**Palm Sunday 2024 - Nothing but the Blood**

**Palm Sunday – Jesus' life culminated in this final week.**

**They had gone to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.**

**By the time Jesus had reached Jerusalem that year, he was a rock star.**

**People were spreading the word - many saw it themselves:**

* **He was healing the sick, paralyzed, lepers, and blind.**
* **He miraculously fed thousands with 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread.**
* **He calmed storms and walked on water.**
* **He had just raised Lazarus from the dead a few days earlier.**
* **And He was preaching a new kingdom has come and that he was both God and king of that kingdom.**

**All these signs pointed to his authority.**

**He’s the perfect revolutionary: could solve food & health crises – raise the dead – he is unstoppable. So, by the time he entered Jerusalem that Sunday – the people were ready to crown him king and messiah.**

**But he had been telling his disciples something strange. I am going to die this week.**

**Mark 10:32-34 “We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They (the Jewish religious elite) will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles (the Roman authorities) 34, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him, and kill him. Three days later, he will rise.” (The location, the when, who and how – he would be arrested, mocked, spit on, flogged, and crucified)**

**This was the plan? Graphic & violent - why death? Why so violent?**

**Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come (implies prior existence) to be served, but to serve, (assumes he had the right to be served) and to give his life as a ransom for many.”**

**Jesus the ransom (purchase freedom / payment) That set him apart from every founder of every religion – they came to be an example, but Jesus came to die – to sacrifice - to ransom.**

* **The Crucifixion was not a mistake**

**Beneath all the controversy over who actually killed Jesus… the truth is: God planned it, and saw to it that it came to pass**

**It was all planned and designed… every detail, right down to how it would happen, where it would happen, the betrayal and method. Over 350 OT prophecies fulfilled in Christ - This was not a sad accident**

* **The Crucifixion was the mission**

**This was why he came - this was the reason.**

**Jesus did not leave any doubt what He came to do...**

**Again & again, I must suffer, I must die, but I will rise...**

**This was the plan? So graphic, so violent, so bloody - why?**

**Within 6 days - what Jesus prophesied, happened.**

**1500yrs of waiting for a messiah / 300yrs of silence from God / 100yrs under Roman rule / they were looking for the Messiah king.**

**Jesus had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover (word got out) - Mark 11:7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. 8 Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. (why we call it Palm Sunday) 9 Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted, “Hosanna!” (Hbw: Ho-shana - Save us now – help us, we pray - a cry for help and a praise declaration - for the Messiah) “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” 10 “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” (the great King) “Hosanna in the highest heaven!” (Many thought Jesus would rally an army and expel the Romans!)**

**\*\*Listen: He is the king - he will overthrow the wicked powers of this world and establish a throne, and rule… but not on this trip. This trip was to deal with a greater problem. Sin.**

**That week - He stirs the pot - flips tables, loves the poor, confronts the religious, heals the sick, preaches the kingdom!**

**By Thursday night, the night before it all went down…. they gathered**

**for an early Passover meal. \*\* Most painted picture of Christ's life.**

**Jesus turned the tables on this 1500-year-old holiday.**

**Let’s walk through that night… Matthew 26:17 On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" 18 He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. (planned before the foundation of the earth – The appointed time is here) I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.' " 19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.**

**The three elements of the Passover meal / Feast of Unleavened Bread.**

**Unleavened Bread - Fruit of the vine – Lamb meat**

**To better understand the cross, we have to look to the OT. Looking back, they put the pieces together.**

**The Passover foretold the Crucifixion**

**That night that gather - reclining at a table about 18” off the ground, sprawled out on pillows, shoes kicked off – serve.**

**What is the Passover: Moses and his confrontation with pharaoh. 9 plagues and still a no. God was intentionally leading them to the 10th.**

**10th Plague - Messenger of death will take the life of every 1st born living, unless the door of their house was covered in the blood of a lamb. Blood was to be on the doorposts. The lamb is cooked & they were to eat all of it.**

**That night the messenger came – He passed over the doors with the blood but took the life of those without. After the plague - pharaoh was so angry – he told them to leave immediately – they were finally free!**

**God instructed to celebrate this yearly to remember.**

**This was Passover - The Feast of Unleavened Bread.**

**1st Element - The Unleavened Bread (without yeast) (Have flat bread)**

**Fermented (fungus) dough from the previous day is mixed with fresh flour - eventually spreading fungus throughout. Fungus releases gas and bubbles in the bread - causing the bread to rise. This is leavened.**

**Why was it unleavened? Back to Moses. When God delivered Israel out of Egypt, God instructed them to run and not wait. So, they ate their bread unleavened. Leaven soon became a symbol of the sin & bondage they left behind (OT & NT).**

**The Unleavened bread was a reminder of freedom - Exodus 13:6 For seven days eat bread made without yeast and on the seventh day hold a festival to the LORD. (Passover) 8 on that day tell your son, 'I do this because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.' 9 This observance will be for you like a sign on your hand and a reminder… For the LORD brought you out of Egypt with his mighty hand. (eat this & remember God's deliverance from Egypt)**

**But that night, the bread took on a new meaning…**

**Matthew 26:26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."**

**"Jesus took the bread - See this, this is My body. Take and eat.**

**2nd Element - The Fruit of the Vine**

**When Jesus handed the cup to the disciples, they naturally would have thought of the blood of the Passover lamb. (Cup of grape juice)**

**Moses - God instructed Israel to slaughter, cook, & eat a lamb & put its blood on the top and sides of the door.**

**Exodus 12:13 The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. (When he saw the blood, he would "pass over" the house)**

**But that night Jesus brought new meaning to it...**

**Matthew 26:27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.**

**Jesus was making himself the center of Passover!**

**Reclining with Jesus – This is my body / my blood? “This is weird.” They would not understand until the next day…**

**Passover celebrated physical freedom from slavery & entrance to an earthly promised land – Jesus said it was a sign of what I was about to do spiritually.**

**The events that followed have caused more debates and fueled more division than any other event in history.**

**Attempts to ignore it, discredit it, and destroy it - But you can’t ignore a piece of lumber that suspended the greatest claim in history - A carpenter who claimed to be God – if it’s true…**

**After Passover meal Jesus heads out to pray - he is cornered and arrested In the middle of night - Jesus is betrayed and sold out by a friend -**

**The God of heaven, the Lord of the universe in human form - the hands that made the Universe – were now in chains.**

**Eyewitness accounts record that Jesus was (the gospels record)**

* + **Illegally arrested & beaten by the temple guards with rods**
  + **Blindfolded him and beat – him mocking him**
  + **Dragged around town to build up a cases against him**
  + **Pharisees sent Him to Pilate (questioned & mocked)**
  + **Who sent him to Herod (questioned, humiliated & beaten)**
  + **Who then sent him back to Pilate again (all before noon)**
  + **Pilate attempting to appease the crowd – beats him short of death.**

**John 19:16 Finally, Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So, the soldiers took charge of Jesus. (experts of death) 17 Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others - one on each side and Jesus in the middle.**

**Sentenced to die a torturous death like a criminal,**

**They stripped him (soldiers gambled for his clothes) – nails driven into his hands and feet… and lifted up to be mocked…**

**That piece of wood! That cross - History has idolized it, despised it, gold plated it, burned it, worn it and trashed it!**

**The Crucifixion - why is it so bloody - morbid - painful**

**Why doesn’t God just forgive everybody? Because…**

1. **The Crucifixion is perfect justice**

**God’s holiness and perfect justice, requires perfect judgment and full payment… even yours.**

**Imagine a guilty criminal (pedophile / murderer) before a judge that says – I forgive you. Is that justice? No – someone has to pay.**

**Like every lamb, ox, or goat placed on the altar to be the substitute for God’s judgment – only they were imperfect.**

**We don’t want the righteous, angry toward sin, just God - we just want a Loving God. But you cannot have one without the other.**

**At that moment - Jesus is justice received.**

1. **The Crucifixion is perfect love**

**Think about it – the greater the love the greater the wrath.**

**If someone picks on your kids (I'm mad) on my kids (I'm crazy)**

**All life-changing love is substitutionary - you can’t love anything w/out taking a hit… love always costs – w/ kids, in marriage, friendships – the troubles, problems - you get pain – but the sacrifice is worth it.**

**IE. Parents: if we don’t sacrifice our freedom and time to equip and mature your kids – they will pay for it if we don’t. Either you make the sacrifice, or they will sacrifice - it’s them or you, love says so.**

**(ESV) 1 John 4:10 - In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (Propitiation = to satisfy wrath - to appease – This is love - He himself took the punishment for sin)**

**On the Cross, the weight of the worlds sin – past / present / future was on Jesus - and the wrath of the Father dealt justly.**

**The ancients understood the wrath of God. They had stories and legends… but they had no idea God would come and pay for it himself – the cross is the self-substitution of God!**

**Matt 27:45 From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. 46 About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). 47 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.” (Jesus often taught in partial verses - rabbinic time saving technique known as "Ramez")**

**Some assumed that Jesus was shunned by the father at that moment - but his disciples would have known better.**

**They would have remembered a Psalm every good Jewish boy memorizes - They would have known the Father had never left.**

**Let's read it - Psalm 22:1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? 6 I am a worm scorned by men and despised by the people. 7 All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: 14 I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. 16 …a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. 18 They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing. 19 But you, O LORD, be not far off; O my Strength, come quickly to help me. / 24 For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help. / 27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, 28 for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations. 29 All the rich of the earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust (those who die) will kneel before him… 30 Future generations will be told about Him and serve him. 31 They will proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn - for he has done it!**

**Jesus was not crying out in loneliness and grief.**

**Jesus was crying out a victorious shout! Declaring Ps 22 - it's happening now! Future generations are free! I have done it!**

1. **The Crucifixion is perfect mercy**

**That violent and vile, horrific, bloody... and beautiful moment.**

**Ephesians 1:7 In him we have redemption (purchased) through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.**

**Matthew 27:50 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. (John 19 - the only disciple at the cross, “It is finished!” Luke 23, “into your hands I commend my spirit.”) 51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. (Rip the bread towel – the 60 ft tall 30 ft wide – ripped from top to bottom – As Jesus was torn - the curtain was torn – the wall between God and Man was torn) The earth shook and the rocks split… 54 When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"**

**As Christ hung there his – they began to understand…**

**Christ is the unleavened bread - His broken body is our deliverance from eternal bondage (as the bread was w/out yeast, Jesus is w/out sin)… We must take and eat it – this truth must be in us.**

**As his blood poured out – they soon understood…**

**Christ's blood is the fruit of the vine - The fruit of his life is the blood poured out for our sin… We must drink it; this truth must be in us.**

**Communion declares – Jesus, I remember, I believe it, and I will live for you – Join us Friday for Communion.**

**The 3rd Element - The Lamb was not mentioned at Passover meal**

**For - Jesus himself was the Lamb**

**it echoes what John the Baptizer cried out when he saw Jesus – John 1:29 ...John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (1 Peter 1:** **18-21 - we are washed with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect - chosen before the foundations of the world - who God raised from the dead!)**

1. **The Crucifixion is for you**

**Your ransom - your rescue - your chance to start over**

**Today, you too – can have salvation.**

**Hebrews 12:2b – For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**

**The redeemed were the joy before him - those who would bow the knee. Even while on the cross, he gave life to a guilty criminal (Luke 23)**

**Nothing but the Blood – Song**

**What can wash away my sin?**

**Nothing but the blood of Jesus.**

**What can make me whole again?**

**Nothing but the blood of Jesus.**

**O precious is the flow**

**that makes me white as snow;**

**no other fount I know;**

**nothing but the blood of Jesus.**

**But how do we know it is true? Because he did not stay in the ground.**

**A stunning statements Jesus made…**

**John 10:17-18 - I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.**

**Prayer –**

**Bread -**

**Juice - cup**

**Towel to tear -**

**Cross???**