 4] Independence Day, yeah, but what date? Fourth of July. And so that's what they do. Every year, so significant was this event, they celebrated every Fourth of July with fireworks and parties.

They even make up movies like on the next slide, Independence Day, where Will Smith saves us all from aliens. Only Will can. For us Australians, we have the day, the event or the day when the first fleet arrived.

And did the reverse to America, actually. It brought us under British rule, which is why it's a little bit controversial today. But the date of this event was Australia Day.

26th of January. Yeah, we're so patriotic here. And it has, whatever you think about Australia Day, that event has shaped us as a nation.

And we remember it every year with barbecues, day off and sport. Well, for Israel, the event that gave birth to them as a nation and shaped who they were or are, took place on the 14th of the month of Aviv.

[2 : 1 5] Close to our month, April. This event was God's Passover, where God redeemed Israel from Egypt. And so significant was this event for the life of Israel that it totally changed their calendar.

So at point one in your outlines and verse one in your Bibles. Have a look there. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, this month, that is the month of the Passover, is to be for you literally the beginning of months, the first month of your year.

I know here God is speaking early in that month, before the Passover, before the 10th day, in fact. Actually, verses 1 to 28 are really two speeches, one by God and one by Moses.

So on the next slide, thanks, Emma, there's a little structure for the passage. These speeches are really complementary. They give us the fuller picture of this Passover event.

And both of them, as you'll see, God starts with the Passover in Egypt and then moves to the Passover in future. And then Moses follows suit towards the end of our passage.

- [3 : 30] And so we're going to do a bit of jumping back and forth. But God here begins by saying that the month of this Passover is to be the beginning of months for them. Why?
- Well, because the Passover was God's redemptive act that would bring or begin their new life as God's people. You see, while God regarded them as his people, his firstborn son, they were still slaves in Egypt and didn't really know God all that much.
- They hadn't really started their life with God as his people. But this act of redemption would change that. In fact, way back on the next slide, in chapter 6, verse 6 and 7, God says that he would redeem them with an outstretched arm and mighty acts of judgment.
- And then, notice the last bit, take them to be his people and he their God. You see, this Passover event, which included both judgment for Egypt and salvation for Israel, it was God's redemptive act where he would take them to be his people, where they would begin their new life serving God as his holy nation, his kingdom of priests.
- And so the month of the Passover was now to be the beginning of their year and to remind them of this, that they might serve God for the rest of the year, remembering that he's given them new life as a nation.
- [5 : 03] But what exactly was this Passover in Egypt? Point two. Well, it began with God's provision of a sacrificial substitute, a lamb.
- So look at verses three to seven. God says to Moses, to tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of the month, each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household.
- If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there and you determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with how many people there are.
- Verse five. The animals you choose must be a year old, males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.
- Take care of them until the 14th day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the door frames of the houses where they eat the lambs.
- [6 : 08] I hear God tells them to choose a lamb or a kid from amongst the sheep or the goats. It must be a year old that is fully grown and it must be without defect or blemish.
- Now, our New Testament Jesus bells should start to be ringing in our heads, particularly given our second reading. But notice they are to look after this lamb from the 10th day to the 14th day before killing it.
- And we're not told exactly why they are to look after it, but I suspect it's to help the family identify with it as one of them. That's what pets do, don't they?
- My youngest daughter has been at me for a dog for a number of years now. I finally succumbed and got a rabbit. It's as far as I could stretch.
- And so the next slide is my daughter, Megan, with Ruby the rabbit. And we've, because it's quite cold at the moment, we've put Ruby in the laundry. On the next slide, this is Ruby in the laundry.
- [7 : 11] And it took only two days before our laundry became Ruby's room. She was already part of the family within two days.
- And I suspect that's why they had to take care of this lamb for four days. So it becomes part of the family. For it is about to act as one of the family.
- It's about to be a substitute for the firstborn in the family. And remember, God was about to send this plague, as Sandra reminded us, this 10th plague.

So last week on the next slide, in chapter 11, verse 1, God told Moses that he would send one more plague. And this was the definitive one, because after this one, Pharaoh would let Israel go.

In fact, God has always been working towards this plague ever since chapter 4. So on the next slide, God told Moses to say to Pharaoh, this is what the Lord says, Israel is my firstborn son, and I told you, let my son go, so he may serve me, worship me.

[8 : 20] But you refuse to let him go, so I will kill your firstborn son. You see, God always planned to bring this last plague, the plague of the firstborn.

And the other nine plagues were all leading up to this one, this one that would justly judge Pharaoh and actually release Israel.

Now, lest we think God's judgment here is too harsh, remember what Pharaoh has done to Israel. So on the next slide, as early as chapter 1, verse 22, Pharaoh ordered every baby boy from Israel to be drowned in the Nile.

It was genocide. And then down the bottom there, chapter 2, the Israelites cried out for help because of the ruthless treatment that they were given.

And so just as Pharaoh took God's firstborn son, Israel, mistreating them and murdering them, so God was now going to take Pharaoh's firstborn sons, not just his own actual son, but all the sons of his nation.

[9 : 27] It was a horrific judgment, but it was just. And it happened just as God promised. Once Israel cried out because of the harsh treatment, and by the end, in chapter 12, verse 30, the Egyptians are crying out because the plague had come.

You see, God keeps all his promises, both the promise to judge those who reject him, like Pharaoh, and the promise to save those who trust him, like Israel.

But by providing a sacrificial substitute, God was also teaching Israel that they actually deserved judgment too. Now, there's no mention of their sin in this passage, but the very fact that they needed a substitute to save them from judgment suggests that they deserved it too.

After all, they refused to listen to God through Moses back in chapter 6, just like Pharaoh refused to listen to God through Moses, just like we sometimes refuse to listen to God through the Bible.

And later on, on the next slide, in Joshua chapter 24, we learn that the ancestors, that is those people here in Egypt, used to worship gods in Egypt as well, just like Pharaoh worshipped other gods, just like we sometimes worship other gods, whether it's money or career or relationships.

[11 : 02] All this, though, suggests that they were deserving of judgment too, just like us. And so behind the redemption from slavery in Egypt seems to be also a redemption from sin and judgment.

But the way he saves Israel from judgment is by providing this sacrificial substitute. The lamb whose meat they are now to eat. So verse 8, it says, that same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire along with bitter herbs and bread made without yeast.

Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire with the head, legs and internal organs. Do not leave any of it till morning. If some is left until morning, you must burn it.

And this is how you are to eat it, with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand, eat it in haste for it is the Lord's Passover. Now here, there's a repetition of the word eat.

You know, eat it boiled, eat it in haste and so on. Eating the lamb was a tangible way of showing their connection to it, showing it to identify with it that this lamb was their substitute that would save them from judgment, that would save the firstborn from death, that kind of judgment, but would save the rest of the family from losing the heir, their firstborn son.

[12 : 34] Now, I love eating lamb roasts, but I'm not sure I could go the lamb's brains and internal organs. I don't know about you, but they were to eat it all.

Again, to show their identification with it. Of course, God doesn't want to make them sick, so he does allow leftovers. It's just that they need to be burned the next morning because the lamb is special, it's sacred.

It was their substitute. And while I prefer my lamb with rosemary, they had to have it with bitter herbs. Why? Well, to remind them that their redemption was from bitter slavery.

And so this word bitter on the next slide is used of their time in Egypt. On the next slide, thanks Emma. of their service. That's why they have bitter herbs here.

And they had to eat it in a way that shows their redemption is imminent. You know, first they are to eat the lamb with unleavened bread, not to make a lamb Slovakia wrap, but because there was no time for the yeast to work its way through.

[13 : 37] Second, they are to roast the lamb instead of boil it because all their pots and pans are packed. And third, they were to eat it in haste, verse 11. You know, a cloak tucked in, sandals on, staff in hands, ready to go at any moment.

It's kind of like my kids who eat dinner on the weekend. On the weekend, they're allowed to watch TV and so they kind of eat dinner half sitting on their chair. So as soon as they're finished, they can go back to watching TV at any moment.

Israel was to eat ready to escape Egypt at any moment. The point is they were to eat it in a way that showed this lamb was God's way, God's means to redeem them from their bitter slavery in Egypt.

For this lamb was God's provision of a sacrificial substitute, whose meat they were to eat as a sign of their connection with it and whose blood would now protect them from judgment.

So verse 12, You see, when God passes through Egypt in judgment, He will pass over Israel with salvation.

[15 : 06] Why? Because He will see the blood of the lamb. In fact, in verse 13, did you notice that this blood will also be a sign for you, Israel? That is, the blood shows them that there was a price for their redemption.

You see, the Bible, to redeem something means to buy it back and that means that a price must be paid, a ransom must be given. In the late 1100s, during the English Crusades, King Richard the Lionheart was captured by Leopold V in Austria and to set him free, to redeem him, buy him back, England had to pay a ransom of 150,000 marks, which according to my source was equal to three tons of silver.

Imagine that. It's where we get the phrase a king's ransom from. But for Israel, the ransom for their redemption was the blood of the Lamb. That is, the death of another.

That's what blood symbolizes, their death. And I hope at this point your Jesus New Testament bells are really ringing. But this blood purchased or bought them for God as well.

Remember, the whole purpose of bringing them out of Egypt was so that they may serve and worship God as his holy nation, his kingdom of priests. In fact, that's the picture we're given in Revelation 5.

[16 : 30] And we'll see this idea particularly with the firstborn sons next week where God will say in chapter 13 that they belong to him because he's bought them, redeemed them. But here God is teaching them that the price of this redemption is the death of another.

That's why the blood was a sign for them. And this is what Moses emphasizes. So skip now over to Moses' speech where he also talks about the Passover in Egypt, verse 21.

So verse 21 just on the right hand side of the page. He says here, Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, this is now on the day of Passover, go at once and select the animals for your families, presumably the ones they've already selected, and slaughter the Passover lamb.

Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on top and on both sides of the doorframe. None of you shall go out of the door of your house until morning.

When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your house and strike you down.

[17 : 45] Moses, as I said, is speaking on the day of Passover and again, did you notice the emphasis of blood? It's the blood of the lamb that protects them from judgment as well as purchasing them for God.

I saw this cartoon the other day. It's of two lambs on the next slide reading the Bible and they say, oh, it says here that Passover is a time of celebration including a feast of unleavened bread, bitter herbs and uh-oh.

I thought it was cute. But the point is at the center of God's great act of redemption for Israel was this lamb, the sacrificial substitute whose blood protected them from judgment, purchased them for God.

Of course, this Passover lamb in Exodus was only ever a shadow of the real Passover lamb, Jesus. As John the Baptist declared on the next slide, I think it is, in John chapter 1, look, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Or as we heard in our second reading at the bottom of the screen there, that we were redeemed not with perishable things like silver, even three tons of silver, but with something much greater, the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

[19 : 11] Jesus is, as you know, our sacrificial substitute, the one who dies in our place, who pays the price for our sins so that we can be redeemed.

Not from slavery to Egypt and a bit of life there, but from slavery to sin and an empty way of life here. And it's Jesus' blood that was shed on the cross to protect us from the judgment we deserve.

Not the judgment of our firstborn's death, but the judgment of our eternal death in hell. Jesus is God's ultimate provision of the sacrificial lamb, isn't he?

God's ultimate act of redemption for us. But only if we trust in him. Only if we, like Israel, believe and take shelter under his blood.

So have you done that? Do you believe in Jesus? Trust in him and his death to save you? For us who have, then we are to celebrate and remember this great act of redemption in Christ.

[20 : 19] Just as Israel was to celebrate and remember God's great act of redemption in the Passover. For Israel, it meant re-enacting the Passover in the future. So more briefly now, point three and verse 14.

Here we come back to God's speech as he tells them what to do in the future. He says, verse 14, During this day of the Passover, you are to commemorate for the generations to come.

You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord, a lasting ordinance. For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day, remove the yeast from your houses.

For whoever eats anything with yeast in it, from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. On the first day, hold a sacred assembly, that is, have church, and another one on the seventh day.

And do no work at all on these days except to prepare food for everyone to eat. That is all you may do. Celebrate the festival of unleavened bread because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt.

[21 : 21] Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. In the first month of your new year, you had to eat bread made without yeast from the evening of the 14th day until the evening of the 21st day.

And for seven days, no yeast is to be found in your houses. Anyone, whether foreigner or native born, who eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel.

Eat nothing made with yeast, whether you live, so wherever you live, you must eat unleavened bread. Verse 14 is pretty clear, isn't it? You are to commemorate this day of the Passover.

You are to reenact it so that you can remember it. And to help them, God adds a seven-day festival, which they had no time to do in Egypt, the festival of the unleavened bread.

And so on the next slide is a kind of table of the program or the feast. On the 14th day in the evening, they'd have the Passover meal. And then the next day, they'd get all the yeast out of their homes, go to church, and for the rest of the week, they would eat nothing with yeast in it.

[22 : 30] And then on the 21st day, they would have church again and the festival would end. And this festival was to help them both celebrate and in turn remember, verse 17, that God brought them out of Egypt.

And there's a lot of emphasis here on eating unleavened bread and getting rid of yeast, isn't there? Possibly because God knew that getting rid of yeast would later also symbolize not just their hasty exit, but also symbolize getting rid of unholiness.

Either way, those who ate yeast were to be cut off from the community of Israel. Why? Because they were rejecting the festival. They were rejecting the redemption that the festival symbolized.

And they didn't, they were showing that they didn't want to be part of God's redeemed holy nation. And so if they didn't want to be part of it, then they're cut off from it. But this emphasis on bread is complemented and balanced by Moses' emphasis on the lamb.

So come back to his speech where he talks about the Passover in the future as well, verse 24. Moses says to the elders, obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. When you enter the promised land that the Lord will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony of the Passover.

[23 : 47] And when your children ask you, what does this ceremony mean to you? Then tell them it is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord who passed over the houses of Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.

Then the people bowed down and worshipped and the Israelites did just what the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron. I hear Moses speaks about the Passover in the future but do you notice the focus is now on the lamb and not the bread.

And when the kids ask why, which is what kids often do, isn't it? You know, why this, why that? Why dad? Are you cutting the throat of my pet lamb? You are, you are to answer them, it is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord where God passed over our houses and spared our homes.

You see, they were to reenact the Passover in order to celebrate it and remember it. And so this Passover in the future with its festival was all about remembering God's redemption. And we too are to remember God's greater act of redemption in Christ.

And not by reenacting the Passover meal of course, some churches like to do that but Jesus has actually fulfilled it. When Jesus celebrated the Passover meal for the last time before he was crucified, he had his disciples there and remember he took the unleavened bread and gave it to his disciples and said, this is my body which is given for you.

[25 : 14] Do this in remembrance of me. And when he took the cup he said, this is my blood that is poured out for you. Do this in remembrance of me. Not the lamb, me.

And by saying these things Jesus was saying that he is the true Passover lamb. The one that that meal pointed to. The one who truly takes away the sin of the world.

And so Jesus replaced the Passover meal with himself. And then he created another one to help us remember his death, didn't he? The Lord's Supper. It's interesting that Jesus didn't create the Lord's Supper to remember his miracles or his teaching or even his resurrection.

But he said, do this in remembrance of my death, my body and blood. For this is God's greatest act of redemption. That by the blood of Christ we are protected from judgment and purchased for God.

But the Lord's Supper is one way we can celebrate and remember his death for us. And by remember I mean two things, we can do things to help us remember what we've forgotten but we can also remember things by doing it in an act of remembrance.

[26 : 30] It's the difference between looking up the date of someone's birthday to help you remember because you forgot or showing you remembered by buying them a present in an act of remembrance.

And we can do both things with the Lord's Supper. It reminds us of Christ's death if we've kind of put it out of our minds but the act itself is an act of remembrance where we are showing and celebrating his death for us.

In fact in the Bible it also talks about it being a participation. We don't crucify Christ again as you know and there's nothing special about the bread and the wine. They're just symbols.

It's also why the service often says lift up your hearts and the congregation responds. We lift them to the Lord because he's not down here on the table. He's up there in heaven.

And as we celebrate the Lord's Supper as I said the Bible says we participate in Christ's as though as we lift up our hearts we enjoy afresh the benefits of his blood. We apply them again to ourselves remembering what his death has achieved for us and we are encouraged.

[27 : 43] The Lord's Supper is a great way we can both remember and celebrate this great act of redemption. But there's other ways. So in terms of the festival of the unleavened bread we celebrate it not by getting rid of actual yeast but by getting rid of bad behaviour.

So on the next slide we read from 1 Corinthians chapter 5 where Paul says get rid of the old yeast so that you may be a new unleavened batch as you really are. Why are we already unleavened and holy?

Well for because Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed. He's already bought us for God and therefore we keep the festival of unleavened bread not with the old bread of malice and wickedness but with sincerity and truth.

This is another way how we remember Christ's death for us. God's act of redemption. Of course we can do it in all sorts of other ways. We can read the Bible.

We can come to church even when it's freezing cold. We can sing gospel-centered songs. We can speak to one another after the service. All those things can help us remember and also constitute an act of remembrance.

[28 : 55] The trick is I think not to rush through it all because we live in a busy world don't we? Where it's easy to rush through things and just take them for granted.

Especially if we hear about it regularly. like Christ's death. And so we have to force ourselves to slow down and take time to pause and ponder. Just how extraordinary it is.

Maybe after taking communion tonight, because I realise it's a bit of a rush coming down the front, but why not go back to your seats and instead of talking to the person next to you about what just happened or what so-and-so is wearing or looking at your watch seeing how long we've got to go, why not pause and ponder the extraordinary death of God's son for you and me?

That he would come to earth and die as our substitute when we didn't deserve it. And he did this that we might be moved to do what Israel did at the end.

Verse 27, 28, fall down in worship and obedience to God. God's son and let me finish with the story. Back in November 2017, so not too long ago, there was the worst church shooting in America, in American history.

[30 : 13] I know there's other worst shootings in this one, but this is the worst church shooting. A gunman burst into a small Baptist church, opened fire and killed 26 people in a Texas church. And as he opened fire, this person on the next slide, Peggy Warden, threw herself, used her body as a shield to protect her grandson Zach.

She took the bullets in her back to save him from them. She gave her life as his substitute, dying in his place to save him.

It's pretty extraordinary, isn't it? But imagine for a moment Peggy did that for the shooter. Imagine the police burst in the shooter had just killed 26 people or 25, Peggy's not dead yet, and then Peggy jumps in front of the shooter and takes the bullets in her back for the shooter who didn't deserve it.

And then you'll have just an idea of what Jesus has done for us. We didn't deserve his death for us, but he did it. Ponder that.

That we might remember God's great act of redemption in Christ and be moved to serve him. As we'll sing in our next song, Jesus paid it all, so all to him we owe.

[31 : 45] Let's pray. Our gracious heavenly father, we do thank you so much for this greatest act of redemption through the blood of your one and only son, Jesus Christ. Father, we are so familiar with this event, we can so easily take it for granted.

Help us, we pray, not to do that, but to pause and ponder afresh as we take part in the Lord's Supper, as we read the Bible, as we talk with one another, just how extraordinary it is that you would give your only son to die for us who don't deserve it.

Help us, we pray, that we might be moved to serve him who died for us.

We ask it in his name. Amen.