

“Behold The Lamb of God”

He is Risen! (He is risen indeed!). Happy Easter! I hope you had a great week. I had a great week. I was on spring break. Funny they call it spring break. I think a more accurate name would be, “you have 5 days to catch up on everything you’ve put off all winter long break”. This week I rented a seed slitter and fertilized, seeded and over seeded my yard and of course I worked in my basement. I think I’m all finished now. The drywallers are coming on Tuesday. They were supposed to come Friday and Saturday but they had delivery issues.

I also had a birthday yesterday. Caleb, Bre and Theo came over for dinner with us last night and I met my dad and step mom for lunch yesterday afternoon. 48 years around the sun. I only have 52 more until I reach 100. I want to thank everyone who reached out to me with your kind words and birthday wishes. You are all my family and I love you very much.

Alright, if you have your Bible with you, and I hope you do, please turn to the book of **Exodus**. Today we’re going to start in **chapter 12**. If you don’t have your Bible with you that’s okay. Any text I read today will be on the screens behind me. While you’re turning to **Exodus 12** I want to quickly catch us up where we left off last week.

Over the past 8 weeks we’ve taken a deep look at how God moves in the lives of His people. We see that God sees us, hears our cries to him, knows our pain and suffering and remembers His promises to us. There’s nothing more comforting when we’re hurting than to know that God is with us through the pain. We’ve seen how getting complacent in our lives leads us into captivity. We’ve seen how God will harden our hearts when we continue to desire sinful things so we can open our eyes to the death and destruction that always comes alongside sin. We’ve watched as God shows that He’s completely sovereign over everyone and everything. He’s in control no matter how much we like to believe that we’re in control.

Last week we read about God bringing 3 days of darkness to Egypt to try to break through and get them to repent and listen to Him. But not even darkness can break a heart like Pharaoh's that is already filled with darkness. Sometimes we're all so caught up in who we are that we allow our hearts to go dark towards God and refuse to listen to Him as He calls us to repentance.

Today we'll wrap up our walk through about the first third of the book of **Exodus** in **chapter 12**. We'll read **verses 1 through 13** together.

"1 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, 2 "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. 3 Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. 4 And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, 6 and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

7 "Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. 8 They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. 9 Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. 10 And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. 11 In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover. 12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. 13 The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt."

May God bless the reading of His Holy Word. Will you pray with me? Amen.

God is always moving. He's always intervening in the lives of His people. Even when we can't see it, He's making a way for us to be made whole again.

Let's be really honest with ourselves today. It's easy to lie to others about who we are. It's easy to fool others, but we should never be guilty of lying to ourselves. **Who knows you better than you know yourself?** If we're being really honest with ourselves we have to admit that we know we're broken more than we want to admit. It feels like we fail more often than we find success. We struggle with getting out of bed and being who everyone thinks we're supposed to be. If everyone could hear our thoughts out loud we'd find a hole and crawl into it.

Look I keep saying we and our and what I really mean is I and me. It's just easier if I include you in my description because I don't feel so alone. Maybe you're not like me at all. Maybe you'd be okay with everyone hearing your thoughts. Maybe you're not broken like me. Maybe you don't fail over and over again in your life as you struggle to be who you know God wants you to be.

It's in my most open and honest times that I become the most humbled and thankful for the blood of the Lamb. **It's the blood of the lamb that covers me so that I don't have to face the wrath of God.** **It's the blood of the Lamb that gives me a new start each and every single day.** **It's the blood of the Lamb that marks me as one of God's children.** **It's the blood of the Lamb that can't be washed away that gives me confidence that even when I'm wandering in the wilderness and deserts of my life that no matter what God loves me and He'll provide for me.**

That's what this passage is really all about. The Israelites were captive. They were in bondage. They were slaves and the blood of the Lamb set them free! The blood of the Lamb brought them out of bondage and led them in a daily walk with the Lord. The blood of the Lamb led them toward the promised land. The blood of the Lamb covered them as they walked with God.

The lamb is crucial to the salvation and redemption of God's people. This passage is really broken down into two parts, the lamb itself and the power of the blood of the lamb to save God's people.

Let's start by looking at the lamb in **verses 3 through 6** together, "**3 Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. 4 And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, 6 and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.**"

There are three things in this part of the passage that everyone needs to understand. First, the lamb was to be selected four days before it was to be sacrificed. During the four days of preparation every inch of the lamb would be scrutinized for imperfection.

In the New Testament we read that John the baptist called Jesus the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. When Jesus entered Jerusalem to celebrate Passover he was examined by the Pharisees, Sadducees and even the Roman government prior to giving His life for those He came to save.

Just as the lamb God required in Exodus had to be without spot or blemish, Jesus, the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world had to be without blemish or spot. He had to be sinless.

I've shared this with you many times before but I think it bears repeating now. The word sin is an archery term. It means missing the mark. Jesus never missed the mark, He never sinned. He always did exactly what the Father called Him to do. That's why we can confidently trust in His completed work on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins.

We read in **1 Peter 1:19** *"knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, **19** but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot."*

Ransomed is such an important word. To be ransomed you have to be held hostage or captive. All of us are held hostage, enslaved by sin. Our death is imminent. Our only hope of being life is by the Father paying our ransom. Jesus offered his life in exchange for ours as a payment or ransom for us.

Just as the lamb was slain to set the Israelites free from bondage and slavery, Jesus was slain for our freedom.

The second part of our passage in **Exodus 12** deals with the blood of the lamb. Look with me at **verse 7** and then look at **verses 12 and 13**. **Verse 7**, *"**7** Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it."*

Now look at **verses 12 and 13** with me. *"**12** For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. **13** The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt."*

The first half of our passage dealt with the lamb. Choosing the lamb, examining the lamb, preparing the lamb and sacrificing the lamb. Now the lamb has been slain and we see the power found in the blood of the lamb to save God's people.

Even this part of the passage is broken down into two parts. **The first part is what God called on the Israelites to do and the second part is what God will do.** The Israelites were to take the blood of the lamb and place it on the doorposts and lintel of their homes.

I'm 100% sure that none of the Israelites were worthy of being saved. All of them had failed God again and again. I'm fairly certain that they'd worshipped false gods

while they were in Egypt. I think it's safe to assume that most of them had forgotten about the One true God. Most likely they had taken part in things that they were ashamed of not just once, but again and again. They didn't do anything to save themselves. They struggled to just get by. They'd heard about God from their grandparents but in their lifetime they'd never seen the things that their grandparents described. They doubted, they lost heart, and still God kept them as His people.

Why? What was so special about them? Why would God go to these lengths to free this group of people? They were faithless. They were broken. They were unworthy. They continued to fail again and again and again. And still God spared them. He saved them. He delivered them. He adopted them as sons and daughters and led them to the promised land. He fed them and led them to depend on Him for everything they needed.

Why would God choose them? I believe that God chose them so I could see and believe that He could choose someone like me to save. I'm the worst of the worst. I'm unfaithful. I'm unloving. I'm unforgiving. I break my promises to both men and God. I worship idols that I manufacture in my heart. And still, God loves me. He carries me when I can't walk. He sees things in me that I can't see in myself. He restores me. He gives me strength when I don't know how I can make it through another day. I'm not special. He's special. He's merciful.

I want to be really blunt with you. If you're like me, if you're like the Israelites, if you're faithless, if you fail, if you've messed up more times than you can count, if you've failed to be who you want to be, God chooses you too. He chooses you because in your weakness His greatness is shown. God LOVES YOU. He does.

The story in Exodus is a story of redemption. It's our story in Exodus. It shows God's faithfulness to provide a way to free His people from the bondage of sin and death. **The only thing that separates the Israelites from the wrath of God is the blood of the Lamb. The only thing that separates us from the wrath of God and eternal judgment of God is the blood of the Lamb Jesus Christ.**

When we read **verses 12 and 13** about the wrath of God being poured out on the firstborn of all of Egypt being slain it should be a warning to us all that God's judgment is coming for everyone not covered in the blood of the lamb.

Please let me say this as clearly as I can so anyone who is listening to my voice today will know. **If you aren't covered in the blood of Jesus you will one day face the judgement of God and face the same fate as the Egyptians.**

But there is hope. **Today you can repent of your sins, turn from them, and call out to God and ask Him to forgive you and He will. You will be covered in the blood of the lamb and when the angel of death comes He will pass over you and you will be saved.** When judgement comes, only those covered in the blood of the lamb are saved.

The lamb gave his life so that God's people could be set free. **But if that were the end of the story it wouldn't have the hope that Easter holds.** Jesus was the Lamb of God that gave His life so that we could be given new life. **But if Jesus had remained dead we would have no hope of eternal life with the Father.** Look with me if you will at **John chapter 20 verses 1 through 18.**

On Friday, the lamb was slain. He was placed in a borrowed tomb. And Mary came to the tomb to properly prepare Jesus' body for burial. Let's begin reading in **verse 1 of John 20.** *"1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." 3 So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. 4 Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9 for as yet they did*

not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. 10 Then the disciples went back to their homes.

11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. 13 They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." 14 Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her."

The power of the blood of the lamb isn't in the death alone, but in the life it brings. Jesus demonstrated His power over life and death through the cross. Can you imagine what it would have been like if Mary had gone to the tomb and Jesus would have been dead? Can you imagine the hopelessness we would have felt?

Many men have given their lives for causes they believe in. Only one man gave His life and had the power to raise it up again. Only Jesus has the power over life and death. Only Jesus can offer eternal life. Only Jesus demonstrated his authority over life by living a perfect, sinless life that we can't live. Only Jesus demonstrated His authority over death by dying a death he was not due and being raised after 3 days. Only Jesus demonstrated his authority over eternal life by offering us a reward as children of God we could not earn. Only Jesus. Only Jesus.

But what good does that do anyone if they don't believe? We read in **John 20:8** that it wasn't until the moment that John saw the empty tomb that he finally believed. That's really the point of all of this isn't it? Belief? Trust? Faith?

I can share the good news of the gospel with you day in and day out, but it's not until you put your faith in it that it really changes your life. Until you truly believe that Jesus was the lamb of God who died to take away your sins and that he was raised on the 3rd day and that He is coming again to take you where He is. Until put faith in Christ this day is just another holiday story isn't it?

But when you believe, when your faith becomes reality, your eyes are fully opened and you see this day unlike any other. **Christmas doesn't matter without Easter.** If Jesus came and taught us to be good moral, loving human beings then He died and stayed dead, Christmas wouldn't matter any more than Mother Theresa's birthday, Gandhi's birthday or Buddah's birthday.

All three of those people taught love, sacrifice, patience with mankind and demonstrated self-sacrificing character traits. But when they died, their graves remained occupied and are occupied to this day.

Only Jesus overcame sin and death through the resurrection. Only Jesus offers hope to the hopeless. Only Jesus offers a new life to the most broken, filthy, corrupt, perverse, degenerates on the planet. We read in **2 Corinthians 5:21** "*For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*".

That's the gospel. That's the good news! The good news is not just that the Lamb of God was slain. If that's where the news stopped that would be horrible news. The good news is the Lamb of God was slain to take away the sins of the world, (that's you and me and every single other person who has ever lived or who will ever live), and **HE WAS RAISED ON THE THIRD DAY** demonstrating his authority over death and sin. Jesus alone has the authority to forgive sin and give new life. He proved that He had authority over life and death by laying down His life and taking it up again!

Won't you call on Him today? Won't you place your faith in Him? It's truly the greatest paradox in mankind. It's so easy, but it's so hard. It's easy to trust in God and confess your sins and yet it's so hard to let yourself do it. God loves you.

There are those of us who have confessed and placed our faith in God and still we struggle. We struggle to overcome the sin and darkness in our hearts. We struggle to forgive ourselves even though God has forgiven us. We struggle everyday. We want to find the place in life that we can just rest in the Lord. But we never seem to be able to find rest.

Let me encourage you. The Israelites had the cloud and pillar of fire leading them in the desert. They had manna from heaven and water from rocks. They'd witnessed 10 plagues, the parting of the Red Sea **and still they struggled trusting God.** Paul wrote about their faith in **Hebrews 3 and 4.** Turn with me to the book of **Hebrews.** We'll read all of **chapter 3 and the first two verses of chapter 4.**

Hebrews 3 beginning in **verse 1** reads, "**1** Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, **2** who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. **3** For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. **4** (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) **5** Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, **6** but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope. **7** Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, **8** do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, **9** where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. **10** Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.' **11** As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.'" **12** Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. **13** But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. **14** For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. **15** As it is said, "**Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.**"

16 For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? 17 And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? 19 So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief."

*"4:1 Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. 2 **For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened.**"*

Hard hearts that cling to sin keep us from resting in the Lord. The good news isn't just for those who have never received it. The good news, the gospel is for everyone. The good news for those that have never received it is good news because they hear and understand that they can have new life through the blood of Jesus.

The good news for those of us who have already received it is that even when we fail and fall and sin, God loves us enough to keep us. It's not a surprise to God that you fall. He knew you'd fall before He sent Jesus to die for you.

The real question is are you going to be like the Israelites that Paul is writing about in **Hebrews 3 and 4** who walked with God for 40 years and still hardened their hearts in sin so much that they never received rest? God's rest comes when we stop resisting His Holy Spirit and stop holding onto sin.

Today is resurrection day. Today is a day for new beginnings. Jesus is the One who makes all things new. It's my prayer that anyone who needs a new start, anyone who needs to be forgiven by God, anyone who is struggling with sin will come to Jesus right now, today and call out to Him and receive new life.

We're going to begin a time of response.