



Prelude to the Cross-Part 2
The Picture in the Passover
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Well I heard that they had their CMT Country Music Awards this week. Yes, I heard they had those. Now you know you're a city boy when you have to look up online what CMT stands for. I kept seeing that, CMT, CMT, what is that? I looked it up, of course, it means Country Music Television. And I knew I was even more of a city boy when I didn't even know there was something called Country Music Television. I guess it's out there somewhere buried in the lineup I have on cable but I didn't know that. Now it's hard for me sometimes I get up here on the platform and revealed to you that I don't know a lot about sports and I feel bad about that sometimes revealing that, but I think I'm in pretty good company here in South County and Southern California to not know much about country music. I assume I'm in fairly good company. I know some of you are going to write me and you know all about it. You don't have to write me, we already know who you are, you few people here in our church, so we get that.

But I guess it's that kind of a built-in condescension you get living in suburbia like we do and hearing all the "you know you're a redneck when..." jokes that you grew up on. But in reality you realize that they're probably laughing at us, really from a position of majority. Now I'd heard this before but I looked it up and found actually a reputable survey, it was dated from 2013, not too old, and they actually substantiated that country music as a genre is the number one music preferred genre in our country. So, you know, they really probably see us as the weirdos. And I recognize that and humbly I want to acknowledge that and also knowing theologically, as it came across my mind this week, that they actually have some advantages. See, the country boy, the Christian country boy and country girl, they're going to get to the eternal state with some advantages that you and I don't have. You see, one thing they'll bring into eternity is an experience with a fundamental biblical analogy. One that's not completely lost on us but in large part they will have an appreciation that we don't have, a moniker, appellation, a title, that is used in Scripture particularly in that heavenly state, that heavenly picture, that is really a fundamental expression of Christology in the Bible, certainly in heaven. Let me put it this way. In the book of Revelation alone, this moniker, this title is used of Christ 29 times, almost 30 times you have this. And it reveals something about Christ that they'll have had some hands-on experience, at least knowing about in their experience in this earthly life. And I want to turn you, just to show you, before we ever get to Luke 22 today, just what's going on in the heavenly realms when the curtain is peeled back, and here is John trying to express to us what he sees in Revelation Chapter 5. So turn there real quickly, just a little aside before we get to our text this morning, and see what's going on in this state.

Now this, as you know, is a bizarre description because in our earthly, finite view of things this is a view of something that goes beyond description. And so we're kind of doing our best with these symbols and all the rest. But you'll see this word and the word I'm talking about, we'll find it here in our passage in Revelation Chapter 5 verse 6. It's the word "lamb." Lamb.

Take a look at it. Let's start with verse 6. It's weird right out of the gate. "Between the throne," and we get that part, "and the four living creatures." Huh? Four living creatures. Yeah. Well, you've read in the book of Ezekiel, perhaps, we're introduced to these four living creatures and they're really weird. That's pretty much what you can say about them. We're not sure what we're dealing with there, probably some super high-ranking angelic beings of some kind, set apart. Nevertheless, they're bizarrely described, both in Ezekiel and Revelation. Nevertheless, they're there, "among the elders," which there are 24 of them we're about to learn. Who are they? I was going say, your guess

is as good as mine, maybe my guess is a little better than yours. But nevertheless we don't really know exactly who they are. Representatives, I assume, of the earthly leadership of both Old and New Testament. Whatever, I mean, that's not the point. What comes next is among all of that, the throne, the living creatures, the elders, you see a lamb. Now you read that word in English, lamb, but it's a diminutive form of a Greek word for sheep. It's like a diminutive form, like a little lamb, a little lamb. Right?

I mean you wouldn't read it like that but that's what you're seeing in your mind's eye, a little fluffy, little lamb. That is the word. And then you see it, like in an anthropomorphized term like, he's standing, this "lamb is standing." And then you know we're talking about Christ here. Right? And certainly it makes it clear here, "as though it had been slain," like a lamb that had died. Now, it says, "with seven horns." Now the city boy had to look this up, that not all lambs have horns. Some don't, some do, whatever. I learned more than I ever wanted to know about that this week. But there they are, these lambs, that some have horns and some don't, but this one... I couldn't find one on the Internet that had seven horns. Right? So this is odd. Seven horns. Horns, of course, are a sign of strength, so something beyond a lamb that is just a little lamb. Now you've got some kind of lamb with horns, that's a sign of strength.

And then you have seven, which of course, I don't want to be a numerologist or anything, but you see throughout the book of Revelation this sense of seven, completeness, the fullness, like just meaning in a perfect sense, so you have strength, this horn, this power, being a perfect kind of power, "with seven eyes." I guarantee you I couldn't find that on the Internet either, a seven-eyed lamb, which gets really weird, "which are the seven spirits of God." People in church history have struggled with the book of Revelation. "What? Seven spirits of God? I thought that there was like the one spirit, the Holy Spirit."

Well, eyes are used for perception. Right? We learn and gain knowledge and data and information through the photons of our eyeballs and all the rest. But it's a window of data, perception, and these seven eyes that this lamb has are the seven spirits of God, which is this picture, I believe, of the Spirit but in its perfection. These eyes are the spirit of God that, look at the rest of this, are "sent out into all the earth." So, whatever power and wisdom and perception we have in the Spirit in its perfect form, the perfect power of the Spirit and all of its wisdom, is resident in this little lamb. Little lamb.

And this lamb that's standing up like a human being, "Went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne." Now, we didn't set it up with the first five verses, but there is a scroll, it's got all the future information that's going to be revealed about the end of time, it's got seals in it which, when you unroll it, you can read part of it, but then you've got to break a seal. It's got seven seals in it. No one's worthy to open it up and read it, but he is. He takes it right out of the hand of the one who sits on the throne and it says, "When he took that scroll," from the hand of him who sits on the throne, verse 8, "the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before," there's our word again, "the Lamb." I mean, think about this, a lamb, that's the picture of this powerful one.

"Now each holding a harp, golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." You want to see yourself in this passage, by the way, there it is. If you came from a Catholic background we're not talking about people canonized by cardinals or popes. These are any Christians, real Christians, praying to God in the midst of all this. There are your prayers coming before God and the Lamb is at the center of all this, he takes this scroll, he's opening it up so he can tell John to tell us all the stuff that's going to happen.

Everyone's falling down now before him and they start singing, verse 9. "They sang a song. 'Worthy are you to take the scroll and open its seals, for you were slain.'" OK, so this is kind of morbid. An animal that was killed, "and by your blood you ransomed people for God," you bought them, you purchased them, you redeemed them, "from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God." So now they have full access to God. They're interacting with God. They're royal and regal citizens and "they will reign on the earth. "And then I looked and I heard around the throne the living creatures, the elders, the voice of many angels," how many, "numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands," that's a way to say a whole lot. Verse 12, "Saying with a loud voice," check this, "worthy is the Lamb." Baah, baah... I'm not good at impressions but you get the idea. Lamb, baah, baah, a lamb, a farm animal. Worthy is this Lamb who was slain."

Look at these words. Looks a lot like Daniel 7, "to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." Sounds like worship, doesn't it? Yeah, they are worshipping. "And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them." Here's John looking in this scene that, really, all through time, I know they're not now, but from Mussolini to your grandmother, someday every knee's going to bow, every tongue confess, forehead to the ground, confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord. They're going to worship the Lamb, the one that was slain, whose blood was some kind of effectual purchasing power.

And everyone, everyone saying to him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, a farm animal, "be blessing and honor and glory and might," not just now, "for ever and ever! And the four living creatures..." Here's a transliterated Greek word which means "right on," "yes, that's true," Amen. They said, "That's right." "Amen!," and the elders fell down and they worshiped." At the center of worship in heaven as the curtain is peeled back and you see what's going on, before we get the end time stuff laid out for us, here you have Christ depicted as a lamb that was slaughtered bloodied and his blood was spilled in some effectual purchase, some kind of transaction. Almost 30 times you have the picture of a lamb.

Now, I say the country boys might have some experience with lambs. Right? I have to rent one for a few hours on a Friday afternoon to give you some kind of illustration on Good Friday, smile if you were here on Good Friday. Right? I mean, I don't have much experience with this. I certainly haven't killed one. If you want to talk about people who can fully appreciate this, I guess you've got to go back to Old Testament times, where these animals were killed.

A lot of times it was the priest who killed them but there was one festival every single year where the head of every household was to take a lamb and take a knife across the throat of that lamb and kill it and spill its blood. That's called the Passover. And Jesus had been celebrating the Passover his whole life. As a matter of fact, the first time we're introduced to Christ interacting, we see him talking to people in Jerusalem, it was when he was 12, we studied it long time ago in the early part of Luke. He is celebrating the Passover as a 12-year-old. We have one more celebration of the Passover in Luke Chapter 22, which is all about families killing a lamb and that blood being a picture of something that Jesus is now going to parlay into something you know of as the Lord's Supper. More on that next week.

Now, I did something risky here. I took a passage that all goes together in terms of Jesus setting up the Passover and then instituting the Lord's Supper, and I broke it in half and I said let's just start with the first part of this today. Let's just deal with Luke 22 versus 7 through 13, and let's just deal with the Passover and what's happening in this passage. Because the historical foundation for the Lord's Supper which, Lord willing, we'll deal with next week, is the Passover.

And I think to appreciate what's going on in heaven right now, and to appreciate one of the most frequently used analogies in Scripture about Jesus Christ, you want to know Christ, you want to appreciate Christ, you like to worship Christ, you better know what this lamb thing is all about. And the centerpiece of the Passover is the lamb. Look at it with me, Luke Chapter 22, I'm going to read verses 7 through 13, that will be our text for the morning. I know it splits up the passage but I just want to think historically, make sure no one leaves this building today without thinking clearly about the Passover.

This will be the last celebration of the Passover before the veil, which is the curtain separating the holy place and the Holy of Holies, was torn from top to bottom, which by the way, to use the word from Hebrews, made all these festivals obsolete. This was the last authenticated, prescribed celebration of the Passover. And Jesus said, I desperately desire to eat this Passover with you. He's going to do this one last time because there is only one more valid celebration of the Passover. He's about to be betrayed that night. He's about to be crucified the next day. It's Thursday and this is what takes place.

Luke Chapter 22, let me read for you from the English Standard Version beginning in verse 7. "Then came the day of the Unleavened Bread." Now we set up with that in verse 1, remember that? We talked a little bit about that last time. "On which the Passover Lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover for us that we may eat it.'" We're going to kill this lamb, we're going to roast it and we're going to eat it. And they said, "Well, you know, it's pilgrimage time, it's the feast here in Jerusalem. You know, we've already told all these people that the foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests, we have nowhere to lay our heads, we don't own any real estate here in Jerusalem. Where are we going to do that?" "Where will you have us prepare it?"

"And he said, 'Behold when you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you.'" Middle of verse 10. "Follow him into the house that he enters and tell the master of the house. 'The teacher says to you, where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' And he will show you a large upper room, furnished; prepare it there. And they went and they found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover."

Jesus lived under the law of God, which means both the moral law and the ceremonial law of God. He kept it from the time, I mean, he has his parents taking him to the Temple Mount when he was a baby to have him circumcised, to have the purchase of redemptive sacrifice that was there at the beginning of his life, all the way through the family taking him to Passover when he was 12. Every year, it says, he went up to Jerusalem for the Passover with his family. Everything.

I know you think he broke the Sabbath. He didn't break the Sabbath. Matter of fact, there was nothing in the Sabbath about not taking heads of grains and rolling them in your hands and eating when they were hungry. That's not the prescription of the Old Testament, he kept all the laws, all of them. When he healed someone of leprosy he said, "Go to the priest, show yourself to the priest, take the sacrifice prescribed by Moses, and do it." And he's keeping the Passover according to the Mosaic Law. He's fulfilling every ceremonial law of the Old Testament. And it will be the last time it's required. The last time under Judaism in Israel and the laws of Moses, he will keep this before that ceremony becomes obsolete and he replaces it with a very pared down, simplified ordinance that we call the Lord's Supper. More on that next time.

But today, let's just look at verses 7 and 8 for starters and think through what's going on. The Feast

of Unleavened Bread and the Passover, a Passover lamb that had to be sacrificed, he says, "Peter, John, let's go do it, go and prepare it, let's eat it, let's do this thing, this memorial meal." To learn about that we've got to go back and our Bibles to Exodus 12. So let's leave Luke 22 and let's get back into the historical picture of Exodus Chapter 12. If you know any chapters from Exodus, hopefully you know Chapter 20, Ten Commandments, Chapter 12, The Passover.

To get some context go back in your mind to the 21st century B.C., about 500 years or so before this, you had Abraham given a promise that God would make a nation through him. You're going to have descendants, you're going to have a lot of people. It seems to get off to a slow start in Genesis because from the time we have that in Genesis 12, reiterated in Chapter 15, again in Chapter 17, you have the story of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and it ends with a lot of chapters on Joseph.

You know that Joseph, not liked by his brothers, was sent, really, out into the desert and he ends up getting betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery, he goes to Egypt, you know the story, he ends up getting thrown in jail, falsely accused. He rises to power and ends up being used, as we quoted last week from Genesis 50, by God in something that was meant for evil in his life, he turned out being the pawn in God's big plan to be used to save Israel from the famine in Israel because he saved all that grain and he was able to dispense it to his own brothers when they were reunited. They were there at the end of Genesis as a family in Goshen and in Egypt.

Then between Genesis 50 and Exodus Chapter 1, there's a gap. There's a gap of 400 years and in 400 years, you know what they're having? Baby showers, lots of baby showers, they're having a lot of kids, and they're growing and growing and growing and growing. And you know what happens? When we get to the front of Exodus, living in Egypt, the Egyptians we're a little bit skittish about this growing group of people, they were strong, they were, you know, growing in terms of numbers, they were afraid of a coup, they were afraid of an overthrow, they were afraid of rebellion. So they enslaved them. They tightened the thumbscrews down on them and they became slaves and they made it harder and harder for them to do their work.

Moses tries to rise up as a child within Pharaoh's household and deliver them. That all falls apart as he kills someone. Remember that? And then he heads out into the desert of Midian for 40 years, he marries a priest's daughter out there, and he's out there just saying, "Fine then, forget it, that part of my life has gone." At 80 years old, God appears to him in the burning bush, he says to "get back to Egypt and get out there, speak to Pharaoh and have him let my people go."

And you know the answer was, "No! I'm not going to let your people go." Moses says, "Yeah, you got to do it, God says you've got to do it, and if you don't do it you're going to be in big trouble." They were going to be in big trouble. What was the big trouble? Something called the plagues. And all of a sudden you have plagues. And what do you have? You have the water turns into blood, that messes things up for the day and for longer than that. Not good. And then you get the frogs come next. "Are you going to let my people go?" Pharaoh says, "No!" Moses says, "Well, if you don't want to do that, then you're going to get frogs." Out of the frogs then you've got the lice and that was not good. Then after the lice, you had the flies, you had the disease in the cattle, you had the hail, you had the locusts, you had the darkness, you had all of these plagues that proceeded one after the next.

And Pharaoh kept hardening in his heart. And God says, "I'm going to harden Pharaoh's heart as well and, not only that, we're going to make it very clear that when you leave this place everyone will know you're God's people and when you speak, Moses, everyone is going to know you are speaking God's word." So, as a prophet, he's validated by all these miraculous signs, most

importantly, the plagues that took place. And finally in one last plague, the 10th plague, he says, "Now, they're going to let you go this time, because I'm going to go through Egypt, these rebellious people worshipping all these false gods, they've had all the light of the God of Israel through the people of Israel. They refused, they hardened their hearts, I am now going to punish all of them. Everyone, man, beast, everyone else, the first born in their household is going to die.

I could kill them all, but I'm not going to kill them all. They're going to get a taste of their rebellion by the punishment of having to weep over the first born in their home." Harsh? Sure. Yeah, it's harsh. But it's a just, holy God punishing sinful people because of their sins. "The wages of sin is death." That's been the rule from the beginning and God says, "Listen, you're sinners too, you Israelites, but I'm going to give you an out."

Here's how it's described, Exodus Chapter 12 verse 1. Let's take a look at this. Let's read it. Think about what's going on, when this was a prescription and 1,440 years later we still have this going on in the first century in the time of Christ. Christ is, in honor of this passage, doing what we find him doing in Luke 22. It's the last prescribed celebration of the Passover.

Exodus 12:1. "The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, 'This month shall be for you the beginning of months.'" "Abib." Abib in Hebrew ends up being, which is part of the ripening of the harvest, it's in the spring. Later it is called Nisan and he says, "This month will be the beginning of the month for you, the beginning of the year for you." Now, you got the civil year starts there, but this is going to be the beginning of the religious year, this is important for you and it will be when you start keeping your calendar at this point in the spring.

"Tell the congregation of Israel on the 10th day of that month, every man shall take a lamb," there is our word, "according to their father's houses, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small," then you don't have to do it. No. You got to do it. Everyone's got to do it, pool your money together. "Then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each man can eat and you shall make your count for the lamb." Everyone's got to do this. Everyone. I don't care how poor you are, get together and everyone can get one lamb and you've got to do this. "Your lambs should be," verse 5, "without blemish, a year old."

Now, I can kind of fudge a bit on Good Friday because I tried to get a lamb I could actually handle. That little lamb that I held there, you thought it was a year old? No way. I got a year-old one and I said, I can't handle that year-old lamb. It's too much. When they're a year old, they're full grown, they're healthy, that's the prime of their youth, the prime of their strength when they're a year old. So I got a little, you know, little brother of the year old. I had a year old but I had a lot of services that I had to preach that day.

So anyway, nevertheless, picture a full grown, healthy lamb at its peak of its adult strength and it's got no blemishes. It's got no diseases, it's coat looks white, it looks perfect. "You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it till the 14th day of this month." Now I underscored that on Good Friday, did I not? I'm talking like this was a week ago or whatever, I know it was some time ago. But you remember there was a sense of attachment, a sense of setting apart of this animal, you had days now to inspect it, it's running around the house, you're getting to see it, it's not a part of the flock anymore. You see this animal up close and personal.

And on the 14th day of the month, four and a half days later, "when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel, they would go out at twilight and kill the lambs," kill them personally, every head of household, kill them. Uggh. Yeah. "And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the

doorposts and the lintel," that the horizontal beam up top, "of the houses in which they eat it." So this is morbid. I know you Southern California, sanitized people are not going to go out and kill your lunch, I'm assuming, unless you're doing something illegal in your backyard. You are going to let someone else kill it in some sanitized way, it's under the carpet, we don't see it on the fringes.

But in those days, even in Christ's day in the first century, a lot of people may not even be involved in killing the foods that they eat, maybe chickens or whatever. But here's one day a year throughout the generations of Israel, for 1,400 years, you're supposed to keep killing an animal that your family has gotten used to, attach to, and you are to kill it and you are to eat it. Eat it. Kill it at twilight, take the blood as gross as that sounds, slathered it on your house. Ugggh, I don't want to do that. Yeah, slather it all over your house on the front of the doorposts and then eat the meat.

"Eat it that night. Roast it on the fire with," as we talked about last week, "unleavened bread," no yeast in it. It's not the best kind. I want yeast, I want it warm, I want it with butter. No, none of that, can't have that. Not only that, here's your side dish. It's not mashed potatoes with garlic, it's "bitter herbs." Gross! No, that's what you've got to eat. Bitter herbs, unleavened bread and lamb that's roasted over the fire. "Don't eat any of it raw, don't boil it in water, roasted. Its head with its legs and its inner part," the whole thing, as bizarre as that may sound.

"And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until morning you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it;" How? "With your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, your staff in your hand." I don't want to eat it that way, I want to sit down, I want to relax, I want to put my nightclothes on. I don't want my staff in my hand. "You shall eat it in haste." I want to eat it slow, I might get indigestion. I don't want to... No, eat it that way. Why? Because it's not about you, it's not your Passover, "it's the Lord's Passover." It's not about your comfort, not about your convenience, not about whether you like stuff that's bitter, not about whether you want yeast in your bread, it's not about how you want boiled lamb. God says, "It's about doing it my way, this is my Passover.

Because really what's at stake here, as inconvenient and weird and as tasteless as it may be, "it's about me going and being just in a land full of sinners." "I'm going to pass through the land of Egypt that night," and I will give everyone a real taste of what it is that the wages of sin is death. "I'm going to strike all the first born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast," even the animals, "and all the gods of Egypt, I will execute judgements." "They are trusting in the gods of the Egyptians. I'm going to show them that's vain, that's ridiculous."

And that blood, that blood that's starting to dry now, the next day, it's caked on there, that crimson, cakey blood. That's gross. No, no, that's a sign. "It will be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood I will," here it is, 'pacach,' "I will pass over." That's where we get the word from. We translate it, thankfully, pacach, is to pass over. And here it's a verb, I'll pass over. "I'll pass over you, and no plague shall befall you." Your first born will be safe. No one's going to die in your house. "Nobody's destroyed, when I strike the land of Egypt."

Now this day, you're going to remember this day, it will be a memorial for you, think back to it. "And you shall keep it as a feast," that means it's a holiday. It's a special day. A holy day "throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast." Seven days now. You're going to start this with the Passover and the killing of that lamb, but after that, "Seven days you shall eat," here it is, "unleavened bread." All that week long, you remember this, it's not the bread I like to eat, but you're going to eat it. On the first day you shall," go through and remove out of your houses all the leaven, "remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is

leavened, from the first day until the seventh day," how serious are you about this God, "that person shall be cut off from Israel." "Well, I used to hang out with the Israelites." "Why don't you hang out with Israel?" "Well, because I had leaven on day three." That's so weird, isn't it? This is what I want you to remember, the seriousness of the wages of sin is death.

I'm going to free you from the slavery from these sinful people and I want you to eat a meal that's not the kind of meal that you would eat. I understand now it's been turned in through the Talmud and the Mishnah and all the writings of the Haggadah, which is the prescriptions as to how to do the Seder. Seder means ordered, the ordered meal, and if you grew up in a Jewish home or if you know Jewish friends, you been to a Seder before it, it's nothing like that. This is very different. Standing, you got a staff, you got a belt, you're eating bitter herbs, you don't have all the hiding of the matzo. This is so different, this is like, "Oh, we were slaves and we were brought out. It was bitter, it's hard, you couldn't even have our bread rise with yeast. It was a reminder of how hard we had it, but God took us out of all that."

I'm talking about a physical enslavement to a physical group of slave drivers and slave taskmasters. Freedom to go into the desert now and no longer are they calling the shots for you. That's enslavement and freedom. That's a picture, here's the word for it in the Bible and it's used often, "redemption." It's taking you back. Now were they God's people? Yes. By virtue of a covenant, by virtue of creation. But now they're enslaved, they're not acting like God's people because the Egyptians are calling the shots. "Well, I'm going to buy you back." You want a definition for redemption? To purchase twice. I purchased you once by virtue of my being creator and a covenant. Now I'm going to purchase you a second time. I'm going to pull you out of that. I'm going to redeem you.

Now why would Jesus have this be the last and final thing he does with his disciples before he goes to the cross? Because that picture of redemption is what he wants to underscore. It's not about geopolitical issues, it's not about personal freedoms. It's about the fact that the redemption that is needed by the blood of his life, it has some very strong parallels to the redemption of Israel coming out of Egypt as slaves.

Number one on your outline. If you never thought I was going get to number one, here it is. It's been a half an hour now. See "Redemption in the Passover." Redemption. Now you're going to see that as a little double entendre. The redemption that is in the Passover initially was the redemption to have people who were enslaved, having people call the shots for them, and they weren't able to worship the way they wanted, they weren't able to make decisions independently, that was going to change as they now go into the desert and worship God according to God's dictates and prescriptions.

But it's much more important than that, and it is hinted to in the Passover in the sense that there is a sin that leads to this kind of punishment, which is the death of the first born. Now, the wages of sin is death. They all deserve to die, but you're going to be freed from that. Freed from the penalty of sin. That's the redemption the Bible talks about the most. Was it great when slaves were no longer slaves? Yes it's great. And if you can get your freedom as it says in the New Testament from Philemon and then get it.

But you know what, that's not the most important thing. What's most important is the redemption that you are no longer are subject to this rule: "The wages of sin is death." That law of sin and death, it needs to somehow to be gone away. I need it to go away. How do I no longer be subject to that law? Well, it's called Redemption.

Now, the Passover Seder has changed a lot. There are a lot of elements: four questions, four cups, the matzo, hiding all that. All of that was added years and years later. But I want you to recognize, when it comes to redemption, that the New Testament says the tie between the Passover lamb and the lamb that is celebrated today in heaven, as people keep talking about Christ is the lamb, the lamb, the lamb, the lamb that was slain, is the connection that we need to make whenever we open up our Bibles and think about the sacrifice of Christ on a cross, which is bloody, which is gross. Right? You read it and you see it. You watched Mel Gibson's *Passion of the Christ*. You go, "Gratuitous. It's so bloody." That's the reality. The reality of a bloody mess. Just like you taking a lamb before you have dinner tonight and cutting it open and having the blood pour all over your sandals and then having to go outside and paint your front door with it. That's really weird. But you need to see the profound gravity of God saying, "You've got a sin problem. I'm going to solve it. I'm going to redeem you from this."

Let me have you look at one passage. I know we're hopping around but I'm trying to show the historical background and the historical connection to the New Testament redemptive work of Christ. Let me do that with First Peter Chapter 1 real quick. If I can do this, let me start in verse 19 and I'll work backwards, real slowly, just through two verses, 19 and 18. First Peter Chapter 1. Let's start in verse 19 to show you the connections. Let me just highlight three, real quick.

Verse 19. Let's start at the bottom of the verse. "Like that of a lamb without blemish or spot." Are you reading that phrase with me? First Peter Chapter 1 verse 19. "Like a lamb without blemish or spot." We'll go before the comma, and who's that describing? Interactive church? Christ. Right? "Christ is like a lamb without blemish or spot." OK? The one thing we read, as we read it carefully in Exodus Chapter 12, is you've got to have a lamb without blemish or spot. That was exactly what we read in English of the Hebrew text in Hebrews Chapter 12, and now we have it here that "Christ is like the lamb without blemish or spot." So there's something about a perfect sacrifice. It has to be perfect. Now we know when we speak of a lamb that was slain that is worthy of all glory and blessing and honor and riches and all the rest of that, there is something about the perfection of that, but that is the starting point.

The lamb of the sacrifice of the Passover is supposed to get us to think about the perfections of the Christ who died for us. Simple observation but, number one, a spotless lamb, a spotless, perfect sacrifice. Number two, working backwards, verse 19, top of verse 19, "with the precious blood of Christ." You can't get away from the bloody scene of the cross. We don't have a clean theology, we have a bloody theology, and the theology is the wages of sin is death. Not just biological death but certainly including biological death, and that is that God is a just God, and you and I deserve to die. We deserve to die in a terrible way. That's why he didn't get shot. There were no guns back then, not at least as we know it, or hung or beheaded. He didn't get impaled. No. He got hung on a cross and that means he gets crucified, which is a torture rack. Why did he get tortured? Because the pain and the suffering and the stripes, as it says in Isaiah 53, was all a part of him suffering the justice of God in a painful human way, so that we would remember that's the wages of sin. And something's happening there in that transaction. So I have a spotless sacrifice, a spotless lamb, I have now blood, blood that's going to do something. If you want to know what it's going to do, here's number three, go up to verse 18, "Knowing that you were," here's the key word, here's the verb, "ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like a lamb without blemish or spot."

So, what is the point of the blood? The blood is to ransom us, redeem us. We saw that word in Revelation Chapter 5, did we not, that he ransomed for him, for God, people from every tongue,



tribe and nation. He bought them, he purchased them. So the transaction is a perfect sacrifice has to die in a bloody, painful death, so that we can somehow not be enslaved. And I like the way it's put here, "from a feudal way of life that is inherited from our forefathers."

Living like a slave, not of a political system, not of a Pharaoh or a dictator, but living as a slave to something Jesus kept talking about and that is anyone who sins becomes a slave of sin. And the slavery is not just the fact that you keep doing it over and over again, it's the slavery to this law, the law of sin and death. If you sin you must be punished. That's a just God. I've said it many, many times. I cannot run for a county judge in our county by saying, "Vote for me. Everyone goes free." I would be a bad judge. I know some people want that. That's chaos. We need a good judge to be a just judge. And God is a just God. And he says the wages of sin is death, there must be payment.

So the three aspects of the redemption: we've got a problem here that needs to be solved by a perfect sacrifice, a perfect sacrifice that has to suffer and die and lose his life, and then there's going to be the result, which is a purchase from slavery.

There are some great passages we could connect with this. But I would just leave you with one for your homework. I may have put it on the back, I don't remember, Romans Chapter 6. A great text about the comparison of what it means to be a sinner under God's condemnation. You are ransomed, it says, "from a feudal way." What way? Romans 6 verses 17 through 19 is the heart of it. Read the whole passage, it's great. But we ought to be thankful that we were slaves to sin. Slaves not only to the repeated nature of sin's habitual practice, but the payment that is coming to sinners. But God freed us from all that.

It ends with a verse you know, Romans 6:23 that "the free gift of God is eternal life." That gift was given to us, not because it's free in and of itself, but because it was purchased or ransomed or repurchased, we're repurchased back to God by Christ's death. It's a simple transaction in terms of understanding, but a profound transaction that you and I should appreciate, if you could just picture, like a farm boy can definitely picture, and that is the killing of an animal in a farm that just sits there and goes baah, baah, when you try to kill it. It doesn't fight back, it just submissively, docilely dies at your feet, like a lamb whose is silent before his shearers. Christ was silent. He went to slaughter like a lamb at the Passover. So much more we could say about that, but I want you to see the redemption in the Passover that's leading to the picture of Christ in the New Testament.

Now, it may sound like a second sermon, but verses 9 through 13, I want you to understand as clearly as I can possibly give it to you. This, I know, will differ from what many of your commentators in your trusted commentaries will say. Not all of them, about half of them I suppose. So let me side with the good half of the commentators that have a different view. All right? Verses 9 through 13. You see this. "Where are we going to prepare it?" Jesus says, "Here's how it's going to work. You're going to meet a man carrying a jar, he's going to meet you, follow him to the house, you're going to enter the house, you going to tell the master of the house, "Hey, teacher needs a place. Where's the guest room? I want to eat the Passover with my disciples." He's going to go, "Oh, right here, large upper room, it's all furnished." He says, "Peter, John, you can it prepare there."

"And they went and found it just as he had told them." Now, that phrase right there, "they found it just as he had told them," it's not just a statement of Christ did some good preparatory plans by talking to Fred, who was carrying the jar. "You're going to meet these guys, and I guess you got to walk back and forth a few times because, you know, they're going to come here and, I don't know what time I'm going to send them, around 2. Which, again, we don't have watches, so I don't know, a little bit after high noon we're going to so get there..."

A lot of commentators say Jesus prearranged all of this. He talked to Fred, I'm just making that up, Fred carrying the water, and of course he's going to be going to this house, which he doesn't even own, but the master, he has already talked to, maybe laid down a few denarii for it. He's going to rent out the Upper Room, he's going to have this because he's done all the human prearrangement. See, I don't believe that.

I don't believe that in part because of verse 6, because in verse 6 we left this with Judas consenting and seeking opportunity to betray him when he was in the absence of a crowd. Remember that? You know one time they would know when they were in the absence of a crowd? When they had all set out to arrange to have this Upper Room Last Supper, the Passover. That would be when they were without a crowd. Well, you're going to say, "Well, Jesus clearly didn't tell the disciples, this is why he has to tell them this now."

I'm saying, you know, we've tracked pretty much every hour of Jesus' life since Palm Sunday. We know what's going on here. I don't think Jesus went out there, took some notes as to what they needed, got Fred out there said, you know, be there this time, then lead him to that... I don't believe that any of this was humanly arranged. I think this is another example of what we see in John Chapter 1. In John Chapter 1, you remember, Jesus pulling a little bit back of his divinity in the curtain of his own humanity showing that he knows what's going on when he was not even physically there. You remember that passage?

Nathaniel, it's Philip and Nathaniel, Philip goes, "Hey, I think we found the Christ." Nathaniel, aka Bartholomew, Nathaniel just an appellation that describes his relationship... Whatever, it doesn't matter. Bart is also his name in the rest of the Scripture. We know him by that name in Luke. Nathaniel, Bartholomew, says, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Remember that? And Philip says, "Come and see." And so, here comes, Nathaniel. "Let's see here. Is this the guy you're talking about?" Jesus says, "Hey, Nathaniel there's a guy, no deceit in that guy, no guile, there's an Israelite. True as well as no guile." Nathaniel says, "You're making character statements about me? How do you even know me? Do you know me?" Jesus says, "I saw you when you were under the fig tree," which clearly he couldn't point to because it wasn't within eyesight. How do I know that? Because of his response. "Whoa. You saw me under the fig tree?"

What's his immediate reaction? "You are the Son of God, the King of Israel." He's freaked by that. Why? Because he's showing his omniscience. I think this not only shows Christ's omniscience in this passage, I think it shows his sovereignty. I don't know what it was that was arranged in the house of the master who somehow had an extra room and it was furnished and it had a place and everything was ready to go except for the actual Passover meal, but it was and he knew it.

It's a lot like Chapter 19 when we had the donkey. Remember that? And he says, "Hey, tell him the lord needs it and he'll give it to you." I don't think Jesus is out there saying, "Hey guys, I'll be back in a minute, I got to make some plans to get a donkey. Then I'm going to leave it there and I going to tell you to go find it." I don't think that's what's going on in this passage, in Chapter 19 or Chapter 22. I think it is Christ showing not only his omniscience, but in this case, there's a lot of details showing his sovereignty, his management over all things. Therefore, I'm with the half of your commentators who like to say about this passage, this was a miraculous demonstration of his divinity.

Now, I think that's important in light of the germane context of what we're dealing with and that is the Passover. Let me put it this way. Number two on your outline. You and I need to see "Deity in

the Lamb of God." You must see deity in the Lamb of God, that he is divine. He's no mere human being. And again, if you don't buy it here, if you're going to side with those other guys who say, you know, this is just his prearrangement, he's just telling them how to do it, then great. I trust elsewhere you know, Jesus is just demonstrating his deity. Right? You agree with that.

If I said to you, "Hey, I got a J.W. over here who doesn't believe that Jesus is the Messiah." Or I introduce you some Muslim friend of mine, a Muslim doesn't think that Jesus is the Messiah, he's just a prophet. I hope you can sit down with him and show him, both a Muslim who thinks there is some credibility to the Bible, not much, or the J.W. who demeans the Bible, but still tries to quote it, I hope you would be able to say, "Let's open the Bible. Let me show you that Jesus is divine."

Secondly though, I would hope you could answer the question if I were to say, "Oh, and tell them why it's so important." And if you said, "Well, it's important because in the Bible." No, no, no. "Tell us WHY it's important. Why does he need to be God?" I hope you'd have an answer for that.

So let's deal with both of those really quickly. There's a lot of things we can do besides this passage. I'm not saying this is the definitive passage showing us that Christ is God, but I am saying I think that's what's going on in this passage as he's showing his omniscience and his sovereignty. Let me take you to one passage real quick, three verses in the middle of John that might help you with this. John Chapter 5. Now we can go a lot of places, we can look at just the outright statements like in Colossians 2, in him dwells the fullness of deity, "In him the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form." Christ is God. We can look at John 1, we can look at a lot of passages. But let me just give you one that I think will help you. Three verses, three simple observations about the deity of Christ, and then we'll get back to the real question I have for you, which is why is this so important. John 5:21. Jesus says this, "For as the Father raises the dead and gives life..." Would you agree with that? Absolutely. It happens in the Old Testament. Matter of fact, let's talk about the first time he's raising someone up and giving him life.

How about in Genesis 1? He forms the man out of the dust the earth, blows into him the breath of life, he becomes a living being. Whoa. Who can do that? God. Why? Because he's the giver of life. You want to look that up in your Bibles? It's everywhere. God is the giver of life. Job says, Job 33 verse 4, "The Spirit of God made me. The breath of the Almighty gives me life." So not just Adam, every person has to say, as Acts 17 says, that God is the giver of life. OK? I'm with you there. "The Father raises the dead, gives life," he can do all that, "so also the Son gives life to whom he will." Whoooo, wait a minute. If I were to ask you, who's the giver of life, I hope you'd say God. Now all of a sudden the Son of God says, "Oh, I do that too. I give life and, listen, I give it to whomever I will, whomever I want." I mean that is a huge statement. I put it this way. It demonstrates divine attributes. The attribute of being able to give life is one of many attributes on display within the Gospels that show that Christ is no mere human. He is not just a prophet on par with Muhammad. It's not the case. He's not just Michael the archangel who puts on some clothes and comes down to earth. Jesus is God in bodily form. That is the reality.

Verse 22, "For the Father judges no one." No, no, no, he judges. Matter of fact, in Genesis, "The judge of all the earth will do right." Psalm 98 verse 9, "The Lord comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness." Who judges the world? God judges the world. You want to be specific, here's the word, Yahweh judges the world. Who is the judge of the world? God, Yahweh. Yahweh is the judge of the earth.

Jesus tells us, "Nope, he's given that to me. I'm doing that God thing. I'm fulfilling that God role." No, "the Father judges no one, but he has given all judgment, all judgment, to the Son." Jesus said,

"I am going to be the judge now." Whoa. So not only does he demonstrate divine attributes, how about this in the next verse, he fulfills divine roles. Right? He not only shows he's got power to give life, which he does, certainly in the Gospel of John repeated examples of that, he now also says, "Well, by the way, the judge of all the earth? That's me, as the second person of the Godhead, I am now going to do that God-thing. I fulfill that role, among many others."

If that weren't enough, that didn't impress you, how about verse 23, "That," here's the reason, one of the reasons at least, verse 23, "that all may honor the Son." Oh, OK, tip your hat. "Nah, hey, you're a great guy." Nope. "Just as," those two English words translate to the word "kathos." It's "just as" to the same extent, to the same measure, "that they honor the Father." What?

Whoa, whoa, whoa, wait a minute. I know one thing about Moses, as long as we're talking about Exodus 12, let's get to Exodus 20 in our mind, he gives some rules and the first rule has been, "You don't have any other gods." I mean God is God. That's it. Matter of fact, by Chapter 34 of Exodus he says this, "Let's just give God a nickname: jealous, a jealous God. Here's what I wrote down, Exodus 34:14. "You shall worship no other God, for the Lord, Yahweh, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." He is really jealous if you start worshipping someone else. God is a jealous God.

Or even Jesus in his temptation, Satan says, "Hey, bow down to me, I'll give you the world." He says, "No." Here was his response. Matthew 4 verse 10, he says, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve." Just one God to worship. And you know what? He says, "Just as you honor the Father, honor me. God gives me divine roles and I get to demonstrate divine attributes so that I can," number three, "'Accept Divine Worship.' I can accept the same kind of worship that would be blasphemous if I weren't God."

Matter of fact, go onto the next sentence in verse 23. "Whoever does not honor the Son," if you refuse, you want to be giving him some secondary position, then the Bible says this: "Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him." It's why people, for instance, and I've said this before, but when the whole Wheaton College thing went on about, "Well, Muslims worship the same God that we do." Not at all. I know they don't worship the same God we do and I know that's because God doesn't accept the worship of anyone who does not worship the Son just as they worship the Father. You cannot have it any other way. The Lamb of God in heaven right now, they're saying this about him, and I already quoted it. Revelation Chapter 5 verse 12. "All glory, all honor, all riches, all blessing." All of these belong to God. Everything. Worthy is the Lamb to receive all of those things.

"All right, Mike, great little primer on the deity of Christ. It's good." Back to my question. I hope you could prove it, and that's just one set of verses, three verses. Why? I mean, if you're sitting there with a person that denies the deity of Christ, why is that important? Well, in light of the Passover, I think it's helpful, and I've already hinted to it and that is this: that certainly you've got a problem with human perfection. You want to talk about a spotless lamb, that's one thing, has a nice white coat, but what about a spotless person? When Jesus was called "good" by the rich young ruler, what did Jesus say? "Whoa, whoa, what are you saying? Why are you calling me good? No one's good but God alone." So one thing I know for sure and it's the simple answer but the simple answer starts with this: I know if God is the only righteous person there is in the universe, then Christ cannot be a spotless person, cannot be a spotless lamb, cannot be a sacrifice that is completely righteous, unless he himself is divine. He's got to be God. There's no way he can fulfill that perfect requirement unless he's God.

But let me go a step further. Turn with me to Hebrews Chapter 9. If this transaction of

substitutionary atonement, that he is going to atone for my sin by being my replacement, these words are helpful. Not only is it the qualitative aspect of him being spotless or holy, which I need, because if that transaction of Second Corinthians Chapter 5 is going to take place, where the "one who knows no sin becomes sin for me, so that in him I may become the righteousness of God." I mean, think about that. If I were to be righteous enough to be acceptable to God, I need perfect human perfection. And that's only going to happen if he's God. So he's got to be human, in that he lives out human righteousness and that he accepts human penalty, but he's got to be God. I've got to have that.

But not only is it the quality of that spotless sacrifice, it's the quantity. Take a look at it this way in Hebrews Chapter 9 verse 11, let's go 11 through 14. "But when Christ appeared as a high priest," he's going to somehow represent me before God, "of the good things that have come." Right? We're past all the goats and bulls and all that, "then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places," into God's very throne room, "not by means of blood and goats and calves." I'm not saying, "Hey, I can represent these people because I've shed a few, you know, the blood of a few animals." No. "But by means of his own blood." A perfect sacrifice, which we learn throughout the book of Hebrews and certainly all throughout the Bible, Christ is perfect. I get all that.

"Thus securing," now here's the emphasis, underline it, "an eternal redemption." Eternal. It has not only a qualitative perfection, it has a quantitative perfection. It has a quantitative value. If I want to get one nice car out of an impound lot, I've got to maybe trade my car for that car and get it out. But this is a car of infinite worth. "Eternal redemption." And he says, you know, even in the Old Testament if my mind can be like, "Oh, things are okay because I had leprosy. Now I don't, but I've had my "bulls and my goats," and all that stuff, "sprinkling of persons with the ashes of a heifer." If it can sanctify for the purification of the flesh, if I can say I can go back to the community now because I'm no longer considered ceremonially unclean. If that can make me feel better about my position in the community, how much more, if that stuff kind of helped my conscience, "how much more will the blood of Christ," now here it comes, this is the tie to verse 12, "through the eternal Spirit," the eternal Spirit, "offered himself without blemish to God." Well that can "purify our conscience." From what? From the law of sin and death, wages of sin is death, those dead deeds, "those dead works," those things that should lead me to eternal punishment. "And then I can serve the living God." I can be free, I can be ransomed, I can now serve him.

That picture of eternal redemption being secured by "eternal Spirit." I can't have Elijah die for me. I can't have Muhammad die for me. I can't have John the Baptist die for me. I can't have Isaiah die for me. I can't have Joseph Smith die for me. I can only have the eternally perfect one, that's the qualitative aspect of his sacrifice, and the eternal one, the quantitative aspect of his sacrifice, to apply to me, not only to me, but to you, to your neighbors, to your co-workers, to our spiritual forefathers. Every single sin that someone committed who put his trust in Christ 500 years ago is as forgiven as I am today, and my forgiveness in my life is secured by the same person. How can one person do that? Because eternal redemption, with massive quantity, has been offered through an eternal Spirit. He offered himself without blemish to God. We need the qualitative spotlessness of the Lamb of God and we need the quantitative sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Eternal worth, more than a one-to-one value.

You need to see the deity in the Lamb of God. I think that's essential for our theology. Do we see it in this passage? I think so. I think God is clearly showing us that Christ is deity by the fact that he is orchestrating all of this without human arrangement. Even if you don't buy that, fine, you don't need to buy it in this passage, there are many, many examples in the Gospels of him demonstrating

divine attributes, fulfilling divine roles and even accepting divine worship.

But if I were to leave you today, and not just with a lesson about redemption or some theological kind of help with you knowing that it is important that Christ is God, I certainly want to leave you with one of the things that we often see as associated with the reminder that Christ is the Lamb of God. Clearly we see it in Revelation Chapter 5 and 6 that it's a holy place with a holy God and it's really clear he's holy. And that means he's set apart from sinners. He's different than sinful people.

But there is often a picture and an association, even as I read for you from First Peter Chapter 1, that passage about we were redeemed and ransomed not by silver and gold but with the precious blood of Christ. Here's how the passage starts. Can I read it for you? It starts in verse 14. "Hey, as obedient children, don't be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but just like he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.' And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourself with fear throughout your time of exile," you're here wandering around in this exile world, "knowing that you were ransomed from your feudal ways of your forefathers, not with perishable things like silver and gold, but by the precious blood of Christ, like a lamb without blemish." When you start seeing the connection of sacrifice, it's not just so that you can be freed from the penalty of your sin, it's so that you can start being freed from the practice of your sin.

Let me prove it to you. A great passage and I'm sure this is in your discussion questions for your small group. First Corinthians Chapter 5 verses 6 through 8. When Paul starts talking about Christ and here's the passage: "Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed." That's the middle of it, that's the sandwich, that's the meat. He then says this: "Listen. Clean out the old leaven," in your life, get it out, "that you can be a new lump," a different lump, a transformed lump, which you really are. Positionally, you are right before God and counted as holy. Now you need to start living that way. Why? "Because Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed," we're freed.

"Therefore, let's celebrate the festival," not going back to the obsolete festival, that's not what it's about. We're celebrating the festival of Christ, our Passover lamb being sacrificed, we're remembering the fact that he died for us, "not with the old leaven, the level of malice and evil, but instead with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." You'll see this all over the New Testament. When it comes to thinking about our redemption, our redemption now demands a transformative life, because one bad lesson that Paul teaches to the Corinthians is this: Yeah, they left, no longer slaves, but they went out to the desert and they started dropping like flies. Why? Because they didn't live a holy life trusting in God's leadership. He says in Chapter 10 of First Corinthians, "Listen, don't be like them. They sat down to eat and drink, they got up to play." They were all about themselves. "I taught them the redemption was not about them. Eat this Passover my way. Do this, remember this is my work, my sacrifice. And now, don't go out to the desert and just live for yourself. Live a holy life."

I guess you're going to take away here from this message, I want you to, not only learn the historical backgrounds of the Passover, not only do I want you to recognize how important it is that Christ, the Lamb of God, is God. But I want you to realize that you need to leave this with a sense of "I got to live in the desert of this world, the wilderness of this world, living like I am that new creature in Christ." You are new to God, you are redeemed. As it says in Romans Chapter 6, "Don't be a slave to sin anymore."

You count your members, the parts of your body, start with your tongue, it's the hardest thing to work with, that you no longer use that thing in your mouth or anything in your life to subject



yourself continually to sinful actions. "Become a slave of God," it says. Present the members of your body as slaves to righteousness. Starts by making sure you know Christ.

I talked about a lot of things were added to the Seder in modern times. Some things as late as the 18th century added something that's a feature today that people think went back to Old Testament times. I talked about four questions and four cups, some of you were raised with this, you know all this, there are four cups, but there's really a fifth. It's the very end of the Seder. A fifth cup, it's called the Cup of Elijah. Some of you know that because you've gone through this.

That Cup of Elijah in the modern Seder that the Jewish people practice every spring, they put that cup in the middle of the table and they fill it up and I've heard Jews talk about the fact they fill it to the very brim to where it's almost, you know, just about to spill over. And they have someone get up and open the door and, you know, they call it a Cup of Elijah because they're waiting for Elijah to come and to drink from that cup. They want Elijah to join them in this. Why? Because of Malachi Chapter 4 verse 5 that says that says Elijah is going to come before the coming of the Lord. The Lord is going to come, the Messiah is going to come, but before he comes Elijah is going to come. They sit there and it's really sad. They want Elijah to come. Why? Because we want the Messiah to come. The Messiah did come.

I told you last week I celebrated my 32nd anniversary. My wife and I dated for four and a half years before that, some of you know the story. When I was out in Chicago going to school and my wife was out here at UC Irvine and we had that long-distance relationship going on. When we did, we had no phones, I mean we had phones, it wasn't the dark ages, but we didn't have cell phones, we didn't have texting. Right? Our phone calls cost a lot. Our part time jobs can barely pay for a few minutes on Friday nights to talk back and forth.

So I built, like a lot of guys did with a long-distance relationships, a little shrine in my dorm room with all of her pictures, you know. I'm sure it irritated my roommate. But my last year, some of you know this, she actually came out and became a student there in Chicago with me and so we were classmates. Finally she was there, she was on campus. She was my girlfriend in real life. It was awesome. Now how sad it would be for me to have all those pictures up there and sit there and be enamored like I was so long before my girlfriend appeared and became a part of my everyday life and pined away for a phone call on a Friday and I sat there looking at all of the pictures, when just over the pictures was my girlfriend standing in the doorway going, "Hey, I'm here for our date." And I'm just like, "Oh no, hold on. I'm just looking at my pictures." That would be pathetic.

And I think one of the sad things about the Seder today is that you have this sense, "Oh, we just want the Messiah to come." I know a lot of people don't mean it but those that do mean it. And there ardent and they say, "We want the Messiah to come." And you think "he's already come!" And they can even look at that with some detachment and say that is sad for them. But how much more sad would it be for you as a Protestant evangelical church-goer to sit here and not only say, well I'm a Jewish person waiting for the Messiah, but I'm a church-going Protestant evangelical talking about Christ already came. I'm just waiting for a second coming now. And you missed the point.

And you may get tired of me talking about this, but you will not complain of me saying to you, "You better be sure you're really a Christian." A hundred years from now you'll say, "Hey, I'm glad. I didn't like it when I was back there. But it is a good thing for you to do that." Because I know people and you will too that will stand there on Judgment Day and Christ will say when they say, "Lord, Lord." And he'll say, "Depart for me. I never knew you."



Really sad for people to have all the pictures of Christ in the Passover and miss Christ. It would be even worse for people to be in a Christian church, singing songs about Christ, and miss Christ. And it's going to happen. I just hope it's not you. I hope it's not me. The Apostle Paul can write to Timothy, who's a pastor, and even drop hints about him making sure that he is saved by his life and his teaching. I have no apologies saying to you, "Test yourself to see if you're of the faith." Make sure that you're right with God and if you know God has forgiven my sins, my trust and repentance is real, I trust him, then get out there, as the early church used to always put it, and prove your repentance by your deeds. Get out into the wilderness of this world and live for Christ. Get the leaven, if you will, of the sin in your life and let's go to war against that stuff, let's live different.

"Well, it's so hard in our culture..." Yeah, yeah it's hard, I get it. It's true, it's getting harder, but we're not the first generation to suffer a little pushback for our faith. As a matter of fact, a lot of our forefathers have given their lives. Talk about spilling their blood, they've spilt their blood for Christ. Let's make sure that we know that we are redeemed, that we've been ransomed by Christ. Let's remember the Lamb of God who stands in heaven being worshiped right now as a lamb as though slain and everyone saying he's worthy of all things. Make sure he's worthy of you saying no to sin this week. First make sure he's your redeemer. Then make sure he's your Lord.

Let's pray. God, help us, I would ask, as we think about the Passover and remember that that last celebration of the last prescribed Passover was the perfect platform for us to see the cross, which will see much more of next week, a cup representing the blood of the New Covenant. But God, as we look back to the Passover, and we know many people in our culture and our day, I'm sure, who still practice the Seder and they know about the Passover and they know about the Egyptians and Israel and redemption, may we be a light to them. Not only to them but everyone. Let them know that Christ has paid for our sin on the cross, if we would trust in him and repent of our sin. It will be the difference between heaven and hell for us. Let's not be afraid to live for him or speak up for him this week.

If there's some leaven that even came to mind as we were talking about those things at the end of this message that we just need to repent of and ask you for you to rout from our lives to forgive us and cleanse us. I just pray that we would see that as clear as we ever have before and leave it here this morning and get into this afternoon and tomorrow morning with just a fresh start. God, I know we can fail, we can stumble, but I pray that we would take a whole new view about what it is to be that new lump without leaven, that new yeast-free leaven-free life. It's got a lot more sincerity and truth than malice and evil. So God, we want to live for you in this wilderness and this tough day that we live in and we want to do it knowing that you are our God because we have a redeemer, a lamb, who freely and lovingly, sacrificially gave his life so that we would be forgiven. Thank you for that reminder this morning in the Passover.

In Jesus name, Amen.