

**- Saint John's Pulpit (Sept 6, Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost)  
- "A Lesson from the Passover" Exodus 12:1-14**

**12** The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: <sup>2</sup>This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. <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.

## ***The Final Plague, was it a game changer?***

During this pandemic, we have experienced lots of natural disasters such as wildfire, flood, locusts, melted iceberg, hot weather, penguins with mudpack, hungry polar bears, and viruses... Some people understand it is our faults because we did not care for our nature. For other people, these are signs for the final day... I do not want to argue which is right or more convincing. However, here is our common agreement. We are in a critical moment!

The text today presents an origin of the Passover, the foremost holiday for all Hebrews. To speak about the Passover, the tenth plague should be illuminated. What was the tenth plague?

*<sup>4</sup>Moses said, "Thus says the LORD: About midnight I will go out through Egypt. <sup>5</sup>Every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne to the firstborn of the female slave who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the livestock. <sup>6</sup>Then there will be a loud cry throughout the whole land of Egypt, such as has never been or will ever be again. Exodus 11:4-5 NRSV*

Could we say that the tenth plague was a game changer? Why do we see that this plague is so serious? On the one hand, it removes hope from people (and the livestock) directly. To kill all firstborns means to kill the next generation symbolically. As we see from Covid-19, the world is mourning now because people lost their parents, children, friends, and neighbors. People lost hope. On the other hand, the tenth plague was special because it required the Hebrews to do one thing. If they didn't do this, they would be victimized too. What was the request from God?

*<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>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. Exodus 12:6-7, 12-13 NRSV*

Putting the blood of a lamb on the two doorposts... Here is a question. Why did God ask for this? The Exodus was the plan made by God. God decided to set His people free. Why do you think that God asked this for His people? Putting the blood of a lamb on the two doorposts means to declare that we are people of God. Many people say that the blood of a lamb is a metaphor for the blood of Jesus Christ. So, putting the blood of a lamb means that we remember what Jesus did for us. It was great love and sacrifice from the Son of God. Yes, it should be our bumper sticker in our faith journey.

In a similar vein, what are we supposed to overcome this long-lasting pandemic? What about this idea? Refreshing and reminding our identity! We are children of God. We are people of God! Although we are surrounded by lots of challenges, let us remember that we are saved by God. Why don't you remember that we are here cause of the Grace of God? When we remember the blood of Jesus Christ, we find hope to overcome all hardships.

Here is another meaning of putting the blood of a lamb. It means that we should be another lamb for our neighbors. Just as Jesus gave us His great love, we are asked to share the same love with others. Like those Hebrew people, actually we cannot put the blood of a lamb on our doorposts, but we can put the love of Jesus on our heart, our lips, and our face. Although we feel that we are under some plagues currently, the reason why we do not fear is the love of God and the love of our neighbors. Because love casts our fears!

*<sup>34</sup>I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-35 NRSV*

One last thing is this. The text today says that this Passover should not be a one-time event, but lifetime events for the Israelites. It means that we should love God and people in our whole time. Our little but repeated practice of Christian love will make a difference in our world day by day. Amen.

