

Cross Examination

1 Corinthians 5.7

Our Scripture text is 1 Corinthian 5.7, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."

This morning, I want us to do a serious examination of the cross of the Lord Jesus. That which most occupies Scripture must most occupy our thoughts and there can be no question that the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ is the primary focus of Scriptures. From God's promise that the Seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent to the Book of Revelation, the Bible is an exposition of Christ and Him crucified. In the Old Testament we see this truth set forward in prophecy, promise and picture. Our Lord left no doubt as to the purpose of OT Scripture when He said, "You search the Scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life." These are the Scriptures that testify of me, but you will not come to me that you might have life. The gospel gives us the biography of our Lord and the History of His work. Acts shows us that the apostles went out preaching Jesus as the Christ. The letters from the apostles are made up of the testimony of Christ and Him crucified and how that truth is to affect our lives.

How far have many professedly Christian churches gone afield of what they are supposed to be doing. They entertain, preach feel-good messages, engage in moralizing and socializing and even drag the filth of politics into their pulpit when they are supposed to be pointing people to the green pastures and still waters of the gospel, setting forth the glories of the Lord Jesus. Charles Wesley wrote, "Oh for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise, the glories of my God and King, the triumphs of His grace."

Would to God there was in every pulpit a single tongue guided by a heart abounding with Christ, that God would send a thousand such tongues into the churches of the USA. One thing is for certain: such preaching would drive the modern-day money-changers and religious hucksters out of the popular pulpits of American Christianity. Such preaching would bring the revival we so desperately need as men and women would see their great sin displayed on Calvary along with the full revelation of God's great grace.

We will attempt just that today, to set forward the great theme of Christ and Him crucified as it is revealed in the Jewish Passover then ask several important questions in the light of the cross of Calvary.

Let us remind ourselves of this great event by which God redeemed His people out of bondage and called the nation of Israel as His people. The Jews had been in Egypt and for some of that time had been treated as slaves, forced to make bricks for Egyptian construction. God sent Moses to Pharaoh with this message, "The LORD says, 'Let My people go.'" Pharaoh answered, "Who is the Lord that I should listen to Him?" Through a series of 10 plagues - disasters sent by God - The LORD showed Pharaoh who He is.

The last of these disasters was the judgment of the firstborn. God decreed that, on a certain night, He would pass through Egypt and kill the firstborn in every household. Note carefully how God worded this: He did not say He would pass through the Egyptians but through Egypt. You may wonder what significance there is to that seemingly small distinction. Had God said, "I will pass through the Egyptians..." there would have been no need for the Passover sacrifice. But seeing He said He would pass through Egypt and kill the firstborn of every household in Egypt, the Jews were in as much trouble as were the Egyptians for they were in Egypt.

Already we see a picture of God's salvation in this story. All of us, even those chosen by God, are worthy of God's wrath and all will receive it one way or another. We are all children of wrath and that just wrath must be satisfied.

But, even though the sentence of death was passed on the Jews as well as the Egyptians, God had said He would make a distinction between Egypt and Israel. This distinction was not to be found in them for they were of no better character or conduct than the Egyptians. This distinction was marked out in blood. God made this distinction by doing several things for the Israelites He did not do for the Egyptians. He did not tell the Egyptians of the coming wrath, but He did tell the Jews. Nor did He tell the Egyptians of any way to avoid experiencing that wrath, but He did tell the Jews. Nor did He move in the hearts of the Egyptians to believe His word and follow His command, but He did that for the Jews.

He told the Jews to select a yearling from the flock a few days before the appointed day of wrath. They were to observe the lamb for those several days to be certain it had no spot, blemish or deformity. This is a picture of the Lord Jesus, our Passover Lamb for He was examined, tried in every point like we are, but proved Himself to be without sin. He did not sin, He knew no sin, and there is no sin in Him. This qualified Him to be the substitute for sinners. You see, one sinner cannot stand in the place of other sinners; only a righteous man can be a substitute for sinners. So Peter wrote that we are redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." And as one without sin, "Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God."

At twilight on the night of Passover, they were to kill the spotless lamb. The Scriptures tell us that the wages of sin is death. Seeing that God laid the sin of His wandering sheep on the Lord Jesus, he

received the horrible wages of death, and received them in full! We sinned with all our being therefore, Christ suffered in all His being. The physical sufferings of our Lord we might imagine, for we know what physical pain is even though none of us has experienced it at the level of those who have been crucified. Our word "excruciating" is derived from the Latin word for crucifixion - the pain of the cross.

But the Lord Jesus endured suffering that we cannot imagine for it was spiritual suffering. That our sin was laid on Him at all must have been a horrible experience for One "who knew no sin." To be "numbered with the transgressors" when you love righteousness and hate iniquity is, in itself, a horrible thing. Add to this that, as part of His suffering, He endured the abandonment of His God. We spend do much of our lives unaware of God we would hardly notice it if, for awhile, God removed His loving presence from us. But not so with the Lord Jesus. God delighted in Him and He in God. But He has been cut off. "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" There is a hell of hells in those words. And Christ suffered such a death for His people.

After the lamb was killed, some of its blood was to be applied to the door posts and lintel of the house. This blood was to be a token to hose in the house - a testimony of God's promise through the blood. And the promise was this. When God passed through Egypt, He would pass over any house on which was found the blood of the lamb.

There are some important things to note about the blood on the door. First, centuries before crucifixion was even invented by men, God symbolized the death of His Son on the doors of His national people. Second, the blood of the lamb was neither shed nor applied to the doors of the houses by the ones who were saved by the blood. Father's served as priests in their homes, so it would

have been the work of the father to kill the lamb and apply its blood to the door. But it was not the father who was saved by the blood, but the son who was saved. And so it is with us. We do not kill the Lamb of God nor do we apply the blood to the door of our hearts. It is God who killed the Lord Jesus, and it is God who has applied His blood to the house of His people. Each of those Jewish houses in Egypt pictured the entire church of God. Third, on Passover night, a person's comfort lay in his ability to believe the blood was on the door but his safety lie in God seeing that the blood was there. The promise was not, "When you believe with all your heart that the blood will shield you from wrath I will pass over you." Rather, God's promise was, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Our seeing and believing on the blood of Christ is not what actually saves us. It is God seeing and accepting the blood of Christ as a sufficient payment for sin that shields us from God's wrath on the Day of His wrath. The death of Christ was a God-ward act. Hebrews says that Christ offered Himself without spot TO GOD, not to us. This popular notion in modern Christianity that we must accept the sacrifice of Christ ignores the fact that the sacrifice was never offered to us. We can neither accept nor reject it since it was never offered to us. It was offered to God FOR His people. And on that day when God sweeps through this world in wrath, wherever He sees the blood of His Son as a testimony that His wrath has already been expressed against someone's sin, He will pass over that person!

So, Christ is our Passover for He is the spotless Lamb who was slain for His people, whose blood was spilled by God and accepted by God as payment for the sins of His people. And the just God will never visit His wrath twice upon the same people. Christ stood for His people, so in God's eyes, wrath has already passed on them, and it will not come to them a second time!

Now let us ask and answer a few questions in the light of Christ's sacrifice. First, what does Christ suffering say about you and me? It declares, in no uncertain terms, that we are sinners beyond ability to fix that problem. God does not waste His efforts nor would he waste the blood of His Son. When we see what great suffering it took to save us, we learn just how great our problem was. "You who think of sin but lightly nor suppose the evil great, here at the cross may view sin rightly, here its guilt may estimate. Mark the sacrifice appointed! See who bears the awful load. 'Tis the Christ, the Lord's anointed, Son of Man and Son of God!" Powerful medicine is used only when the disease is great.

Second. What do you think will happen to you if, in the day of wrath, the blood is not upon you? Look at the suffering of Christ and understand the spiritual nature of it, and you will learn what will become of you apart from Christ. Christ suffered what His people would have suffered apart from Him. So, if you are apart from Christ, you will suffer what He suffered. So I urge you with the very words of our Lord, "Flee the wrath to come!"

Third, seeing such great suffering, does it not seem clear that it would be sufficient to save one like you? I say with all soberness that nothing LESS than the suffering of Christ can save you and I say with all joy and confidence that nothing more than the suffering of Christ is needed to save you! If you would flee the wrath to come, flee to that place where wrath has already been, Christ and Him crucified!

Fourth, is there any good reason for you to refuse to come to Christ for salvation? You may have your reasons, but none of them are any good. You say, "I am such a great sinner." Yes, you are but He is a greater Savior than you are a sinner. You might say, "But I do not know if He died for me?" God never called on us to answer that question as a prerequisite to coming to Christ. God set forth

Christ as a sacrifice of atonement through faith in His blood. God has set Him forth as a Savior. If you see Him as such, then run to Him and find salvation in Him. You have Jesus' own word that it is the will of the Father that of all who look to the Son and believe on him, Christ shall lose none but raise them up in the last day. Leave it to God to sort out the secrets of sovereign will. You act on what He has revealed, and what He has revealed is that you are a sinner in need of a Savior and His Son is the Savior you need.

May God give you grace to look to the Son and believe on Him