

Open your Bibles to Exodus 12:43-51.

- We're continuing our study of the book of Exodus.
- This morning we come to read some additional commands about keeping the Passover.
- And our theme will be God's Heart Toward the World.

Our text today focuses on WHO was permitted to eat the Passover.

- And the answer was this: Only God's People could eat.
- That's pretty exclusive. But, as we'll see, it was also incredibly inclusive, because anyone could become part of God's People by receiving circumcision, the sign of the Old Covenant.

In light of us having sexual perversions shoved in our faces more than usual this month, I want to preach this text in a way that has application to our situation.

- This text reminds us that God's goal has always been to bring all sorts of people to Himself.
- God's plan has always been to bring all kinds of people into His Kingdom...even the ENEMIES of His People.
- And I want to highlight that because I think that Satan is attacking the Church in two ways right now:

1. He tempts us to cave in to the sinful demands of our culture.

2. If we're too strong to cave, Satan tempts us to hate our enemies.

- To see the difficulties they're placing on us and hate them for it.

- Satan tempts us to not even desire their salvation because they make us so miserable.

The text before us is a good antidote to the poison of that second temptation.

- And that's because it reminds us of God's heart toward the world. That God offers salvation to all people.

- And we're supposed to imitate our God.

- So it'll do us good to remember that God has a place FOR ANYONE who desires to be His through faith in Jesus Christ.

If you're like me and have swallowed some of Satan's hate-poison, I hope this sermon makes you vomit it up.

- And I hope that we all leave here with a greater understanding of God's heart toward the world.

- So may God bless the preaching of His Word.

If you would, and are able, please stand with me now for the reading of the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God.

Exodus 12:43-51

[43] And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner shall eat of it,

[44] but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him.

[45] No foreigner or hired worker may eat of it.

[46] It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones.

[47] All the congregation of Israel shall keep it.

[48] If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it.

[49] There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you.”

[50] All the people of Israel did just as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.

[51] And on that very day the LORD brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.

(PRAY)

Our Great God,

- *You gave the Scriptures for our learning.*
- *So we ask that you would grant us to hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we might grow in every grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*
- *By your Holy Spirit, work in us today.*
- *Show us what you're like. And make us more like you.*
- *We ask these things in Jesus' Name and for His sake.*
- *Amen.*

1.) Before we dive in, I'd like to give some context.

• Last week we read the account of the Exodus itself. God brought Israel out of Egypt, just as He promised.

• And in v38, we read, "A mixed multitude also went up with them..."

• Gentiles, people who WERE NOT descended from Abraham, left Egypt with Israel.

• And that introduced a question: Is there a place for them among God's People?

v42 provides us with the set up for our text today.

• It says, "It was a night of watching by the LORD, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; so this same night

is a night of watching kept to the LORD by all the people of Israel throughout their generations.”

- The “night of watching” is a reference to Passover.
- So, Passover and its regulations are now the theme.

So two big things are being dealt with in our text:

1. Passover regulations.
2. How Passover is to be kept in light of the presence of the mixed multitude.

•We could sum it all up with this question: WHO can eat the Passover?

Let’s read vv43-45: “And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ‘This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner shall eat of it, but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him. No foreigner or hired worker may eat of it.’”

•Catch that: “This is THE STATUTE of the Passover...”

•There were many regulations for Passover. But this one was the most important.

•What was it? You must be CIRCUMCISED in order to keep the Passover.

Now, let me explain the significance of circumcision.

- It was the sign of the covenant God made with

Abraham. The sign of the Old Covenant.

- God had promised the land of Canaan, the giving of laws, a kingdom, and a great nation of descendants that would come from Abraham.

- But most important of all, God promised that the Messiah would be one of Abraham's descendants.

- And as a sign of His promise, God gave circumcision to Abraham (Genesis 17:10)

- On the eighth day of his life, every male descendant of Abraham was to be circumcised.

- And every male slave or foreigner who belonged to the household was also to be circumcised.

Circumcision was the sign given to mark those to whom the promises belonged.

- It was a sign of those who worshipped the Living God.

NOTE: Now we need to remember that circumcision was not necessarily a sign of saving faith in all who received it.

- Sons born to Jewish parents received it, and not all of them grew up to be believers.

- Slaves could be compelled to receive the sign because their master was a Jew.

- For some, circumcision was a sign of saving faith.

- But for many, it was only an outward sign that they

belonged to the nation of Israel, were outwardly part of the Old Covenant People of God, and outwardly professed true religion.

But what I want you to see most is this:

- Circumcision was to be the sign that you were one of God's People, belonging to His covenant, worshipping Him alone, believing His promises.

- And that was especially true if you took that sign BY CHOICE.

And God says that in order to participate in the Passover, you MUST BE CIRCUMCISED.

- “No foreigner shall eat of it...” No OUTSIDER.

- No one who is NOT PART of the covenant community could eat the Passover.

- And the rest of the passage shows that being a “foreigner” didn't have anything to do with residence or ethnicity.

- Being a foreigner had to do with whether or not you were counted among God's People.

This was religious discrimination. (The good kind.)

- If you're part of God's People, you have to keep the Passover. If you're not, then you can't.

- This was a matter of religion, not nationality.

Social status didn't keep anyone from celebrating

the Passover.

- Slaves could eat it. But the slave had to be circumcised first. The slave had to become part of the covenant community and profess allegiance to the LORD.

- From the lowest to the highest, whoever would come to the LORD could eat.

So, again, we see the big point: Only those who were circumcised could eat the Passover.

- Now, women weren't excluded by this. Any woman who was part of a household where men were circumcised could partake.

But, again, you had to take the sign of the covenant.

- You had to align yourself with the Living God.
- You had to profess true religion and unite yourself to God's People, in order to keep the Passover.

vv46-47 go on to give some more regulations:

- “It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it.”

- These commands may have been given to, among other things, emphasize the UNITY of God's People.

Passover was eaten in ONE house.

- One lamb for each household. Many houses, but each family ate TOGETHER. Unity.

The Passover meal wasn't taken outside of the house.

- Eating it exclusively indoors kept it from misuse. Uncircumcised people wouldn't have access to it.
- ONLY God's People could celebrate.

And the lamb's bones were't to be broken.

- This certainly foreshadows our Lord who, though Roman custom was to break the legs of the crucified, had no broken bones (John 19:36).
- But this may have also been meant to communicate the unity of God's People.
- One unbroken, undivided, sacrifice for one People.
- Further symbolizing unity, the whole congregation was to keep Passover.

In all of this, we see that God's People are ONE:

- One lamb, one house, eaten together, staying in the house, an unbroken but shared meal.
- All of that says: One way of salvation, one God, one Savior, one Faith, one People.
- Again, Passover was EXCLUSIVELY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE.

But even with all that unity and exclusion, God goes on to emphasize that the Gentiles could be included:

•“If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall at of it.”

- All were welcomed by God to join Israel.
- Anyone who desired to keep the Passover could, if they would submit to God’s covenant sign.
- And why would anyone desire to keep Passover?
- Because they BELIEVED in the God of Israel!
- God was inviting the nations to come to Him!

Whoever would receive the sign, and bring his house under the Old Covenant, was to be considered a full Israelite.

- God said, “...he shall be as a native of the land.”
- God says that a foreigner who decided to join himself to the LORD would become equal to the native-born, blood-relative of Abraham.
- The circumcised Gentile would become a Jew. A full member of God’s covenant People.

God then said, “There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you.”

- Whether native or foreign, everyone who would keep Passover must be circumcised.

- But, again, the LORD puts outsiders on equal footing with Abraham's offspring, if they desire to be His!

Now we come to the final two verses:

- “All the people of Israel did just as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron. And on that very day the LORD brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.”

- The People kept the Passover, allowing only those circumcised to partake.

- And on that first Passover day, God saved Israel.

2.) The big question of the text is: Who can eat Passover?

- Answer: The People of God.

- And who are the People of God? All who receive the sign of the covenant.

Even under the Old Covenant, our God welcomed all who desired to be His People.

- Ethnic descent didn't matter.

- Faith is what mattered. All were welcomed by God, if they would come.

God had promised Abraham in Genesis 17:4, “... you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.”

- And we see that happening in its early stages here.
- Even at the first giving of circumcision, foreigners were present and given the sign. (Genesis 17:27)
- Foreigners were always to be included in God's covenant. Only unbelief could keep them out.

This was an early sign to the Gentiles of what God would do in Christ.

•The Apostle Paul speaks of "the mystery of Christ." Something hidden for ages but now revealed.

•In Ephesians 3:6, he says, "This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel."

- God's design was always to include the Gentiles.

So I think our text teaches us three things:

1. God's Plan for the World
2. God's Heart for the World
3. What Our Attitude Toward the World Should Be

3.) God's Plan for the world is to save the world.

•Now, when I say "world," I don't mean every single individual.

•We aren't going to abuse this text and deny God's sovereignty in election and reprobation.

- Rather, "world," most often means people from every

nation, tribe, and tongue. All kinds of people from everywhere.

- And God's Plan is to save the world.

That was the whole reason for Israel's existence.

•Genesis 12:1-3, God's first words to Abraham were, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

•The world-blessing Offspring, the Messiah, Jesus Christ would come from Abraham.

•The Seed of the Woman, promised to Eve, who would crush the head of the Serpent and set all things right, would come from Israel.

•And all the nations of the earth would be blessed IN HIM.

•That was God's whole purpose for Israel. He was creating the nation through which His only begotten Son would be born, according to the flesh.

God's Plan to save the world is found in the Psalms, too.

- They speak of a future time when all nations would

know the LORD.

- Psalm 22:27 says, “All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you.”

- Psalm 117:1-2 says, “Praise the LORD, all nations! Extol Him, all peoples! For great is His steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD!”

- Did you catch that? ALL nations and peoples should praise God. Why? “For great is His steadfast love toward US...”

- US! That’s both Jew and Gentile!

Prophets foretold of a day when salvation would come to the Gentiles through the Messiah:

- Isaiah 1:10 says, “In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of Him shall the nations inquire, and His resting place shall be glorious.”

- The root of Jesse is Jesus Christ.

- And He will be a signal for all peoples. They’ll rally around Him and come to Him for instruction.

Speaking again of our Lord, Isaiah 49:6 says,

- “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the

earth.”

- Jesus Christ is too glorious that He would save only the Jews. So God would give Him as a light for the world, that salvation might come to all men!

Prophets also spoke of a time when the knowledge of God would be universal.

- Habakkuk 2:14 says, “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

Jesus Christ brought and is bringing these promises to pass, since He came into the world to live, die, and be raised to save sinners.

- John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

- Why did Jesus come? To save WHOEVER would believe, whether Jew or Gentile.

- He came to save the WORLD. Because God loves the WORLD. Because God’s Plan is to save the WORLD.

Jesus said this in John 12:32:

- “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

- He was speaking of His Cross. Being lifted up. When

He was crucified, the result would be that all people, all kinds of people, would be drawn to Christ.

- That's why He came.

As Isaiah said, it would've been too small a thing for Jesus to save only the Jews.

- Jesus came to redeem a multitude that no man can number, made up all nations, tribes, and tongues.

- He lived a perfect life and gave that life in place of whoever would believe on Him.

- He suffered God's wrath as a substitute for men of all nations. He worked redemption for a mixed multitude of believers.

Hear the words of Romans 1:16:

- “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

- Christ came for all who would come to Him in faith.

- And that's why the Apostle could say, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.” (Galatians 3:28-29)

- By faith in Christ, all people can become God's People.

THIS WAS THE POINT OF IT ALL!

- Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, pictured in our text today.

- Through God's son, Israel, Gentiles could know God. But now, through God's only begotten Son, Jesus, all sinners may know God by faith in Him.

- It was never really about Israel. It was always about God's purpose to save the world through Jesus Christ.

4.) And God's Plan for the world reveals God's heart for the world.

- And what is God's heart? What's His attitude toward the world?

- In a word, "Whosoever will may come."

- God will gladly embrace any sinner who comes to Him. That's His disposition toward the world.

Listen to what our God says to this sinful world:

- "The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price." (Revelation 22:17)

- "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other." (Isaiah 45:22)

- "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink." (John 7:37)

- "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and

I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:28-29)

God says, “COME!”

- He says, “Turn to me! Come! Come to me!”
- And He says it to all the ends of the earth! To whoever thirsts. To whoever desires. To anyone. To everyone. To all who are weary of their sin and seek rest.

- God freely offers Christ to the world!
- He freely offers the forgiveness of sins, peace, rest, and eternal life to whoever wants it!
- His disposition is that of a Savior!

HEAR ME: I’m not denying God’s sovereignty in salvation. I’m not denying that all men are dead in sin apart from God’s regenerating grace.

- But I AM SAYING that God’s disposition toward ALL MEN is that if they will come, He will save them.
- If any sinner would join Him, if ANY will repent and believe on Christ, GOD HAS A PLACE FOR THEM!

Background doesn’t matter. Past sins don’t matter.

- Ethnicity, social status, intelligence, NOTHING MATTERS BUT ONE THING ONLY: Faith in Christ.

- If the sinner desires a place with God, God has a place for him.
- If the sinner desires forgiveness, God freely gives it.
- If the sinner desires to come, God always has another room in His House.

THAT IS THE HEART OF GOD TOWARD THE WORLD!

- Whoever will come, may come. And He will gladly receive them.
- This is why the Son of God says even today, “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.” (John 6:37)
- Whoever comes to Christ will never be cast out. Never rejected. Never denied.
- Why? Because God’s heart is that of a Savior. And Jesus Christ is the exact imprint of His nature.

Beloved, hear me: There are no “native born” Christians.

- All must be born again by the Spirit.
- But the sinner who repents will become “as the native born,” so to speak.
- The believing sinner will receive the same legal standing before God as the saint who has followed Christ for fifty years.
- Why? BECAUSE CHRIST IS THEIR LEGAL

STANDING BEFORE GOD!

- And Christ is the same for all His people who have been united to Him by faith.

Our God is a saving God.

- Quick to mercy and slow to wrath.
- He stands at the ready to save any who will come.
- He is glad to receive sinners through Christ.
- He has an open heart to ANYONE who will believe in Jesus.
- THAT is the heart of our God.

5.) Brothers and sisters, God's heart for the world should be ours, too.

- We should earnestly desire to see others come to know Him through Christ.
- We should desire to see "Gentiles" join the Israel of God by faith.

As God's People, we're to have this on our hearts and lips to the world:

- "We want you to come! We want you to know God. We want you to join our Family. We don't care who you are, what sins you've committed, who you've been, or anything else. Our Lord says, 'Whoever will may come.' So we say the same. It would be our joy that you become our brother/sister!"

Now, we all put our “Amen” to that, theologically and theoretically.

- And we probably actually feel that way...about ALMOST everyone.

- But, being honest with ourselves, there is probably some person or group of people that we don't have that kind of heart toward.

- And it's usually a person or group who is our enemy.

- Not even that WE'VE made them our enemy. But they've made themselves our enemy. They've wronged us or seek our harm.

- So we don't think about them with the heart of God.

I have in mind two groups of people in particular:

1. Political Liberals/Leftists/Marxists

2. The so-called “LGBTQ Community.”

- I bet that most of us aren't so warm-hearted toward them. Especially this month.

We know theoretically that they could become Christians.

- But do we even WANT THAT?

- Do we sincerely desire their salvation?

- Or do we view them purely as our enemies and secretly (or not so secretly) desire their damnation?

I ask this because I know that I'm prone to hate

those two groups.

•But it's not even because of the sins they're known for. I don't tend to hate gay people because they commit acts of sodomy. I don't tend to hate liberals because they're atheistic and irrational.

•It's far more personal than that.

•It's that both of those groups desire to silence and destroy the Church.

•That they eventually want to see my family, my people, my brothers and sisters in Christ silenced, jailed, or ultimately killed unless we fall in line with their godless ideologies.

•That's where my hatred comes from.

•That, and I can see what they've already done (or tried to do) to many good Christian people who refused to bow down to their demands.

AND I BET I'M NOT THE ONLY PERSON HERE WHO STRUGGLES WITH THAT.

•So I ask again, do we want these people to know the Lord?

•Is that our first thought about them?

•Or is our instinct toward animosity and hatred?

•Or maybe even fear that makes you want to run the other way when you see them?

ILLUSTRATE: Recently, my daughter had a party with

some classmates at her dance studio.

- Two homosexual women introduced themselves to me as one child's "Moms."

- My gut-reaction was to get away from them.

- I'm a pastor. My kid is in a class with their kid. I know we're going to clash at some point if we talk.

- I immediately thought, "Great..this will go well...stay away from my kid...I don't want to talk."

- I was civil and friendly. But my insides were on fire.

But you know what I didn't think?

- I didn't think, "Those are two potential church members. Those are two women who could be born again, by God's grace, renounce their wickedness, trust in Christ, and be trophies of God's mercy. AND I WANT TO SEE THAT HAPPEN. So, I should talk to them about Jesus and pray for them."

- That thought didn't cross my mind until I began studying this text. Shame on me for that.

But that's how I should've thought about them.

- That's how the Israelites should've viewed the Egyptians who left Egypt with them.

- Egyptians, part of the mixed multitude, could join Israel, according to God.

- Israel's enemies, who had enslaved them for centuries, were offered a place among God's People.

- The enemies of God's People could become His People.

And that's even more true today since Christ has come!

- May we never forget the Apostle Paul!
- May we never forget that two Elders in this church were vehement atheists before God had mercy!
- God welcomes His enemies, if they'll repent and believe.
- And we were all once His enemies. But God had mercy.

Are you OK with that, Christian?

- Do you believe we have room in this church for "Egyptians?" Because WE MUST!
- It's not our church. It's Christ's. And if He says, "Come," then we say, "Amen! Come!"

Brothers and sisters, every sinner you meet, no matter how wicked and wretched is a potential church member.

- I want you to think about people that way.
- Everyone you meet, should God have mercy, is a potential brother or sister, no matter how far they are from God.
- If they desire to come, God says, "Come!" And

Christ's Bride says, "Amen!"

Friends, we need more pity than anger.

- We need broken-hearted yearning for conversions more than slogans and memes.

- We need earnest prayer more than angry conversations.

- We need a Holy Spirit induced, open-hearted, God-imitating desire to see the world come to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

- And that includes our bitterest enemies.

Richard Wurmbrand, a Lutheran minister who spent 12 years in Communist prisons said often, "We must love the Communists."

- Friends, if we fight hate with hate, we're using Satan's tools and playing into his hands.

- Nobody has ever been brought to Christ through hatred.

- But if we bring love and the Gospel, who knows what wonders God might work through us.

- We might very well find that we have many siblings among our enemies.

6.) Brothers and sisters, we must have the heart of God.

- His design is to save all kinds of people, from all

kinds of places, caught in all kinds of sin, that HE MIGHT BE GLORIFIED AS THE SAVIOR.

•It was true in Israel's day. And it's even more clear now that Christ has come.

So if you, like me, need to repent of your hatred and lack of desire to see ALL KINDS of people come to Christ, then repent.

- Christ died for hard hearted sinners.
- Christ died for the self-righteous.
- Christ died for the forgetful.
- Christ died for you.
- Look to Him again in faith, be forgiven, and seek to love.

May we all view everyone as potential citizens of Christ's Kingdom.

•And may we speak, pray, and interact with all men with the desire that they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

•Amen.