

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, April 23, 2024
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“The Passover of God”

READING: Exodus 12:1-8, 11-13 – The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, “This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the side and tops of the door frames of the houses where they eat the lambs. That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast.....This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into our belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the Lord’s Passover. On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn – both men and animals – and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.”

Today is Passover! Some years Good Friday coincides with Passover; some years it doesn’t. Christianity and Judaism have different dating systems because Christianity uses a solar calendar while Judaism uses a lunar calendar. I’m sure there is some ancient arcane method for determining the dates of Good Friday and Easter. It has something to do with the first full moon after the Vernal Equinox, but even after I Googled it I could not determine why they are so different this year. All I know is that the calendar hanging on the wall behind me while I’m writing this says today is Passover, three- and one-half weeks after we celebrated Easter! Go figure!

What is important is that the first Passover (and every one of them thereafter) was full of Jesus. Think about it: the Israelites were to take a year-old male lamb without any blemish, sacrifice it and catch the blood. That blood was to be smeared onto the wood of their doorframes. Then the lamb was to be consumed entirely by the household. When the Destroyer came amongst the dwellings, any home marked with the blood of the lamb would be “passed over” and no harm would come to that family.

Jesus, “The Lamb of God”, was in his prime when taken to the cross. He was without a sinful blemish, perfect before God. Then he was sacrificed on the cross, and by his blood we are “passed over” without condemnation for our sins. He was utterly consumed: physically tortured and bled out; spiritually rejected by the Father on our behalf; and abandoned by nearly every one of his friends and followers. What happened at the Passover was precursor to the sacrifice of God’s Son for the benefit of sinful humanity.

And, of course, the Passover is directly connected to the Lord’s Supper. Instead of pointing back to a sacrifice on the cusp of the Exodus, Holy Communion points back to a sacrifice on the Cross that brings hope and salvation to all who believe on Jesus’ name. When we eat his body and drink his blood, we are remembering and re-enacting his death while receiving its benefits at the present time. Concurrently, we are brought into the very presence of Christ himself in fulfillment of his own words of institution: “This is my body...this is my blood.” Jesus comes to us and joins himself to us in a most marvelous way. The Passover was evidence to Israel that God was with them and leading them out of bondage with a mighty arm.

Communion is evidence to Christians that God is with us and leading us out of bondage to sin and death by the "Blood of the Lamb".

So Happy Passover to you! We don't celebrate it in the Church, but it is always a day worth remembering because in so many ways it heralded and pointed ahead to God's deliverance of all people whose hope is in our Lord Jesus Christ. Christians can't and shouldn't look at the Passover without seeing Jesus all over it. He is the very Pascal Lamb sacrificed for us and our salvation. It is celebrated once a year by Judaism while the Lord's Supper is celebrated by Christians often and frequently. And some day you and I will celebrate all of it at the "Wedding Feast of the Lamb in his Kingdom." Now that's something to look forward to! Amen.

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1) Please pray for our Junior Confirmands. This Sunday they will be confirmed in the Faith in the late service. Pray for Amelia, Madelyn, Maggie, Breena, Heidi, Knox, Landon, Asa, Kellen, and Lukas as they become communicant members of Grace.

2) ATTENTION IU FANS: we are taking a bus tour to IU Bloomington to take a guided tour of Assembly Hall and a visit to the Fine Arts Building on campus on Wednesday, May 15. The tour costs you \$10.00 and you'll buy your own lunch. Sign up outside the office or call Karen to get your name on the list.