

Sermon for Maundy Thursday

'The Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.'

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'The whole assembly of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.' 'They shall eat the flesh that night, and they shall collect some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the house in which they eat.'

This is the Lord's Passover. In ancient times, it was proper that *every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' house, a lamb for the household*. For a sacrifice was indeed required. For was it the case that only the Egyptians were sinners? Were only their firstborn to be killed for the sins of their fathers? Yet, *there is none without sin, not one*, so even among the victims of this Egyptian slavery, the Hebrews required atonement, for they, no different from their Egyptian oppressors, were sinners.

We do not understand in our modern time how this could be the case, for we regard oppressors as the evil, and the oppressed as the innocent. But this is merely human pride, for there are none innocent among us; *for all have fallen short of the glory of God*.

Even the Hebrews were godless sinners. If they were not, the Lord would not have sent Moses to them to deliver them from their sin. And even the most wretched among us are sinners; for if it were not so, the Lord would not have sent Christ to deliver us from our sin. Do not be deceived. Even the weak can be evil. And for this reason, the Hebrews, downtrodden as they were, still required a sacrifice, for they too were among the children of Adam, no different from the Egyptians, and were thus born *in iniquity*, and so blood and flesh shall be separated to cover their sin before the Holy Lord of all.

Let a lamb be sacrificed. Let its blood be spilt, let its flesh be torn and eaten. This is only right. For a lamb makes much noise in the days of its life, bleating, as we say, at any opportunity, even as *a voice crying in the wilderness*, it cries out. But when it is bound, and its killing is near, it *opens not its mouth*.

It is eerie, for I have killed a few lambs in my time, even killed them on this day. A lamb I had seen many times before, day upon day, which made no end of noise during the springtime of its life. Bind its legs. Throw it on its back. See the terror and fear in its eyes. And hear. Hear how quiet it is. The song of birds, the chatter of people, the sharpening of a knife. Yet it is quiet, for the lamb makes not a sound.

Take a blade to its throat, according to the old traditions, and cut it. Blood flows forth, and life flows away; and the fear does not leave the lamb's eyes. Yet it makes not a sound.

For like the *Son of Man*, he *opens not his mouth*.

Our Lord has spoken much to us, in verse and in prose and in parable. But the time of speaking is coming to an end. This is the Lord's Supper. The Service of the Word is over. The Service of the Sacrament has begun. So let the Word be silent, at least for now, and let the flesh and blood cry forth, for this is the Lord's Passover.

For tomorrow, the true Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world, will shed its blood and give up its flesh.

We, like the Hebrews, are not innocent. Though we are oppressed by the devil and every temptation, yet we are not without sin. Rather we are wretched; committing wickedness upon wickedness.

Therefore there is no choice, but to cover ourselves in the blood of Christ; to take into ourselves His very body. For *in Him there is no sin at all*.

Come today, and partake of our Lord's Passover, for tomorrow the Lord Almighty goes to war, to strike all the firstborn of man. But He will not strike those marked by the blood of the Lamb. Therefore, come, eat, and drink, begs the Lord,

'that we might not be condemned along with the world.'

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Preached by Pastor Fields

Sermon Texts: Exodus 12:1-14; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32; John 13:1-17, 31-35.