

SEVEN WORDS - ENOUGH
A SERMON BASED ON JOHN 19:16-30
PREACHED AT CHIPPAWA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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FRIDAY, APRIL 19, 2019
10:00 a.m.
'Good Friday'

There are times we may not really understand

what is before us, what is in front of us.

If we don't understand what is before us,
we may not fully comprehend its worth, or value.

We may not understand whether it is enough.

Is it a car? Or is it a Rolls Royce.

Is it a shoe? Or is it a Jimmy Choo.

Is it a guitar? Or is it a Gibson.

Is it a painting? Or is it a Monet.

Is it a basketball player? Or is it LeBron James.

The risk of not really understanding what is before us, in front of us
is also present at Easter.

Is it Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter?

A nice spring weekend of statutory holidays,

or is it something more?

If we don't understand what is before us,
we may not value it correctly.

If we don't understand what it is that could be on offer,
we are at risk for thinking that it is something less.

This principle also applies to our faith.

Author C.S. Lewis describes the problem in a famous quote,
"It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong,
but too weak.

We are half-hearted creatures,
fooling about with drink and sex and ambition
when infinite joy is offered us,
(we are) like an ignorant child
who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum
because he cannot imagine
what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea."

Lewis says, "We are far too easily pleased."

What is before you this weekend,
last evening at the table,
today at the cross,
and anticipated this Sunday
is more than we could ever imagine,

What is before you this weekend,
last evening at the table,
today at the cross,
and anticipated this Sunday
is more than we could ever hope.

What is before you this weekend,
last evening at the table,
today at the cross,
and anticipated this Sunday
is enough.
It is more than enough.

For what is before you, is a lamb.

This is not the lamb served with mint jelly.

This lamb is something far more desirable,

far more satisfying,

and far more nourishing.

This lamb is eternal.

This lamb is glory.

This lamb is heavenly.

This lamb has so much value,

Anything else we feed our souls,

is settling, making us far too easily pleased

Today, on Good Friday, it is lamb that you are offered.

It is not just any lamb.

It is biblical lamb.

It is the Lamb of God.

It is the lamb that saved at the Passover in the Exodus.

It is the lamb that provided atonement in the Old Testament temple.

It is the lamb of whom John the Baptist cried out,

‘Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’

It is the lamb of heaven named in the book of Revelation

who sits on the throne,
to whom the multitude and the elders bow.

This lamb is Jesus.

The lamb you are being offered is Jesus.

Eternal, glorious, heavenly, biblical.

There are times we may not understand what is really before us.

If we don't understand what is before us,
we may not comprehend its worth, or value,
we may think we have enough.

But this is no ordinary lamb.

This lamb is eternal, glorious, heavenly, biblical.

This lamb is seasoned with the biggest, major moments
of the biblical account,
and carries all the weight
and all the meaning
and all the implications of all those moments.

In Genesis

at the beginning of the nation of Israel's story,
was Abraham.

Abraham was told to leave everything,
to go to the land God would show him.

Abraham and his wife Sarah were childless.

God promised to make a great nation of Abraham.

But as Abraham got older and older,

the promise seemed more and more far fetched.

Abraham and Sarah's trust wavered.

They got desperate.

They'd be too old to birth a nation.

Sarah encouraged Abraham to stop trusting God,
and take initiative, to be his own man.

So Abraham had a son by his slave Hagar,
which complicated his story immeasurably.

Nevertheless, God followed through on his promise.

In very old age,

Abraham and Sarah had one son, Isaac.

The entire future promised to them, rested on Isaac.

But God then said to Abraham,

‘Take your son, your only son Isaac,

whom you love,

and go to Moriah,

Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering.

It is as bad as it sounds.

God wanted Abraham to sacrifice Isaac back to him.

After all the years of waiting,

after trying to take the promise of God into his own control,

Abraham was asked to offer it back.

Abraham went to Moriah.

He piled the rocks for the altar.

He had Isaac carry the wood for the sacrifice.

Abraham carried the knife.

Isaac asked his Father,

‘Father, the fire and the wood are here,

but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?

Abraham answered,

‘God himself will provide the lamb.’

Abraham got to the point of raising the knife over Isaac.

God stopped him cold.

‘Do not lay a hand on the boy.

Do not do anything to him.

You have not withheld your son.

Your only son.

And there, in the thicket, was a ram.

God provided the lamb for sacrifice, sparing Isaac.

Lamb was offered.

Does that sound familiar to you?

If we don’t understand what is before us,

we may not comprehend its worth, or value.

Today you are provided the lamb of God.

Taking your place in sacrifice.

Today you are provided the lamb of God.

who was to carry his own wood, the cross.

Today you are provided the lamb of God.

God's beloved, his only son, with whom he is well pleased.

This is no ordinary lamb.

This lamb is eternal, glorious, heavenly, biblical.

This lamb is seasoned with the biggest, major moments

of the biblical account,

and carries all the weight, meaning and implications

of all those moments.

In slavery in Egypt for centuries,

God called Moses to lead his people to deliverance.

At God's command, Moses brought nine plagues upon Egypt,

in order to convince Pharaoh,

to let God's people go.

Water turned into blood.

Frogs, gnats, flies, the death of livestock,

boils, fiery hail, locusts, darkness.

None of them were enough to convince Pharaoh,
to release God's people.

The last, was the plague on the firstborn.

God said 'At midnight I will move throughout Egypt,
the firstborn from Pharaoh's household
to the firstborn of the slave woman,
to the firstborn of the cattle will die.

There will be wailing throughout Egypt.

Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month
each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household.
The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect
The members of the community of Israel
must slaughter them at twilight.

Then they are to take the herb hyssop
dip it in the blood of the lamb
and using the hyssop dipped in blood
mark the sides and tops of the door-frames
of their homes where they will eat the lamb.
It foreshadows the shape of the cross.

God said,

On that same night I will pass through Egypt
and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals,
and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt.

I am the Lord.

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.

We call the remembrance and celebration of this event,
Passover.

It was the meal Jesus and his disciples were having
at the Last Supper.

When I see the blood, I will pass over you.

The Lamb of God is before you today.

It is the lamb by whose blood,
by whose blood a pass over is granted
and there is the opportunity to go free.

We are saved by the blood of the lamb.

There are times we may not really understand

what is before us.

If we don't understand what is before us,

we may not comprehend its worth, or value.

At the cross, God gave everything he had to give.

It is Philippians 2

where Paul reminds us that Christ Jesus:

Who, while being in very nature God,

did not consider equality with God

something to be used to his own advantage;

rather, he made himself nothing

emptying himself of everything except service,

being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself

by becoming obedient to death—

even death on a cross!

He served until he was spent.

The prophet Isaiah says this of the Messiah to come, of Jesus.

He took up our infirmities.

He carried our sorrows.

He was pierced for our transgressions.

He was crushed for our iniquities.

The punishment that brought us peace was upon him.

We all like sheep had gone astray.

The Lord laid on him,

the iniquity of us all.

He poured out his life unto death.

He bore the sin of many.

Isaiah has described the sacrificial lamb of the Old Testament's

Day of Atonement.

One lamb is a sacrifice.

The sacrificial lamb.

One, a scapegoat.

An escape goat - who goes free.

There are times we may not really understand

what is before us.

If we don't understand what is before us,

we may not comprehend its worth, or value.

This principle also applies to our faith.

What is before you today at the cross,

is enough.

It is more than enough.

It is everything.

In the garden after being at the table,

after the Passover meal with the disciples

anticipating his sacrifice,

knowing he had nothing left to give,

because he would give his body,

his blood,

his very life,

for them, and for many for the forgiveness of sins,

he gave everything he had to give.

It was enough. More than enough.

It was everything.

He served up everything.

He offered up everything.

Is that just a cross?

Is it enough?

Or is more. Is it our very salvation?

Is it more, more than enough.

He paid it all.

From the cross Jesus said, it is finished.

It's actually just one word.

Tetelesthai.

It is a word found all over ancient archeological financial records.

When something was finally paid for,

it was stamped, tetelesthai.

Complete. Done. Paid. Enough.

Knowing that all was complete,

so that Scripture would be fulfilled,

Jesus said, "I am thirsty.

A jar of wine vinegar was there,

so they soaked a sponge in it,

put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant,

and lifted it to Jesus' lips.

The gospel of John,

by using hyssop to lift the sponge of vinegar to Jesus' lips,

hyssop is actually similar in size and strength to parsley.

It looks a little bit like lavender.

Which means that it in no way

could it carry the weight of a sponge soaked with vinegar,

up to Jesus' lips.

By using hyssop in his account,

John took a writer's creative liberty to point us to a truth

bigger than just the facts.

By lifting up the wine vinegar with hyssop,
John takes us back to Exodus chapter 12,
the night before the Israelites were delivered
from their slavery to the Egyptians,
back to the Passover meal,
a meal eaten with the last packed moving boxes
at the front door,
with the house emptied,
and the suitcases in the car.
He takes us back to a meal of escape and of deliverance.

At the beginning of his ministry,
it was John the Baptist cried out,
'Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.'

With the hyssop lifted up,
dipped in the blood of the lamb,
covering the doorframe of humanity at the cross,
we too have experienced Passover.

With the hyssop dipped in the blood of the lamb,
stamping the door frame,

Jesus said. Done. Paid. It is finished.

It is enough.

They are free.

With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

It is enough and it is more than enough.

It is everything.

There are times we may not really understand

what is before us.

If we don't understand what is before us,

we may not comprehend its worth, or value.

You can't pay this price.

You don't have enough to cover it.

God laid on Jesus the sin of us all.

With the blood of the lamb stamped on the doorway,

we have been passed over.

Jesus said, Done. Paid. It is finished.

It is Jesus who is enough.

Who is more than enough.

Who is everything.

At the cross today

you have been given Lamb, the Lam

Eternal, glorious, heavenly, biblical.

For this is the Lamb now on the throne.

Where all of heaven bows.

Today, Good Friday,

Understand the value.

Understand what you have been offered.

Understand what has been given to you.

Understand, how deeply God loves you,

to give you the Lamb.

He is enough.

He is more than enough.

He is everything.

Amen.