

# Rituals of Remembrance

## Exodus 12

**INTRODUCTION:** I learned early as a Pastor - people will rarely remember any particular sermon. You may remember an illustration or a joke, but rarely will you really remember the outline or the meat of a message. That's just reality. What people remember is what you say over and over.

Not that which comes up in any particular sermon, but rather those things that come up in most every sermon.

That's how memory works - repetition is the mother of education.

That is why God has ordained a few rituals for his people to practice - RITUALS of REMEMBRANCE. Why? He's trying to teach you something. He's trying to change you ever so slightly over the course of time.

Rituals practice in repetition is the KEY TO CHANGE.

If you want to change the **CULTURE** of a nation - change it's rituals. If you want change the CULTURE of a business change it's rituals. If you want to change the culture of a family, change its rituals.

### **RITUAL is the RUDDER of CULTURE.**

Julie and I have had certain rituals that we have practiced as a culture for 21 years -

- The 4 D's - Dialogue Daily, Date Week, Depart Quarterly, Depart Annually.
- At family meals - we have a single conversation.
- We attend church gatherings weekly.
- We spend time in bible reading and prayer daily.
- We celebrate holidays and discuss their meaning.

These rituals and traditions have served our family well and have formed a culture that we very much enjoy.

**God knew the power of ritual** - as a matter of fact, he designed humanity in a way that NEEDS ritual to function properly.

Your brain cannot process every particular stimulus that is thrown at it. Therefore, rituals and habits are our brains way of increasing its efficiency. We accept certain things as TRUE and HELPFUL.

**Brushing your teeth** for example. We don't have to think about it each time we do it. We move that practice into the decided upon category and do it without thinking.

Driving to work becomes almost muscle memory. We don't have to stop and think about which route to take. We are creatures of habit. Studies have shown that the interruption of COVID has greatly disturbed those patterns and it's taking a while to get them back.

They are perhaps the most important rituals ever instituted and observed and they were instituted by God Himself.

**CONTEXT:** Remember we have been looking at the 10 plagues that God sent upon Egypt when Pharaoh refused to release the Hebrews from their bondage.

We said last week that the plagues were a REVERSING of the days of creation. As God brought CHAOS into ORDER, the plagues took things from ORDER into CHAOS. They were a disintegration of the world as Egypt knew it.

But the tenth and final plague - the death of the first born would be the most severe. It would effect every family in Egypt. It would upset Pharaoh's on household and nationally it would upset Pharaoh's plan of succession from father to son.

But there was HOPE. There was a way to avoid this horrible judgement. The hope was found in a **MEAL**.

**Have you ever considered the fact that scripture presents history as a series of meals?**

- History begins with a meal In the Garden of Eden, Gen. 3.
- History ends with a meal in Revelation - the Marriage supper of the Lamb.
- Then there are two great meals in between - Passover in the OT and the Lord's Table in the NT - those are what we are going to talk about today.

We are going to talk about those two central meals this morning, then we are going to observe one of them. These meals point to three things....Notice first of all...

## 1. The Reality of Renewal

### Exodus 12:1-2 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, <sup>2</sup> "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.

**In the Ancient World, each culture observed its own calendar.** They were typically agricultural calendars that began either in the SPRING with seed time or in the FALL with HARVEST.

But here God commands His old covenant people that **HISTORY would determine calendar** - specifically the new calendar would begin at the inauguration of the EXODUS.

Our modern calendar follows a similar pattern, also rooted in history - it is **AD ANNO DOMINI - the Year of Our Lord** that is divided from **BC BEFORE CHRIST**.

Every time you state the year, every time you write the date on a check, you are making a theological declaration by marking your historical distance from the Birth of Jesus Christ.

As a matter of fact - one of the things that **Anti Christ** will attempt to do at the end of history is modify the calendar.

For the Jews - Rosh Hashanah which literally means, "the head of the year" marks the CIVIL new year. This is where it began. The passover meal that is described in the following text is celebrated on the civil new year by the Jews.

Passover points to a NEW BEGINNING for the Nation - They went into Egypt as a TRIBE, they are coming out as a great Nation of People.

It is not insignificant that Jesus was celebrating this very meal with his disciples when he instituted the NEW COVENANT.

The institution of the New Covenant would declare that all that had been pointed to in the Old Covenant with its types and shadows - has been fulfilled by the coming of the Messiah. I'll say more about that in a moment - but notice first of all the *REALITY OF RENEWAL...*

## 2. The Ritual for Remembrance

### Exodus 12:3–11 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household.

Now according to the NT the Day Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem was the same day the Jewish families brought the lambs into their homes. The significance is unmistakable. He would be the ultimate lamb of God that all of these lambs pointed to.

PASSOVER was a ritual reserved for each physical family unit. Each family would take a lamb and have a meal. The family you were physically born into.

COMMUNION - In the New Covenant it is a Spiritual Family Ritual - you take communion with your church family. The family you were spiritually born into.

<sup>4</sup> And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. <sup>5</sup> Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.

This lamb had to be perfect because it would point to the Ultimate LAMB of God - “He who knew no sin” the Lord Jesus Christ - so the lamb needed to have no spots or blemishes. Later God would tell them that the priest had to inspect the lamb and make sure it was as perfect as it could possibly be.

<sup>6</sup> and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

This was to take place “at twilight” so that there would be enough light for the process of slaughter, which also involved skinning, removing entrails, tying up for spit roasting, laying the proper fire.

<sup>7</sup> “Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.

This is very important - somehow the life of this animal would ***SUBSTITUTE*** for the life of the first born. A life for a life.

<sup>8</sup> They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it.

The meal itself took place later, after nightfall, when the moon was full (the fourteenth day being the middle of the twenty-eight day lunar cycle, thus the exact time of the full moon).

In New Testament times, of course, the Passover was celebrated at this same time of the month, during the night (e.g., John 13:30) as it has always been in Judaism. The New Testament’s “last supper” with Jesus and his disciples was a Passover meal. So the moon was full on the night of Jesus betrayal.

<sup>9</sup> Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. <sup>10</sup> And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. <sup>11</sup> In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord’s **Passover**.

As they were eating this meal, throughout Egypt families are wailing out as sons were dying.

### **Exodus 12:12–13 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute

judgments: I am the Lord. <sup>13</sup> ***The blood shall be a sign for you***, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

Now notice - the blood is a SIGN for YOU. You expect it to say, it will be a sign for my angel to passover. But no, it's a sign for YOU. Listen, God knew whether or not they believed, God didn't need this sign. The sign was for the people, not God.

When you take communion, or you obey the Lord in baptism, it does not contribute one ounce to your forgiveness... your forgiveness is found in the person and work of Jesus Christ and your response of faith - PERIOD.

Why do we do it? As a sign for the people - so show others what our faith is in.

**Turn over to Exodus 13:11–16 (ESV) and let me show you something very important.**

<sup>11</sup> “When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, <sup>12</sup> you shall set apart to the Lord all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the Lord’s. <sup>13</sup> Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. <sup>14</sup> And when in time to come your son asks you, ‘**What does this mean?**’ you shall say to him, ‘By a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery.”

Why do we practice communion? It's a sign. And listen, if your child has not made a conscious decision to trust Jesus Christ and His work on the cross for forgiveness, you ought not let your child participate.

Why? He has not been spiritually reborn. One of the greatest conversations a parent will ever have with a child is when they aren't allowed to take communion and then they ask WHY?

We live in a day where no one is told NO. Everyone gets a trophy. The most foolish, unwise, and I would say unkind thing you can do as a Parent is to allow your child to take communion when they have not professed faith in Christ.

There is a Reality of Renewals, a Ritual for Remembrance.

### **3. The Redeemer to Reveal**

This use of a lamb was first used in Genesis when Abraham was told to sacrifice Isaac and God raised up a substitute of a ram caught in the thickets.

A Lamb is used again here at Passover.

A Lamb would be used at every passover that would follow for generations.

A Lamb would be used on the Day of Atonement - as the High Priest sprinkled it's blood on the Mercy Seat to atone for the sins of the nation.

Then the first sermon in the New Testament after God had been silent for 400 years after the prophet Malachi... the Prophet John speaks...

### **John 1:29 (ESV)**

<sup>29</sup> The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, **“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”**

Jesus Christ would embody everything that the lamb symbolized.

He would be the perfect substitute.

### **John 11:47–52 (ESV)**

<sup>47</sup> So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. <sup>48</sup> If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” <sup>49</sup> But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. <sup>50</sup> Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.” <sup>51</sup> He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, <sup>52</sup> and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

So imagine it now - the moon is full. Jesus is there with his disciples. It's not like the mural by Leonardo da Vinci.. Jesus and his disciples would have sat on the floor in Jewish style, feet pointed away from the table leaning in. They have eaten the Lamb, the bitter herbs... the Jesus speaks.

### **Luke 22:15–20 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” <sup>16</sup> For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” <sup>17</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves.” <sup>18</sup> For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” <sup>19</sup> And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” <sup>20</sup> And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

### **CONCLUSION/INVITATION:**

Do this IN REMEMBRANCE of me... there is our RITUAL.

We are told how often we should do it. Many early churches did it weekly. The passover that it was taken from was done annually. Here we practice it about 5 times per year.

It requires you not only to engage your mouth, but also your mind. REMEMBER, RECALL, THINK....

Remember the threat that was coming against you.

Not a death angel, not the loss of the first born, but the eternal wrath of God in Hell itself.

But then came a LAMB... THE LAMB... who laid down his life for you... HIS LIFE WAS GIVEN, HIS BLOOD WAS SHED.

But friend - has it been applied? Have you taken it up and painted it on the doorpost and lintels of your heart - if NOT do so today and celebrate the ritual of remembrance with us.