

Sermon 2010 Maundy Thursday

Text: Luke 22:7-20

Theme: "Call Me if There is Blood"

My kids are used to hearing the phrase, "call me if there is blood." Our house is usually pretty "rough and tumble" and I am not interested in being alerted about every boo-boo sustained while sliding down the stairs in a cardboard box or playing pirates with plastic swords and any other scrap pieces of lumber that might be acquisitioned. However, on the occasion when stitches might be necessary, they know to call for me. Parental notification of potential broken bones and concussions is also acceptable.

Blood is supposed to be inside your body and when it is pouring through a breach in your skin; that is a sure sign that something has gone sideways. Blood is the essence of life for us. Long before science understood how blood works to provide oxygen and nutrients for all of our organs, people knew that it was extremely important and if enough of it flowed outside the body, you would die.

Blood has also always been important for God's people. From the very beginning of the sacrificial system, blood had to be spilled in order to offer a sacrifice for sin. The blood of a lamb was used to show God's forgiveness of sin. It is not that the blood did anything in and of itself. It was that one gave up something that was prized, in this case a lamb, to demonstrate his love for and faith in God. That relationship with God made you one of his people and within the context of that relationship, there was forgiveness.

So the tenth plague over Egypt comes along. In Exodus 12, God says.

"Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight."

"Then 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. They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with

unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it.... And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover."

"For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt."

"This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast."

God took the life of every first born son and animal in Egypt. The way to avoid your flock being devastated and your son dying was to sacrifice a lamb and use its blood to paint your door

frame. Now ask yourself this. Was that to mark your house so God would know who belonged to him and who did not? No – not really, He knew who His people were. So why paint the door with blood?

God knows that we need action for our faith. Talking about faith does not make the connection for us. He knows that because he invented the human brain. Every elementary teacher knows that repetition is the mother of learning and that no kid is going to know the state capitals by reading it once. They have to commit it to memory and there are all kinds of games and drills to help them to do that. Likewise, the Israelites heard that God loved them, forgave them and would take care of them, but they needed constant activities to remind them of that and to incorporate that truth into their brains. So God told his people to do something to help them remember who they are and that as the blood of a lamb saved them this night so the blood of The Lamb would save them eternally.

Jesus gathered his disciples together and did what every Rabbi did on Passover. They remembered the night that blood

saved God's people. But Jesus did something new. He took the unleavened bread and said, "This is my body." He took the wine and said "This is my blood." No Rabbi had ever done that before. The people gathered at Rabbi Jesus' Passover were surely aghast, but they had seen Jesus do radical things before. He had welcomed women and children to hear him teach. He had spoken to a Samaritan woman and drunk from her cup. He had healed on the Sabbath. Now he was changing the Passover.

If it is just bread and wine, don't bug me. I can live without another religious ceremony, but call me if there is blood. Blood is the essence of our physical life and the body and blood of Jesus is the essence of our spiritual life. The disciples would see a lot of blood in the next few days. They would see Jesus sweat drops of blood in the garden. They would see blood pour out of his back as he was scourged. They would see blood run down his face as thorns gouged into his flesh and they would see blood spray as spikes were driven into his hands and feet. Surely each time they saw him bleed, they thought of the Passover that had become the Lord's Supper. They saw his blood run out of his

body and surely did not fully comprehend what this meant for them – but we do because he rose from the dead and showed us.

We know that, like the lamb on the first Passover, His blood had to flow to prevent our eternal blood from flowing. And now His holy blood flows into us and unlike the Passover lamb, His blood does not just mark us as the redeemed, His blood makes us the redeemed. His blood forgives us our sins, and His blood empowers us to live in this broken world until He returns for us and takes us to our eternal home that He has prepared for us. If you are celebrating a religious ceremony with a meal that represents a bunch of pious stuff, don't bother me. I have too much to do. But call me if there is blood. Amen.