

DEAL CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

EASTER COMMUNION SERVICE 2025

THURSDAY 17th APRIL 2025 | SIM FORDER

Easter communion service

Not so long ago we were studying the book of Genesis, and you may recall the account of Abraham's willingness to obey God, to even be willing to offer his only son, Isaac, as a sacrifice for sin.

We read in chapter 22:1-8

Genesis 22:1-6

Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together.

And so, here we have a father, who puts wood on the back of his son for him to carry up a specific mountain, that he might offer him as a sacrifice for sin (though God later stopped Him at the last moment, as we know). And this is such an incredible picture of what God would do, as Jesus took the cross of wood upon *His* back, en route up this *same* mountain, where He would *actually* be offered as a sacrifice for sin.

Indeed, the account in Genesis *specifically* points toward what Jesus would do, for we read on:

Genesis 22:7-8

But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

That Lamb that God would provide, wasn't the ram that they would next find stuck in the thicket, but was Jesus, whom John the Baptist would announce, saying "*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*" He was the perfect, innocent lamb, of whom John would also say "*He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry.*", of whom Pilate's wife would describe as a *just man*, and whom Pilate himself conclude was innocent, as we read in Luke's gospel account:

Luke 23:13-15

Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, said to them, "You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him.

But despite that conclusion, we read on:

Luke 23:16-17

I will therefore chastise Him and release Him" (for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast).

And so staggeringly, Pilate allowed this innocent Man to be condemned, while a murderer was set free. We read:

Luke 23:18-25

And they all cried out at once, saying, "Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas"— who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder. Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. But they shouted, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Then he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go." But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

And so we have this great exchange. The innocent for the guilty. The sinner set free, and the sinless man sentenced to death. This great exchange should leave us humbled, because that is what God has done with us. For we were that sinner, that wicked man who was *deserving* of death. But aren't we good people, you might ask. Well, no! Sure, from my perspective you're all lovely. But God's standards are higher than our standards, and that was the problem. Indeed, the very fact that God is good, that He is holy, that He is perfect, actually is a problem at first, for even in looking at His 10 commandments alone, we are surely guilty as charged.

I don't know if you've ever been out driving, happily minding your own business, when *thud*. And you realise you've just hit a rabbit. Or a bird. Or a cat. And your stomach turns and your heart sinks as you realise an innocent animal probably just died, or at least was injured.

Well, consider what Jesus endured for us, and how that ought to turn our stomachs even more, as we consider that all He went through was effectively at our hands, for it was because of our sin. We read in Matthew's gospel account:

Matthew 27:26-31

Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

As we consider His sufferings, let us remember *why* He suffered. That with each commandment of the Lord we have broken, there is another thud. Another turn of our stomach. Except the sound isn't of a car hitting an animal, but of nails being hammered into Jesus hands and feet for you and I.

We read, that we should have no other gods before Him. But then we realise all the things we have turned into our gods and have put before Him. Thud.

We read that we should not have any idols, and then worship alcohol, money, celebrity, career, sex, possessions, sunshine filled holidays, power, status, and more. Thud.

We read how we shouldn't take the Lord's name in vain, yet as a Christian still act in a way that brings Christ's name into disrepute. Thud.

We read how we should remember the Sabbath, and though that requirement has changed, we barely commit one morning a week to the Lord. Thud.

We read how we should honour our father and mother, and then are rude or disrespectful to them. Thud.

Then we read that we should not murder. And perhaps we breath a sigh of relief, and think "finally, one that I've not broken!" until we hear Jesus' words that if we have hated anyone in our heart without cause, we are committing murder in our hearts. Thud.

We read that we should not commit adultery, and then hear Jesus explain that if we look at anyone with lust, we are adulterers-at-heart. And we recall how we've done just that. Thud.

We read that we should not steal. Yet we gladly take pens from the office, or steal time from our employer by doing our own errands in work time. Thud.

We read we should not lie. Yet we are dishonest in many things. Thud.

And we read that we should not covet, yet spend many of our waking hours watching YouTube videos of things other people have. Or we scroll through Instagram or Pinterest coveting the lifestyle and possessions of others. Thud.

All those things required Jesus to die for us. For the alternative is unthinkable. For we would have to pay the price for our own sin. That is we would not only be guilty, but we would be condemned by a just a holy God who *must* see that we are punished, or else He would not be just and holy!

Oh, what God has done for us!! We read in 2 Corinthians:

2 Corinthians 5:21

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

What God has done for us is worth more thanks than we could ever give. No wonder we read of such worship in Heaven, as John records in the book of Revelation, writing:

Revelation 5:11-14

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!" Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

Let us take some time in quiet to personally come before God and thank Him for all He did in sending Jesus to die in our place. Let us thank Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, for doing that for us.