

**“The Eucharist”** (2 Chronicles 30:1–5, 25–27) (12.4.22)

2 Chronicles 30:1–5 (NIV84) *Hezekiah Celebrates the Passover*

**30** Hezekiah sent word to all Israel and Judah and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, inviting them to come to the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover to the Lord, the God of Israel.<sup>2</sup> The king and his officials and the whole assembly in Jerusalem decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month.<sup>3</sup> They had not been able to celebrate it at the regular time because not enough priests had consecrated themselves and the people had not assembled in Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup> The plan seemed right both to the king and to the whole assembly.<sup>5</sup> They decided to send a proclamation throughout Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, calling the people to come to Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover to the Lord, the God of Israel. It had not been celebrated in large numbers according to what was written.

2 Chronicles 30:25–27 (NIV84)

<sup>25</sup> The entire assembly of Judah rejoiced, along with the priests and Levites and all who had assembled from Israel, including the aliens who had come from Israel and those who lived in Judah.<sup>26</sup> There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the days of

Solomon son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem.<sup>27</sup> The priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard them, for their prayer reached heaven, his holy dwelling place.

## **The word of God for the people of God.**

LET US PRAY.

Title: **"The Eucharist"**

INTRODUCTION:

Most of you know the story to one extent or the other. At the burning bush, God told Moses, "I have heard the cry of my people." The LORD sent Moses to Pharaoh in Egypt to convince him to set the Hebrews free from slavery.

Pharaoh was hard hearted and needed a lot of convincing. After nine terrible plagues, Pharaoh was still resisting. The LORD determined that the tenth plague would settle the matter. Starting with Pharaoh and going all the way down to the lowliest household, the first born would die, human and animals alike.

But, God promised the Hebrews who followed His instructions would be saved. Each household was to sacrifice a male lamb without defect. The blood of the lamb was to be spread on the sides and tops

of the doorframes of that house. Inside that house, the lamb was to be completely consumed before morning.

Exodus 12:12–14 (NIV84)

<sup>12</sup>“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord.<sup>13</sup>The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

<sup>14</sup>“This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord—a lasting ordinance.”

Upon hearing the LORD’s instructions Exodus 12:21 (NIV84) Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb.

Exodus 12:26–27 (NIV84)

<sup>26</sup>And when your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’<sup>27</sup> then tell them, ‘It is the **Passover** sacrifice to the Lord, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared

our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.' ”  
Then the people bowed down and worshiped.

Passover also launched another festival of remembrance: Exodus 12:17 (NIV84) “Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.”

BODY:

That is the backdrop to today’s scripture. Last week’s message addressed the previous chapter of 2 Chronicles. King Hezekiah had just taken over after the death of his wicked father. The Temple doors had been locked – closed for business, so to speak. The nation was in ruins on many levels.

King Hezekiah’s remedy was revival. The priests and the Levites were cleansed and consecrated. The Temple was cleansed and consecrated. Temple worship and sacrifice were reestablished. The doors of the Temple had been reopened and the people and ministers of God, and King Hezekiah rejoiced.

How could this renewal be extended and expanded? There would be a celebration of Passover. The whole nation of Israel would be

invited. This is very important because there was serious disunity in the nation.

When the Assyrians had conquered the Northern Kingdom, they deported much of the population. And, they took other displaced people and brought them into the Samarian region. This was a deliberate and effective strategy. It reduced the likelihood of a later rebellion because their separate identities as a people and a nation were diluted.

That is exactly what happened. Many in the conquered Northern Kingdom intermarried with their new neighbors. And because of this, the Hebrew people of Judah looked down upon them. 2 Chronicles 30:6–7 (NIV84)

<sup>6</sup>At the king's command, couriers went throughout Israel and Judah with letters from the king and from his officials, which read:

"People of Israel, return to the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, that he may return to you who are left, who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria.<sup>7</sup> Do not be like your fathers and brothers, who were unfaithful to the Lord, the God of their fathers, so that he made them an object of horror, as you see.

Return to the Lord that He may return to you. Certainly, you can hear King Hezekiah calling the nation to repentance and renewal. These are the pillars of revival. And what was going to be the impetus for this movement? The people were going to Jerusalem, going to the Temple of God, to celebrate Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The Spirit of God moved in this renewal of worship and faithfulness. Their God had commanded these festivals of remembrance not for God's sake but for His beloved people. We are blessed when we remember what God has done because that is the basis of our hope for the future. The God who hears the cry of His people is the God that saves. He sent Moses to set the Hebrew people free and He sent Jesus so that all people could be free.

The response was remarkable. There was rejoicing at every level. Hearts were affected to the extent that it was decided to extend the Feasting and celebration of what God had done another whole week. This required King Hezekiah to offer up a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep and goats for the assembly, and the officials provided them with a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep and goats.

2 Chronicles 30:26 (NIV84) There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem.

There had been a hitch in the festivities. Many in the crowd had not consecrated themselves. They were ceremonially unclean according to Jewish Law. Many people who had come from the northern tribes had not purified themselves, yet they ate the Passover, contrary to what was written. It may have been out of ignorance because it had been so many years since the Passover was celebrated. It may have been the unexpected fairly short notification because travel was mostly by foot over a considerable distance.

2 Chronicles 30:18–19 (NIV84)

<sup>18</sup> ... But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, “May the Lord, who is good, pardon everyone<sup>19</sup> who sets his heart on seeking God—the Lord, the God of his fathers—even if he is not clean according to the rules of the sanctuary.”

To us, the ceremonial law does not seem like a big deal; but, it definitely was a big deal to the Jews. Violating these God-given guidelines could lead to banishment from the community. That is why King Hezekiah prayed for them and why it was crucial

that the LORD heard the prayer and healed the people.

Now, isn't that an interesting phrasing. The LORD's response to their uncleanness was to "heal the people." Yes, sin is a sickness. Remember the words of Jesus in an encounter with the Pharisees in Luke 5:30–32 (NIV84)

<sup>30</sup> But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

<sup>31</sup> Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. <sup>32</sup>I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Maybe you are wondering why I have not mentioned the word Eucharist yet. Patience, I am getting there. The next step is to demonstrate that Jesus is the Passover Lamb for Christians. I will just give you three scriptures of many to demonstrate this fact.

John 1:29 (NIV84) The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

Hebrews 9:14 (NIV84) How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit



offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

1 Corinthians 5:7 (NIV84) Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

After the miracle of Jesus feeding the five thousand with five small loaves of barley bread and two small fish, Jesus addresses the crowds following Him. Funny thing, I don't think I noticed before that the bread and fish were described as small.

Here is what Jesus tells the crowd: John 6:47–59 (NIV84)

<sup>47</sup>I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. <sup>48</sup>I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup>Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. <sup>50</sup>But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. <sup>51</sup>I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

<sup>52</sup> Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

<sup>53</sup> Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. <sup>56</sup> Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup> Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever." <sup>59</sup> He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

Who is it that eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Lord Jesus? It is we Christians who partake of Holy Communion. This is one of our two sacraments commanded and ordained by Jesus. Let us join Jesus and His disciples on their last night together before His crucifixion. Luke 22:7–20 (NIV84) *The Last Supper*

<sup>7</sup> Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> Jesus sent

Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover."

<sup>9</sup>"Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked.

<sup>10</sup>He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters,<sup>11</sup> and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'<sup>12</sup> He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there."

<sup>13</sup>They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

<sup>14</sup>When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table.<sup>15</sup> And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.<sup>16</sup> For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

<sup>17</sup>After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you.<sup>18</sup> For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

<sup>19</sup> And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

<sup>20</sup> In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

Hopefully, you are able to see the pathway we have followed. You can see the consistency in God's plan to redeem us and save us. You can see the connection between the Passover, Jesus, and the Lord's Supper. As the blood over the doorframes of each Hebrew household was key to salvation from death, so the blood sacrifice of Jesus saves everyone who spiritually consumes the body and blood of the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world.

## CONCLUSION:

My friends, we have come to our destination, The Eucharist. The Greek word is *eucharistia* that literally means "thanksgiving" and it refers to the Lord's Supper. If you look at the accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, you will see that Jesus gave thanks three different times. Considering what he knew He would face the next day, this is remarkable.

According to the Lexham Bible Dictionary: "Jesus' action represents more than a table blessing or simple expression of gratitude. He uses terminology associated with the sacrificial ministry of the Jerusalem temple, offering the elements of bread and wine as His "body" and "blood" and referring to the action as His memorial."

It is interesting that Passover started as a corporate celebration at home. It is like Christmas in that we celebrate together as a Body of Christ while also doing it individually in our homes. As the celebration of Passover evolved historically, it was held in the Jerusalem Temple of God. We can see by the account of Jesus and the disciples; it was also still being celebrated at home.

My exhortation to you is that we celebrate the Eucharist in our homes, in the normal rhythms of our lives. Jesus chose the two most common dinner items – bread & wine – in establishing the practice – do this in remembrance of me. Truly Jesus is the bread of heaven. Like manna, we need Him every day. As we pray in the Lord's prayer, give us this day our daily bread.

John 6:53–55 (NIV84)

<sup>53</sup> Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Whoever eats my

flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.<sup>55</sup> For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.”

Give thanks, give thanks, give thanks. This is the gift of The Eucharist.

**Amen and amen.** Let us pray.