

SERMON PREACHED BY MR J K POPHAM
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HEBREWS 11 V 28

"Through faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood lest He that destroyed the firstborn should touch them"

The Scriptures, this chapter particularly, teach the blessedness, the energy and the fruitfulness of a God given faith. If you have faith given by the Holy Spirit you will never be able to let the Lord alone. It will put a difference between you and the world, between you and a dead professor. It will make God very real to you. It will make the curse very real to you. It will make a way of escape very necessary for you and it will, in the blessed energy, which God is pleased to give it, set you so on Himself as that you will give Him no rest until He establish you and make you what you want to be. It will preach in your heart about your own wickedness and tell you that every description of sin and sinfulness and sinful people, the Word of God has is true in your own case. Not outwardly, bless God for that, but inwardly it will show you that the only work which pleases God is believing on Him whom He hath sent. A great thing this. It will reject your leaven, hypocrisy, good deeds, good tempers, claims of various sorts which a proud legal heart would constantly be preferring and bring you empty and poor and weak and defiled and then you will be after eating the Passover, the Paschal Lamb, sacrificed for you. O happy sinner who has real faith. It credits contradictions, it talks with the unseen, it brings unseen things into the open vision of faith.

In the text we have that which Moses was enabled to do. "Through faith he kept the Passover". We know what that was. Israel was in Egypt the land of darkness, the rainless land of idolatry, persecution and wickedness. But out of that land Israel was to come by divine covenant, by omnipotence, and when the 430 years of captivity, predicted by God Himself, had come to an end, then the Lord instituted this wonderful ordinance and sacrifice and only way of

deliverance, the Lamb slain and with the blood of sprinkling, the blood sprinkled on the lintel and door posts of the house, there should, when the angel of destruction passed through the land, be seen that blood sprinkled house, and the destroyer should not enter into it. This keeping of the Passover is doing just that one thing that God commanded Moses and Aaron. It was killing and eating the Passover lamb.

Let us then, as enabled, this morning look first at the slaying of the lamb and the sprinkling of the blood. These appear to be two distinct acts. The keeping of the Passover is an act of faith, and the blood of sprinkling is an act of one who sprinkles the blood on the sinner so that the angel of destruction enters not to destroy him. Who is the anti-type? The Scripture informs us "Christ", the Passover, "our Passover was sacrificed for us", as Paul teaches in the Corinthians. This means the death of incarnate God, nothing less. The voluntary, the vicarious, substitutionary death of the Lord Jesus. O sinner, unless you have an interest in that wondrous death you never will get out of Egypt. You will never escape the destroyer. Think of it. Here is a world of sin, a world of sinners. Hell is not to have them all. Some are to escape the wrath to come. Then are we in that number? How shall we escape the wrath to come? Vain is all our best devotion, vain is our poor religion, vain is all profession, passing away is all knowledge that is acquired by men, and the one only way of escape from the wrath to come and an eternal hell is this, the slaying of Jesus Christ in the room and stead of those who are to escape. Egypt fitly represents the state of death and darkness and wickedness in which we all are. Pharaoh fitly represents the god of this world as holding in bondage all his subjects. He will never let them go voluntarily. He holds them in painful captivity, in a furnace of iron, and so the Lord comes. "I am come down" He said, and He sent His beloved Son. He made Him to be sin. "He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin". So the Lord comes. "I am come" said Christ, "that they", these poor dead sheep of mine, "might have life and that they might have it more abundantly". O what a coming was the coming of Christ. O sinner if you get a sight of the coming of Christ you will do exactly in spirit what the wise men of the east did when they saw the young child. They worshipped Him, and they opened their treasures and presented unto Him gold and

frankincense and myrrh, and you will do just that in your spirit. Of all the blessed sights that we can ever see by faith is the coming of Jesus Christ into this world. The love of God sent Him, His own love brought Him, and the love of the Spirit was in Him. The fulness of the Spirit was in Him. His sacred human nature was filled with all the grace of the Spirit. And He, with infinite willingness and kindness and mercy appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. So when He uttered that important word "It is finished", salvation was accomplished. This is the Passover. The cross was the place where the Paschal Lamb was slain. There the justice of God drew the sword against Him, and there wrath to the uttermost fell upon Him. There sin was put away by Him and the handwriting of ordinances and the captivities and the troubles and the evils of the wilderness and dangers of Egypt were all, all put away. Now this is to be kept. Moses by the powerful faith that God gave him got this sacrifice so before his eyes, it was so in his heart, that he could not but keep it. If you have faith, this sacrifice offered so long since will be as real to you as if it were now done before your very eyes, so real. O I wish it were to me always and with you. There is a peculiar power given to faith, a peculiar power that brings distant things near. It knows no intervening years, but just the thing done and believed becomes real and near in your own heart. What a wonder it is for Christ to be in a sinner. What grace it was of God to send His Son. What faith it is that lays hold of His Son and makes the Son of God real, that enables a man of God to say - "We know the Son of God is come". We know that He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. When you keep it then you have no leaven. It is a very solemn word that. If any man should eat the Passover with leavened bread he should be cut off. That soul should be destroyed. Why this tremendous significance with respect to leaven? Leaven was something the man had of his own, something that he added to the meal, the fine flour, and therefore it was not pure. And this represents the hypocrisy and fleshly religion that we may have and try to mingle with the Bread of God. This makes it so solemnly important that all leaven must be cast out of the very coast, out of every house, so that the Bread of God should be eaten. Bitter herbs there are plenty of, but leaven, O the Lord says, no, no leaven.

And to keep this Passover is to have a holy convocation, a holy

convocation on the first day and throughout the seven days and on the seventh day a holy convocation and no leaven. If you take the number seven to set forth, as it is in the Scripture, perfection, it shows how absolutely free from the leaven of the creature is Jesus Christ. And as He is partaken of it shows that with Him there is nothing mixed.

With Him was there anything mixed
Then what will thou mix with Him now?

And this holy convocation is spoken of thus in the Scripture to show us that between Christ and the sinner there is this blessed union formed. As the bread eaten becomes, as it were, the substance of the person who eats it for his nourishment, so Christ partaken of by faith, without leaven, is the life and the nourishment and the strength and the liberty and the peace of the soul. Through faith Moses kept this. You must keep it through faith, by faith, if you keep it at all. It is an exceedingly close, searching question, with regard to this leaven. You may think you keep Christ and yet be unsuspecting always as to this matter of leaven. And what will you mix with Christ? O but is it not difficult, and how impossible to our nature. What nothing? Nothing at all but a sinner? A sinner looking with grief and shame at his sins? A sinner held in some bondage? A sinner incapable of good and capable constantly of all evil? Such a sinner laying hold of and eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus Christ. This is the very thing. Who is sufficient for it? Only the man in whom the Holy Ghost creates faith and brings it into a living exercise on Christ crucified. Nobody else will ever do it. What a thing, what a wonder, that real faith is given to some people to distinguish them as the people of the living God. And they alone have this wonderful thing in their hearts, Jesus Christ the hope of glory.

Now let us look at this for a moment in a way of reflection on ourselves and on our own cases. It shows this, among other things, that there is a point of real spiritual contact between the sinner and Jesus Christ. There is a real receiving of Christ crucified by faith. As the act of eating is real, and the person who eats knows it, so, in some way and measure, every soul that has faith one day comes to

receive and eat in his very heart this blessed Jesus Christ, this slain Lamb. And this is keeping the Passover. Dost mind the place, the time when this contact took place in you? O sinner that is the thing. It is one of the most solemn moments in a person's life. Egypt lost all, Israel gained everything, when Israel came out of Egypt. It was called the month Abib. Abib means springing forth. As the herb springs forth, so the soul goes forth, grows up out of Egypt. "Through faith he kept the Passover" It shows us what an office faith has. It shows us what a blessing it is to receive the Lord Jesus, what liberty, what life, what peace, what deliverance a sinner has and upon what a pilgrimage he starts. "Through faith he kept the Passover". And he could say, yes looking forward Moses could say, for substance

None but Jesus, none but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good

The pleasures in Egypt, the pleasure of sin for a season, the wrath of Pharaoh the king, all these things were as nothing to his faith that took hold of the Lamb and brought salvation. So it will be with you, with me, if we have living faith. No wrath, no sin, no devil, no pleasures for a season, will have the effect of holding us down if we have real faith. We shall spring forth after and to Him, and lay hold of Him who was sacrificed for us. "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us". Let us therefore eat with the unleavened bread of sincerity. O dear sinner, this is the place where you will meet with God and where God will meet with you, and you will both be such friends. He will bless you and you will bless Him. Egypt will vomit you up. Get away quickly, as if it would say, get out at once. They pressed the people out. You cannot be held in bondage when the sweet Passover is received.

And now look at the second thing. There seems a significance in this, a sort of division. There was first the Passover slain, the lamb slain. This was in God's sight everything. This was the liberty, this was the life, this was the peace of Israel - the lamb slain. But the blood of the lamb was caught in a bason and that blood was, with a bunch of hyssop, sprinkled on the lintel and the door posts of all the houses in which Israel was. And the destroyer, in passing

through Egypt into every Egyptian house to slay their firstborn, and the firstborn of all cattle, had this token given to him by the King of kings - when you see the blood enter not into that house that is covered by it. The blood covered the whole of Israel; every house covered with blood was passed by. Now sinner it seems the significance is this, that on every Israelite after the Spirit shall be the blood of sprinkling. Death, pestilence, arrows of death and darkness fly about, and what shall protect me, what shall protect you? It is not a dead doctrine that will do it nor a dry truth that will do it. It is the precious blood of Christ as of a Lamb without blemish sprinkled on your heart that will keep you from evil and save you from death and make you a true pilgrim, and faith will bring this, faith will bring it. This is called laying hold of eternal life whereunto thou art also called. This is called being sanctified. The blood of Christ sanctifieth the conscience, sanctifieth the whole person, for if sin be removed from the conscience what is there left for the destroyer to lay hold of. He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet. You can walk with God and will do if the blood of Christ be sprinkled on you. You will walk by faith. You will be a true pilgrim and you will walk with God from time to time, and walk also with one thing in your eye, namely the promised inheritance. I have many things in my view; you have, who fear God. The difficulties of the way, the great difficulties of the pilgrimage, the hardship of the pilgrimage, the trial, the waiting, the turning again here and there, the putting off the longed for day when you enter into the land. These things we look at. They are trials, great trials. Now faith has one thing. The Apostle speaks of the things which are not seen. He says "We behold the glory of the Lord". Now to look after, to look upon, and see again and again by faith the promised land, the goodly land, this is that that comes through the blood of sprinkling on the conscience. Paul speaks in this epistle of the conscience being purged from dead works to serve the living God. That is just what comes to pass when the atonement is brought to the conscience. There is a real purging away of dead works. This teaches a sinner what it is to be saved and how he is saved. It cleanses him from his legality, it cleanses him from his legal fears, delivers him from his hard bondage, and causes him to see a good God in a crucified Saviour. He has peace with God through the blood of Christ. The blood of the everlasting covenant tells him of everlasting safety. It brings him

to this that he expects, now and again he expects to prove the promise true. Through faith you will get this; no other way. And this does put a singular beauty on that Scripture of the Lord when in reply to one who said - "What shall we do to work the works of God, to inherit eternal life?" - He said "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent", and this is God's work. That is the only work which God is pleased with. The only thing that could please God in Moses, Aaron and the whole of Israel was obeying Him with respect to the lamb that was slain and the sprinkling of the blood of that lamb. That was the work that pleased God. You will give God pleasure O guilty sinner when, by precious faith, you receive this slain Lamb and have His blood sprinkled on your conscience and your faith says - "I am clean, just God I am clean". No other way. Never can a man walk with right expectations of deliverance and of heaven but by this Paschal Lamb and the sprinkling of His blood. Well now how do you stand with regard to this? I can tell you of many things, of dangers, and troubles and evils, but if I am to speak of what fits for God, of what makes God real, great, gracious and precious, then I have to say there is only one thing, the blood of Christ sprinkled on your hearts. That is all and that all means heaven. Everything that is good, everything that is holy, everything that gives God pleasure, all here in this one thing, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." The professor may think it easy; the child of God finds it far from that, for all the while there is before him this bondage in which up to that moment he was held. A mighty Pharaoh, inveterate enemies, these were still, as it were, upon him. He was still in the furnace, still groaning. But now faith said, here is a deliverance coming, a wonderful deliverance, and this is that that brings it, a slain lamb. Life for life, the life of the lamb for the nation and the blood of the lamb for deliverance. So sinner this is how you must keep the Passover. "Through faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood".

And there was this before him - "Lest He that destroyed the firstborn should touch them." Did you ever fear the touch of the destroyer? There had been many plagues as you know in Egypt, the land all but entirely destroyed. There remained one stroke. A sinner may have much trouble, much affliction in his person, much affliction in his family, and no grace. And then there comes at last one touch, the

touch of the destroyer, the hand that was laid on the firstborn in Egypt in every house, in every field; the hand that was kept from Israel, could not touch Israel. That hand will be laid on all of you who have not this Passover, do not keep it, and have not the blood of sprinkling. It must be laid on you. It is a very solemn consideration with me, how many things we may have that are right apparently God knows. How many ways we may walk in religion and not have this infinite mercy, God knows. But the day will come when all who have not kept the Passover through faith and the blood of sprinkling will be under that dreadful touch, the hand that will smite the creature, body and soul, unto eternal destruction and death. And yet there is one only way of escaping this, and God has revealed that way in the Scripture and He reveals it to the faith of every one to whom faith is given. He reveals it to that person in whom faith is created by the Holy Ghost. And faith points out the way to a destitute, a poor, a convinced rebel, points out the way to life and liberty and peace and heaven in the blood of the everlasting covenant, in the slain Lamb. Is He to be seen still? O yes, the Holy Ghost still reveals Him. The closing of the Scripture is according to the beginning of the Scripture. In the beginning of the Scripture this Passover is promised, the seed of the woman, and the closing of the Scripture is this, a lamb as it had been slain. And that seems to, if one may so say, embrace the life of a true child of God. He finds in the beginning of his religion as he is led to look back, the Lord Jesus, and he finds at the end of it the same Person. The sacrifice of the Passover and the blood of sprinkling. So dear friends look narrowly, and God help you, prayerfully, at this mighty subject and ask how the case stands with you, whether you can go along with Moses, he forward, and you backward, to the same Object, and that Object is Christ crucified, and to the same means of protection, the sprinkling of the blood on the house. Safety alone is here. Escape alone is by this means appointed of God. There is such a thing as gracious experience. Many exercises, many fears, many deliverances of various sorts, but when you come to that that gives life and a title to heaven, you come to one thing, one point, one person, one death, one atonement, and nothing else. May the Lord bring us to that.

AMEN.