

Coach House Church **BEACONS**

8TH APRIL 2020

ANNIVERSARY

Good Morning everybody, I'm Steve and I'd like to welcome to today's Coach House Beacon. I'd also like to send you extra special greetings if today is your wedding anniversary. I know that covers at least 5 of you and I trust you will be especially blessed today even though you can't go out and celebrate.

Before we go any further lets settle down comfortably and pray that God will open our hearts to what he has to say.

Lord; we recognise that you are sovereign over our lives. We ask that you would speak with us this morning and draw us closer to you. Help us to listen to your words and put them into practice in our lives.

This time last year I was at a wedding enjoying seeing two good friends getting married. It was a time of great joy seeing two people reaching a point of change in their lives, committing to live together, to sharing all they had, and to sharing the same aims and objectives in life. More than this it was done in the sight of God, the young couple recognised that it wasn't just the two of them, they wanted God to be fully involved in everything that they would now do.

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One year later and isn't it astonishing how much difference a year makes, last year we were all packed into the church for the wedding, and later we were all together dancing the night away at the wedding party. This year we are all stuck in our own homes and can only send a message to the happy couple on social media when we would much rather be sharing cake with them.

Talking of celebrations, we are also only days away from the biggest celebration of all in the church calendar, Easter, an event that is still widely celebrated across most of society and not just Christians. We all love to celebrate don't we, birthdays, anniversaries and other important events in history like remembrance Sunday or Guy Fawkes night.

But do we ever stop to think about why we do these things? Some might think that it comes from the fact that we all love a good party but of course that just isn't true. The bible teaches us that the first celebrations were instigated by God with just one purpose; to remember Him.

Way back in the early days of history, Gods people, who were called the Israelites, had many special celebration days.

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One such celebration was the meal called Passover. So what is Passover and why did it come into being? Well very early in history, the Israelites found themselves stuck in Egypt, enslaved by the Pharaohs. They being were ill treated but were still blessed by God. God loved His people and He wanted the Israelites to move out of Egypt and into Canaan, also known as Israel. To do this He appointed a man called Moses to go and negotiate with Pharaoh. The story, in the bible book of Exodus tells us that Moses said to Pharaoh "Let my people go".

Unfortunately Pharaoh said no, which wasn't the answer he should have given. We know that God is merciful, and if Pharaoh had agreed to the plan, God would have blessed him beyond what he could conceive of, but by saying "no" Pharaoh made himself an enemy of God. God plainly told Pharaoh that his course of action would result in something bad happening, and so started a series of ever worsening plagues. All these were sent with the intention of showing Pharaoh that God was in charge and would have his way, eventually, no matter how much Pharaoh resisted him.

Sadly, we know that Pharaoh took no notice of what was happening around him and after 9 plagues Pharaoh would have to face the worst event of all. God decided that all the oldest sons in the land would have to die, the only exceptions to this would be those inside houses, that had sacrificed a lamb, and used the blood to paint around the doorways of their houses. They would then roast the lamb and eat it with bitter herbs, salad, and bread made without yeast. That night, as they prayed, the Angel of Death made his way through Egypt seeking out those whom God had said must die.

Whenever the Angel came to a house he looked at the door, and if he saw the blood on the doorpost he just passed over, going on his way without visiting a death on that house. This is where the festival got the name Passover from. And by the way, the Israelites were then allowed to leave Egypt and go to their home in Canaan.

Regarding the future celebration of the Passover meal, God gave the Israelites this instruction in Chapter 12 of the book of Exodus. "This is a day to remember. Each year, from generation to generation, you must celebrate it as a special festival to the Lord." It became the first and most important festival in the Jewish calendar, its date each year to be determined by the lunar calendar which the Jewish people followed. The purpose of Passover was to ensure that each generation remembered two things; who God is and what He has done. Because if we are really honest we know that we all tend to forget about God when things are going well. If we think otherwise we are probably deceiving ourselves.

Just as the wedding anniversary helps us to reinforce our relationship with the one we love, so the festival to God was intended to reinforce the peoples relationship with God.

Well as we have said it is Easter this week. What is Easter and what is the link with Passover? Well the connection is because something important happened at the festival of Passover back in AD 32. It was that year, that Jesus ate the Passover meal with his closest friends, knowing

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that the following day he was going to die. So why did this need to happen? Why did Jesus need to die? Wasn't it enough that he lived a good

life and gave us special teaching? Well apparently not. You see despite having many special days to remember God, and despite sacrificing many animals, people still wandered away from God and walked their own path in life. Does this sound familiar? It doesn't take much for us to start doing our own thing does it? God knew that the only answer in the long term would be a better sacrifice than a lamb or goat, and only Gods son, Jesus, was capable of being that sacrifice. So on the night of Passover AD 32 he left the security of the house and the blood of the lamb that they had sacrificed and painted the doorposts. He willingly went out into the night in the full knowledge that it would cost him his life. Jesus had become the true sacrificial lamb, once for ever.

So this Friday we will remember. On Good Friday we will remember that Jesus died to forgive our sins. But it doesn't end there, this was not the final bit of the story. You see Jesus did not stay dead, his death was just the prelude to his resurrection. So on Sunday we will celebrate again. This time that Jesus rose from the dead, proving that he was indeed the perfect sacrifice and had gained authority over death. This changed everything. No longer would we need to kill a lamb and paint our doors with the blood. Now all we need to do is to paint the doors of our heart with the blood that Jesus shed. We can do this by recognising who Jesus is and believing that is who he said he is. Only His blood will cleanse us from all the bad thing we have done. We do though still need to remember who God is and celebrate what he has done for us regularly. We can do this every day when we read our bible or spend time in prayer, or even as you are doing now, when you listen to a Coach House Church daily beacon.

Lets Pray – Lord, help me to remember what you have done for me, all day, every day. Paint the doors to my heart with your shed blood and forgive me for any time that I didn't remember you. Amen.



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