



**Saint John United Methodist Church**  
12700 W. Hwy. 42, Prospect, KY 40059  
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**Message for March 26, 2023**  
**“Good News: Worthy Is the Lamb”**  
**Speaker: Pastor Tom Grieb**  
**Scripture: I Corinthians 5:6-8**

### ***Salvation at the Sea***

The story of the Exodus is at the heart of the Hebrew faith. My Old Testament professor in college coined the phrase, *“Salvation at the sea, and decision in the desert”* when it came to the Exodus.

The backstory of the Exodus includes a series of plagues set in motion to soften Pharaoh’s heart to the place where he would let God’s people go. The last of those plagues included the death of every firstborn Egyptian son. The Hebrews were spared the horrors of that plague.

### **The Unblemished Lamb**

They were instructed to slaughter an unblemished lamb and apply the blood of that lamb to the doorframe of their homes. Upon applying the blood, the promise was that the angel of death would *“pass over”* that household, thereby saving that household from death.

### **Getting Ready to Travel**

The Hebrews were also instructed to get ready to travel, after all the Lord was about to set them free. They were to put on their traveling clothes if you will. Since time was of the essence, they were also instructed to bake unleavened bread. There was no time for the leaven to work, so they were called on to leave it out.

I love bread. I can’t get enough of it. I like big fluffy, rise over the top of the pan bread. Everyone has commented on the Hawaiian Bread we are now serving at Holy Communion. We couldn’t find it during COVID. Everybody likes bread, particularly with a lot of sugar in it. 😊

The unleavened bread of Passover is a very flat, dry cracker, which doesn’t have a lot of taste. We will have some of it at our Seder meal on Maundy Thursday. We will also hear a lot more about Passover.

### **Cleansing Their Households**

One of those details we will hear more about is that as the Hebrews were not only to prepare their bread without leaven but were to dispose of any leaven they had, even to the point of sweeping their floors and getting rid of what was swept up.

Down through the centuries leaven had come to represent sin and evil. By ridding themselves of all leaven, the early Hebrews were, in effect, cleansing their households of the sin that was a part of their lives.

Paul writes in I Corinthians 5:8, *“Therefore let us keep the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.”* (I Corinthians 5:8)

Just preceding this verse, Paul strikes an even deeper truth when he talks about *“Christ, our Passover Lamb.”*

*“Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast, for Christ, our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed.”* (I Corinthians 5:7)

### **(Take Down Slide)**

#### **Christ Our Passover Lamb**

The notion of Christ as our Passover Lamb is foundational to our understanding of what he does in paving the way for our salvation. Just as the Passover Lamb brought life to the Hebrews centuries ago, so Christ brings life to those who so believe.

At the first Passover, the sacrifice of a perfect lamb saved the lives of Israel’s firstborn. The lamb also paved the way for the Hebrews to be released from bondage. They were no longer slaves, but free.

For us, Jesus is the final Passover Lamb whose sacrifice paves the way for our salvation and the freedom that is ours in him. In a word, because of what Jesus did on the cross the road to perdition becomes a highway which paves the way to forgiveness and freedom.

#### **The Supreme Sacrifice**

I love the story told of the church in Werden, Germany that has a lamb carved in stone on the top of its roof. It is said that when the church was being built, a stone-carving mason fell from a high scaffold. His co-workers rushed down, expecting him to be dead. To their surprise, he was alive and only slightly injured.

As the story goes, a flock of sheep was passing beneath the scaffold at the very same time the man fell, and he landed on top of one of them. The lamb broke his fall but was crushed to death. The man, though, was saved. To commemorate his miraculous escape from death, the man carved a lamb in stone and placed it on the roof of the church, all in gratitude for the fact that the lamb had saved his life.

So it is with us when it comes to Christ, the Lamb of God.

#### ***Behold the Lamb of God***

*“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.”* says John the Baptist in John 1:29.

The great prayer, *the Agnus Dei*, has been prayed and sung throughout the ages, *“O Christ, you are the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. Have mercy upon us.”*

Let’s repeat that prayer just now.

Praise be to God for his Son Jesus Christ, the holy Lamb of God.