

## Remembering Salvation

- I. Independence Day
  - A. We got to see a parade on Thursday (July 4<sup>th</sup>).
    1. It all began weeks ago when we received a letter from the Mayor of the Meadows.
      - a) We live in the Meadows, a city of 5000 people between Houston and SugarLand.
      - b) We have our own Mayor, police, etc.
    2. The letter said that the July 4th parade this year would be extended and would go right down our street. It asked that we not park on the street between 10:00 am and noon.
    3. So Thursday morning, we sat on lawn chairs in the front yard to watch the parade.
    4. After the obligatory police car and fire truck, sirens blaring, waking up the local teens, came the color guard. The flag was held high by veterans of foreign wars. Behind it was a group of veterans of WWII and Korea and Viet Nam. Overhead an attack helicopter flew in acrobatic circles. The parade included the mayor, city aldermen, boy scouts, girl scouts, and just about anyone who wanted to wear the red, white, and blue and salute America.
  - B. The Fourth of July is a special day. It is a day when we look back 220 years to July 4, 1776.
    1. On that day, our forefathers declared independence, and in declaring it also laid their lives on the line, because that independence did not come without a human price.
    2. Many of you have paid that price in your own involvement in military conflicts, you have served in wartime, you have been POW's, you have lost a spouse or child or brother or sister serving our country.
    3. That price continues today, as we continue to uphold freedom.
    4. Just two weeks ago, a bomb destroyed a military barracks in Saudi Arabia.
    5. All of this surfaces on July 4. We look back. We remember. We count the cost of freedom and we celebrate it.
  - C. When our people forget July 4, then our nation begins to falter.
    1. When July 4 is just a day off, a day for the beach, a day to sleep in, then it ceases to be Independence Day.
    2. When July 4 is just another excuse to have a sale or another excuse to make more money, it ceases to be Independence Day.
    3. July 4 is only Independence Day when people remember, count the cost, and in a way, participate in it.
- II. The Exodus / Passover
  - A. In the life of ancient Israel, the key defining event was the Exodus. The exodus showed God's adoption of Israel as his people and the re-establishment of His covenant with them.
    1. In a sense, the Exodus was a declaration of Independence for Israel.
  - B. The story begins with (Exo 2:23-25 NRSV) *After a long time the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned under their slavery, and cried out. Out of the slavery their cry for help rose up to God.*<sup>24</sup> *God heard their groaning, and God remembered his*

covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.<sup>25</sup> *God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them.*

1. Throughout Israelite history we see references back to this cry. Individuals are told not to abuse others, because the Lord will always hear the cry of the oppressed.
2. God took notice by grooming Moses to be a deliverer, to bring the people from slavery and to be God's covenant community in the promised land.
3. From that day on, God became the God who brought them out of Egypt, from the bondage of slavery. It is a statement that is repeated over 100 times in the text.
  - a) How can you doubt the God, "who brought you out of Egypt?"
  - b) How can you deny the God who saved you?
  - c) (Psa 81:10 NRSV) *I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.*
4. The exodus event became the defining action of the nature of God and the salvation of his people.

#### C. Establishment of Passover

1. The way God saved Israel was by a series of plagues followed by special care until the giving of the law on Sinai. To the Israelite, all of these things contributed to each other, and it was the Salvation of God.
2. (Exo 12:1-14 NRSV) *The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: <sup>3</sup>Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. <sup>4</sup>If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. <sup>5</sup>Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. <sup>6</sup>You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. <sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. <sup>9</sup>Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. <sup>10</sup>You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. <sup>11</sup>This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the LORD. <sup>12</sup>For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; 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 live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. <sup>14</sup>This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.*
3. God instituted the Passover as a special annual feast, like the 4th of July, as a day to remember their independence. Everything else was to stop, and they were to hear again and live again the salvation that could only come from God.
4. (Exo 13:8-10 NRSV) *You shall tell your child on that day, 'It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.'*<sup>9</sup> *It shall serve for you as a sign on*

*your hand and as a reminder on your forehead, so that the teaching of the LORD may be on your lips; for with a strong hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt.*

<sup>10</sup> *You shall keep this ordinance at its proper time from year to year.*

5. (Exo 13:14 NRSV) *When in the future your child asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ you shall answer, ‘By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery.’*

D. Year after year, the people of Israel gathered and reenacted the events of their forefathers.

1. It was as if they were slaves in Israel.
2. It was as if God was on that very night bringing them out of Egypt.
3. So they celebrated the feast on the same day.
4. They celebrated it in the same way.
5. They ate the same foods.
6. And to the greatest extent possible, they felt the same emotions.
7. The meal was eaten in a hurry. They ate standing up, ready to leave. The unleavened bread didn’t have time to rise, for the meal was prepared in a hurried way.
8. At the climax of the meal, the youngest child would ask, “What does all of this mean.” Then the patriarch of the group would retell the story of salvation.
9. They told the past, to add meaning to the present, and give hope to the future.

E. When Israel forgot the Passover, they also forgot the Exodus and all that God’s Salvation meant.

1. 2 Chronicles 34 and 35 talk of a new King of Judah. Josiah was only a boy of 8 years old when he began his reign, and 39 years old when he died.
2. When he was 16, scripture says he began to “seek for God.” Judah had become very wicked with all sorts of idolatry and evil practiced by the people. The worship of Yahweh God had virtually disappeared.
3. By the time Josiah was 20, he knew enough to know the wickedness of Judah so he began to purge Jerusalem of the idolatry and destroy the items of idol worship.
4. When he was 26, he began the restoration of the worship of Yahweh and the reconstruction of the Temple.
5. In the midst of all of this, Hilkiah, the priest, finds the book of the law, and Josiah has it read to all the people.
6. Then Josiah did something that had not been done in Judah since the days of Samuel, he led the people in celebrating the Passover.
7. Festivals help us to remember our past. Festivals help pass on the story. Israel had not celebrated its story of salvation, and the place of God was soon forgotten also.

III. The Church /Lord’s Supper

A. The defining story that is central to who we are is the story of Jesus Christ, and specifically the events surrounding the death of Jesus.

1. (1 Cor 15:3-4 NRSV) *For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures,<sup>4</sup> and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures,*

2. (1 Cor 1:22-23 NRSV) *For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom,<sup>23</sup> but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,*
  3. (1 Cor 2:2 NRSV) *For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*
  4. (Rom 3:23-25 NRSV) *since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God;<sup>24</sup> they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,<sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith.*
  5. (Heb 10:12-14 NRSV) *But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, “he sat down at the right hand of God,”<sup>13</sup> and since then has been waiting “until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet.”<sup>14</sup> For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.*
  6. God heard our cry, as he heard the cry of Israel.
  7. He saw the hopelessness of our situation as he had seen the hopelessness of their.
  8. And God intervened, becoming incarnate, becoming a man, living among us, showing us God, being the perfect example.
  9. He demonstrated how to live, he was always in obedience to his Father’s will.
  10. Yet men were threatened by him, rejected him, and killed him..
  11. What they did not know was that they were living the Passover all over
- B. Jesus took that same Passover meal, that celebration of salvation, and gave it his own meaning.
1. Just before his arrest, mock trial, and crucifixion, he gathered his disciples for the annual Passover feast.
  2. They did not realize that the lamb that would be slaughtered that day was none other than Jesus Himself.
  3. Jesus would reinterpret the whole Passover salvation in light of his ministry and sacrifice.
  4. He sat with his 12 around a dinner table and together they ate the highly symbolic Passover meal.
  5. <sup>23</sup> *the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread,<sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”<sup>25</sup> In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”<sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.*
- C. As we gather as a church, our minds go back to that upper room.
1. We remember the past to give meaning to the present and hope for the future.
  2. There are a group of men serving you, but rather it is Jesus.
  3. You are reminded of the events of his life.
  4. You are reminded of the fellowship you share.
  5. You think of the miracles he has worked in your life.
  6. You think of the teaching he has given to you.
  7. You think of his care, his challenge, his unusual way of reaching people, His love.
  8. Today it is you and Jesus. You remember him.
  9. You remember that your salvation is only possible through him.

10. (Eph 1:3-12 NRSV) *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. <sup>5</sup> He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup> that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, <sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup> In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, <sup>12</sup> so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory.*
11. (Gal 1:3-5 NRSV) *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>4</sup> who gave himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, <sup>5</sup> to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

- IV. When the church loses sight of the Lord's Supper, it too can lose sight of its salvation.
- A. The Lord's Supper draws us back to Jesus just as Passover brought Israel back to Sinai.
  - B. We need the supper, weekly, in the fellowship of other believers, to be reminded of who we are and whose we are.
  - C. Indeed there is an interesting passage in (1 Corinthians 11:29-30 NRSV) *For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, (Jesus and the fellowship) eat and drink judgment against themselves. <sup>30</sup> For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.,*
    1. This is the only passage in the NT that reads this way, and we don't know the details, but the passage seems to say that there were members of the congregation who, because they were abusing the Lord's Supper were sick and some had even died as a result of God's punishment.
    2. The message is: God takes our remembrance of his salvation very seriously.
- V. As we come together, one of the purposes is to remember the salvation that is only to be found in Jesus.