



**The Lamb Who Was Slain
Good Friday 2018
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Good Friday, as you know, commemorates the death of the Lord Jesus Christ almost 2,000 years ago, outside the city walls of Jerusalem. It's a somber event, it was a dark event, it was, in many ways, a sad event, yet we commemorate it as Good Friday. We Americans may not be as quick to remember that this all coincided with a high holiday on the Jewish calendar, one of the three pilgrimage feasts in Israel. This, as Luke sets it up in Chapter 22, starts with the words of, "The Passover drew near and the chief priests were seeking how to put him to death." That was all going to come together, the apex of their evil plan, right exactly in correspondence with the Passover feast. Seven verses later Jesus tells Peter and John to "Go and prepare the Passover for us," speaking, of course, of the Apostles and Christ, "that we may eat it." Now if you think about the historic feast, the pilgrimage feast, where everyone came to Jerusalem and they celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread, that's the long name of it, a seven-day festival, that started with the Passover.

It started with a very important meal, an ordered meal, the meal that we know of today as the "Seder." Seder in Hebrew is an ordered meal. Ordered is what it means, a template, a prescribed meal with very specific instructions. Now when you think of that last meal that Jesus ate with his disciples, unfortunately we remember it much differently than we ought to, because we picture it as the Last Supper and we often think about the communion service, what we experience in our day from our New Testament perspective. So you generally think of the unleavened bread and you think of the cup, the cup and the bread. We say, well that's what was going on. And even in the pictures that we often have of this Last Supper, that's often is what's depicted on the table in these paintings and drawings and renderings. But if you go back to really understand what Jesus was saying when he said, "Go prepare the Passover so we can eat it," he wasn't saying go get some unleavened bread and go get some wine so that we can have this last meal, which is hardly a meal at all, and then we can institute something new called the Lord's Supper, the communion service.

Now actually to prepare the Passover meal was quite involved. The end result was a main dish, which was roast lamb. That's what they ate, roast lamb. That was the meal they would eat. It was a meal, actually, that was going to feed them. It was something that was going to be, as it had been prescribed all the way back to Exodus 12, a meal that would feed everyone under that household. Now Exodus 12 prescribes it all for us. And of course, if you know your Bible, you know that is the first introduction to the instructions and the menu for the Passover feast. The Passover, an odd kind of meal. I mean, if you looked at the ingredients it wasn't all that strange in terms of what they were eating but certainly what they did in taking that branch, dipping it in the blood of that lamb that was killed, and putting it around the entrance to their homes in Egypt.

Remember, that's how this all started with Moses giving instructions via God's revelation telling the people that they needed to have this lamb and its blood put on the door post, on the lintel or the crossbeam over the doorway, and you were to spread it on there. Kind of a gross picture of death to put on the doorpost. And it was, as we know from the name that resulted, the Passover, it was so that, as the Bible says in Exodus 12, God's judgment would pass over that home and all those who were in the home would be spared God's judgment. Particularly, at the apex of the ten plagues, which was the death of the first born in that house. The Passover, God would pass over them.

Now, if you think about why God was going to instruct them regarding what to put up on their door, it wasn't because God didn't know the difference between the Israelites and the Egyptians. Surely he

knew the difference between them. It wasn't that the judgment that he was sending out via this angel was somehow needing some kind of visual marker as to who the good guys were and the bad guys were, because as the Bible says from the beginning, when you really get honest about who we are, we're all bad guys.

I mean the Bible has taught us from the very beginning, even before the giving of the Law of Moses, that the truth about God's standards had gone out. They had gone out not only through the prophets and the spokespersons before Moses, but certainly in our own conscience, the law of God was written on our hearts. Even in creation we can see the symmetry and the order and the beauty of it all. We can look at our own hearts and see that we fall short. Much of the Bible up to the point of Exodus 12 had talked about the failure of human beings and all of their sin. As a matter of fact, some of it is some of the worst depictions of mankind in Genesis and Exodus, the kinds of sins that begin to take root in societies and show how corrupt people's hearts actually are.

And so it wasn't that the Egyptians were rotten, terrible sinners and the Israelites were righteous and holy people. They were all sinners. But God said to his people, "Listen, if you would do what I instruct you to do...", which in itself is an acknowledgment of their own sin that they fall short of God's standard. And if you would, in a very strange arrangement in preparing a meal, take the blood from that animal that you are going to kill and you bring that blood to your door post, I will now consider you covered. The Hebrew word in the Old Testament that we translate "atonement" means "to cover." Your sins would be covered. "I will Passover the judgment that you deserve."

Now this was all instituted in Exodus Chapter 12, but it's a theme that runs throughout the Bible in terms of the guilt that we all bear. And if we are to remember that God is a good God and a holy God and a righteous God, just like a judge up in Santa Ana could never be considered a good judge if he let everyone go and treated everyone as though they were just fine. Or even that they somehow, just because they acknowledge they were sinners, they would be forgiven. There was some thing that a judge, any judge, would have to do to maintain order, to maintain his own integrity, to maintain her own goodness and sense of morality. There has to be an honesty about our sin and a punishment and some consequence.

And the Bible says, "The wages of sin is death," which is much more than just physical or biological death, or really a removal of God and all of his blessings from people that deserve that punishment. And the Bible says, I've laid before you right and wrong, righteousness and sin, good and bad, life and death. And of course the problem is and everyone here today can attest to what was going on in the hearts of the Israelites in the 15th century B.C. and that is that we all recognize, if we're honest enough, and hold up the mirror of even just our conscience and certainly God's truth, and we know we deserve God's punishment. But that's what the Passover was all about. God said, "There's a way I will count you as not sinful. There's a way that I will see, if you just acknowledge that sin, and then you take this symbol, this picture of blood and put it on your house, I'll recognize you as forgiven, as covered, as atoned for."

Now if you look at the specific instructions of Exodus Chapter 12, it's a very interesting arrangement that takes place. In Chapter 12 verse 3 it speaks about getting a lamb. It says, "on the 10th day of the month," now this is in the spring. This is the coinciding of the calendar of the Passover with our Easter and Good Friday on that March/April month, Nissan in the Hebrew calendar, on the 10th day you're supposed to go into the fields and you're supposed to get a lamb. I want you to picture what that's like. Go out into your herds and get yourself a lamb. Picture that, would you? Let's picture that real specifically.

(A live lamb is brought out to Pastor Mike on the platform: Here's my lamb right here. Say hello to everybody.)

Go into your herds, get your lamb. You bring it from the herds into your home. This is not what the shepherds and farmers like to do. As a matter of fact, they understood that their herds were to be outside. Their lambs were to be in the flock, in the pen. But here you're supposed to bring on the 10th day of the month that lamb into your home. Your kids would become attached, because you're supposed to keep it all week from the 10th day to the 14th day, a work week if you will. For four or five days you have this lamb in your home. It's running around. Think about your home, if you try to bring a lamb into your household and it runs around in your living room. Day one, it's in the kitchen while you're eating. Day two, day three, day four, your kids are getting so attached to this little lamb. A lamb without blemish, you're supposed to bring a good lamb, a young, good, healthy lamb without spot or blemish. And all that's fine and good but on the 14th day after you get real accustomed to your little pet lamb, the Bible says at sunset, at twilight, you're to kill that lamb.

One thing for Dad to go out into the herds and find a lamb and kill it and bring in dinner. It's another thing for you have kept as a pet, becoming, really, so acquainted with this animal that everyone is used to this little animal scurrying around your home. Now you take that animal at twilight and kill it. I think there's plenty of tears that young little Israelites had as that lamb that had become a part of the family, at least for a week, was now going to be dinner. It was going to provide the meal. But more than that, it was going to provide that blood on the doorpost. "Keep that lamb until the 14th day of the month and kill that lamb at twilight." Then you're going to eat it. Eat that meat.

We're all used to that, right, most of us here, at least. We eat meat, take animals, we eat it. But this was a little different. It's like taking a pet and having that pet become your sustenance. And the Bible says not only do you eat that animal, I want you to eat it with bitter herbs, bitter herbs. So this isn't just to taste good. This was something that was to remind you of bitterness, that word used throughout Exodus was a reminder of the bitter slavery that the children of Israel had. That lamb was to be eaten with those bitter herbs to remember the bitterness of what it is to be enslaved by people, to not have your own way, not to have your own country, not to have your own rules, not to have your freedom, to be a slave.

And then the Bible says, it's not like you just sit around and enjoy a meal, "you're to eat it in haste," tuck your cloak up into your belt, put "your staff in your hand," and get ready to go. Slam that food down because we're leaving. That was a picture that Christ was trying to paint as he, as an observant Jew, 1,478 years after these instructions, was saying, one more time, we're going to celebrate the Passover, we're going to eat that Passover lamb.

That picture was tough. It was tough for those kids back in the 15th century B.C., and the blood itself, almost gruesome and almost gross, was a picture of what it took for God to give a symbol to the people. A symbol, by the way, that would last for 1,400 years as the center of the worship in Israel. In Jerusalem, after the tabernacle, then we had a temple constructed by Solomon, you would have in the center of all that an altar where lambs, like this, were routinely, consistently and systematically killed on the Temple Mount. You would have the head of the household come, this was a very familiar scene, as Leviticus 1 verse 4 says, you're to have that representative of your family put that lamb there before the priest to have his hand placed on the top of the lamb's head and then take that knife. If you look closely at this picture, it's one I'm sure that they saw often. The

priest would have a knife. You can see this even in the villages as representations and altars throughout Old Testament Israel were there, to have that knife then slit across the throat of that animal, to have it bleed out, to have it taken up the steps in Solomon's Temple, at least, and put on a big altar.

I mean it's strange, I assume. It's different. It's odd. I mean you have, in a sense, this smell of roasted meat every time you went to the worship center. But it wasn't just like you had an In-N-Out Burger truck roll into the parking lot of your church, you were watching these animals be slaughtered. You watched these animals bleed and die. You watched the blood, in this case, not be put on doorposts but to be spread with the branch along the base and the sides of the altar. This is odd. This is different. This is something today that we really know nothing of. We don't have much experience with live farm animals. And we certainly don't know what it's like to take a farm animal that we've become acquainted with for a week and have our children sleep with and play with, our wives grow accustomed to, and then dad takes that knife, slits that throat.

A lamb is an easy victim. A lamb, much different than other animals, you corner a dog and try to kill it, it's going to bark. Take most animals and corner them, they're going to scratch, they're going to bite, they're going to howl. But you take a knife to the throat of a lamb, it just stands there. It's silent before it's shearers. That's a picture that became very real all throughout the Old Testament. And while you may think it's barbaric, it's really not something that they understood in some kind of mystical or supernatural way. They understood, as the New Testament makes clear, it's impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin.

There was no pretension in their minds that they were being forgiven because the blood of an animal was being spilled, even when the animal was a prized animal, even if that animal was without blemish or spot. No, they understood a dead animal wasn't really going to do anything for them.

But the prophets continued to speak about one who was coming who was going to solve our sin problem. Isaiah 53 verse 7, said that this coming servant, this suffering servant, would be led to the slaughter like a lamb, not fighting, not kicking, not rebelling, not, as Peter said, even opening his mouth to retaliate, but "like a lamb is silent before it's shearer, so Christ, he didn't even open his mouth." In verse 10 it says, he's going to be a sacrifice. This perfect, coming, suffering servant would be a guilt offering. That's the picture of the Passover. You're guilty, the innocent will suffer so the guilty will go free. God will pass over the judgment that you deserve because the innocent suffers in your place.

Well, when you think about that animal being sacrificed over and over and over and over again, you saw the preparation and you saw the kind of anticipation that one day the Messiah would come, who would be called, as John said in John Chapter 1 verse 29 as he looked up and saw Jesus coming on the horizon and he said, "Behold, look the Lamb of God," not the lamb of a man, "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" Oh, it's clear the blood of animals can't take away your sins, it may feed the priests, but it's never going to resolve and absolve you of your guilt. But there would be one who came, and he would suffer, and he would die, and he would "take away the sins of the world," the Bible says.

It's one thing to watch an animal die. It's one thing even to call Jesus the Lamb of God. But we've got to up our picture of what this really was all about, what was involved. It's one thing for your kids to be attached to a farm animal and have that pet killed on the 14th day of the month so that



God could, in some way, view you as atoned for. We're not talking about an animal. The coming of Christ is about a person, about a baby. Let's get that image real clear in your mind. It's not about having a farm animal. This is a whole new ballgame here, isn't it?

(Pastor Mike to the baby now in his arms: Hey, how are you? Are you doing alright?)

Babies, they're different than animals. It's one thing to love a pet, it's another thing for you to look in the eyes of your own child, isn't it? And think to yourself that a child, somehow, could solve a problem that we have with God? I mean, think through what the Bible actually says. Our atonement was provided because God, who calls himself a father, sent the second person of the Godhead who he calls his son, and he said, "I loved you so much in your sin, I'm going to send my own son, I'm going to render him a guilt offering." Isaiah 53 goes on to say, "And I was even going to be pleased to crush him, putting him to death, so that by his death he might justify many." "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son." And in that picture of a son, he keeps telling us throughout the Gospels. At one point in a miraculous scene as Jesus is there being baptized, a voice from heaven says, "This is my beloved son. In him I am well pleased." Of course he was well pleased. Everything about him, his life was the perfect human life. Growing up from a child, as the Bible says in Luke 2 verse 40, "He became strong, he was filled with wisdom," here's the phrase that should catch you, "and the favor of God was upon him." The Father from heaven watching perfect humanity, which is the encasement of deity. Growing up, as every baby ought to, growing up as every kid should, responding as every pre-teen should, living his teenage life as every teenager ought to, becoming an adult and living an adult life exactly as God intended humanity to be lived and that, God says, "I just love it. Every stage of this life is exactly what human beings should be."

Philippians says that this baby was perfect because this baby was God, "though he was in the form of God, he didn't regard equality with God to be a thing to be grasped, but he emptied himself, by taking the form of a bond servant, and being found and born in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a human being, he humbled himself." He didn't have to leave that glory but he did. And he lived a perfect life "becoming obedient to the point of death," the Bible says, "even death on a cross."

It's one thing to watch a lamb be slaughtered on the Temple Mount. It was a complete, a radically different thing, to see the perfect Son of God be crucified because of our sins. To imagine the Father watching his own Son, not be quickly killed, but to have him be tortured for hours one afternoon.

(Pastor Mike to the baby in his arms: You've had enough of me? Have you? We've had enough. You want me put you down? You do don't you. I'll let you go. Ready? Here comes Miss Ruth.)

To watch the Son of God die on a cross is one thing from our perspective, imagine it from God's perspective. To say, "I love people so much in their own sin," as Romans 5:8 says, "that though they're yet sinners, I'm going to send Christ to die," and Christ willingly in the garden, as we looked at last Good Friday, say, "I'm willing to drink the cup of wrath so that they can drink the cup of blessing." What an amazing reality that took place on that cross.

It's impossible for the blood of bulls and goats or lambs to take away any sin but, several verses later, six verses later, it says, the opposite of being a sinner is to be made holy, to have our sins taken away, is to make us judicially and legally holy. Well, we have been made holy. If we're Christians trusting in Christ, which starts with recognizing our sin and needing that atonement to say, "Yes, the offering of the body of Christ on our behalf has made us right before the living God.



A man couldn't do that. One man could die for one man. We need the infinite worth of the infinite God with perfection to be provided in the person of Christ. That's why you and any detraction from the deity of Christ cannot provide the adequate solution for sin. But the Bible says it wasn't a lamb that died for us, it was the Son of God who died for us.

As it's put so poignantly in First Corinthians 5, tying together the Old Testament Passover to the New Testament death of Christ, our Passover lamb, Jesus Christ, has been sacrificed. And, of course, as Hebrews tries to make over and over the emphasis in the Bible, that the repeating of that sacrifice of an animal over and over again, all that did was remind us of our sin problem. But we only needed Christ to die once, once and for all. As Peter put it, "The just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."

That lamb theme goes all the way from the beginning of the Bible, certainly from Exodus Chapter 12, all the way to the end of the Bible, the Book of Revelation is filled with these lamb images. At one point, Chapters 4 and 5, we have a picture of the scene in heaven, which right now is going on, that's the picture in Revelation and here's the kind of songs they're singing right now. "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain." Willingly, like an animal led before the one who's going to slaughter that animal, willing, not even opening his mouth in retaliation, say, "I'm willing to die for them." The love of the Father sends him, the love of Christ makes him willing to say, "not my will but yours be done."

And look at these words. He's worthy to be receiving power. That's from who? From everyone. Everyone in heaven, everyone on earth. Your power, your energy, your strength, your creativity, all of that should be deserving to the one who took your sin away. To receive wealth? All my money is his. Wisdom? Every good thought, every straight idea, every intellectual, creative thing that I can think of, it all belongs to him. Might, honor, glory, and blessing, all of these things are due and worthy of God. If we understand that God has sent his Son, Christ, he is the focal point of our redemption, it's something that should make us stop on a Good Friday and say, this is deserving of everything in my life. We celebrate every Good Friday the Lord's Supper, but it wasn't the supper that was eaten by Christ on that Thursday night before his crucifixion. That was the Passover meal. What happened there was the production of a meal with the main course being lamb, it was roast lamb, that's what took place, but we're not celebrating that. This is a new kind of meal. It's a new kind of meal because the main course is missing. As Paul said when he was speaking of the Lord's Supper, he said our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed. Christ is the lamb, "the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." The bread, now, that was part of it, the unleavened bread, and the cup, certainly now are to remind us of the lamb that has been slain. His body has been broken, his blood has been shed.

We only remember that. We don't have to bring a lamb into this, we don't even have to think about the animal sacrifices any more, we think of the real sacrifice that provided my holiness, and we eat the bread and we drink the cup in remembrance of that death. I love the fact that he could have added anything in the Lord's Supper, he just stuck with those two, a picture of my body, a picture of my blood. No bitter herbs anymore, I love that. Something that should refresh our hearts every time we take the Lord's Supper, "There is therefore no condemnation for those in Christ," Romans Chapter 8 verse 1. Everything else could be going wrong in your health, your finances, your relationships, but you can sit here tonight and partake in the Lord's Supper knowing there's no lamb to eat tonight. This is just a representative meal of the body and blood of Christ. And there's no bitterness between me and God. The bitter slavery of sin is over. Oh, you may struggle with it in your fallen humanity but you're free from its power. What does that mean? That means all the sin



that I've ever committed, it's all been pinned to the cross, it's all been paid for. "The wages of sin is death." Christ suffered death for me. "God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in him I might become the righteousness of God." The bitterness of my conscription to sin is over.

There is one more thing, remember, that they were to do, they were to eat this in haste. Well, there are really two audiences when we think about that. If you put your trust in Christ, the one book that focuses all on the ceremonies of the Old Testament says, when it comes to haste versus rest, remember this: if you're a Christian, you live your Christian life at rest. It doesn't mean we don't work, we don't struggle, we don't make every effort to add to our faith. It just means this, when it comes to being right with God, we know our rest, it's done, it's finished. There's rest in place of haste.

If you're not a Christian, you don't know what it's like to truly trust in the finished work of Christ, if you're like a lot of people still trying to do something to gain God's favor, you haven't trusted in the grace of the Gospel, then the Bible would say, you need to eat this meal in haste, you need to run to the cross. The book of Hebrews, more than any other book in the New Testament, that speaks of these issues of the sacrificial system, the temple, the priesthood, the Sabbath, all of these things are reminders to us that if you are not there yet and seeing the fulfillment of all of those in your relationship with the living God, then what you need to do is run.

Today, if you'd hear his voice, the writer of Hebrews repeatedly says, don't harden your heart. Respond today. Make sure you leave this building, matter of fact, before these elements or even passed, that you say, "I am right with the living God." It starts with admitting your sin. No one is going to take a basin full of blood and put it on their doorposts unless they say, "I have a sin problem." It starts with that.

It's turning from that sin in my heart and saying I repent of it and now it's trusting in the finished payment for that sin. Should you eat this meal in haste? Well, right now there should be some urgency in your heart if you know you're not right with God. Even if you doubt that you're right with God, get it right tonight. And if you are right with God, then we eat this in great peace. We've entered into our Sabbath rest, the Bible say. There's no more urgency as it relates to my getting right with the living God. I'm at rest with my maker.

We're going to have the modified Passover meal, which just means we're going to take the bread and drink the cup. May I ask the ushers to come down the aisles right now to pass those. If you've done this before with us you know how this works. I want you to spend some time talking to God, keep one eye open though as those elements come your way. Take that bread and take that cup. And if you just hang onto those as you speak to God, Joseph and his team are going to play. I just want you to get in sync with God right now.

If you're not a Christian, right now is the time. Repent of your sins. Put your trust in Christ. Tell Christ you're a sinner and you need to be right with him. And today settle your account with the living God and then you're welcome to participate with us. Take that bread, take that cup, hang onto that, talk with God, and in about four minutes I'm going to come right back up here and we're gonna take these elements together.

Two sides to this response to the Gospel. One focuses is on the sin problem, the other one focuses on sin solution. Several words as it relates to the sin problem, words like "confession." You hear a lot of apologies today, people trying to make apologies that are terrible apologies. You know what

I'm talking about? You've probably received a few of those. "I'm sorry if I made you feel bad." Right? "I'm sorry you were offended by that." "I feel bad that all happened." It's not a confession. Confession is a great compound word in the Greek New Testament "homologeō." "Homo" is "same." "Logeo" is "to speak." It's for you to speak the same thing about your sin that God says about your sin. And we don't even like reading passages about what God says about sin, but if you were to read passages about what God says about sin, you'd see big words, words like an "abomination," words like "transgression," words like, "He was grieved over our sin." So many great words that let us see God's..., I mean, I hate to say this, it is not a very accurate theological word, but his visceral reaction to the sin in our lives. Confession is to look at that and say, "that's true, my sin is an abomination, my sin is a transgression, my sin is iniquity, my sin is a blot, it is a stain.

Another good word as it relates to sin is that word "repentance." To look at that sin and say, "This is not acceptable before God. I'd like to please and love God. That means I need to turn from that." "Metanoia." It's taken a real beating, that Greek word, in modern theology. A lot of people try to turn that word into something it's not. They try to make it a synonym with just affirming facts about Jesus, that's not what the word means. Metanoia is used contextually, just like in the Old Testament, it's equivalent words, Azub in Hebrew and [00:30:04] Shub. Azub and Shub and they give that sense of saying, I repudiate that, I turned from that. Some of those words are used in Ruth, a little book we'll read in our Daily Bible Reading this week in the Old Testament, it talks about forsaking and clinging. I'm moving away from this. I love you enough to relinquish the things that you're against and cling to the things that you're for. Repentance.

All of that is a focus on the problem of sin and then the other side of the response to the Gospel is these positive statements about God's solution to sin and how I respond to that. The words often translated as "faith," which is, again, talk about taking a beating, this time not from the theological academy but just from the man on the street. Faith to them means believing something you know is not true. That's what people think faith is. But faith is putting my confidence in something, putting my trust in something.

A lot of old illustrations, you probably heard some of them, but if you were to lay in a hammock, you're trusting that the cords on each end of that tied to those two trees that will hold you up, you put your faith in it. You step into a plane and you see the pilot and the co-pilot, you walk by, you say, "Hey, how are you doing?" You trust that they know what they're doing, that they're able to take you from point A to point B. You trust as you sit in that seat that the wings that hang off the fuselage of that plane have the ability to get you where you need to go safely. You put your trust in something, your confidence in something.

Even love, as it relates to the solution to sin, God says you are to love him with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. I put my confidence in Christ's finished work, that the death on a cross solved my problem, and that now I'm going to love you, which means I'm willing now, in relation to my life, as I look about it, it's going to be lived for you. There are a lot of people who want to sign an insurance policy and hope they get their spiritual ticket to their spiritual Disneyland in the sky and they think they can pray a prayer, walk an aisle, raise a hand, throw a pine cone in a fire and somehow have fire insurance. And God said, "You have to love me. If you love me you'll keep my commandments. If you love me you'll walk with me."

John kept saying in his epistles, if you love him you'll seek to walk in the manner that he walked. That's why Christians are different. It's not because we're trying to earn our place in God's family,



but because we've seen the problem of sin and responded biblically to that, confession, repentance. We've looked at the solution to sin and we've said, "Yes, I trust that. I love you for doing that."

The power of the illustration tonight is that if killing an animal is some kind of, you know, breathless reality to you, having God kill his own Son is unthinkable. It's profound. And for us to stop tonight and say, "Yeah, I need to, in terms of all that is right and appropriate in response to that, I repent, I confess, I trust, I love. I hope tonight that's where you are with the living God and the Lamb of God. And if you are then I invite you in this modified Passover meal, knowing our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed, to eat with great thanksgiving this bread and drink this cup. Let's do that together now.

God, what an amazing thing just to think historically that we are participating on the other side of the world 2,000 years later in some modified form of a Jewish high holiday, this truncated Passover meal, which isn't a meal at all. It's basically just a taste of something that gives us that tactile experience of the tangible body of Christ that was really in time and space crucified on a cross as the target of your just retribution for sin. And to drink this cup that reminds us of the blood of Jesus Christ that just flowed down his back and from his side and off of his brow. But that bloody death was the kind of sacrifice we needed to ever be considered righteous in your eyes.

Oh, the moderns with all their neat and plastic theology want to tell us that's a barbaric way to see God. And yet we recognize that you are so holy that your response to sin is so much worse than we could ever imagine. And yet your love has sent your own son to fulfill all righteousness that we might be considered clean.

Though our sins be as scarlet and many of us in the pangs of just self-reflection as we think of our own sin have felt it tonight. We're so grateful because of Christ they can be white as snow. Cleanse us tonight as we confess and repent of our sins and trust in Christ and choose to love him right now.

In his name we pray, Amen.