

## The Embrace of God

### Exodus 12:43-51; 13:3-10

*And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner shall eat of it, but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him. No foreigner or hired worker may eat of it. It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you." All the people of Israel did just as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron. And on that very day the LORD brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts... Then Moses said to the people, "Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand the LORD brought you out from this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out. And when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you shall keep this service in this month. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. Unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days; no leavened bread shall be seen with you, and no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory. You shall tell your son on that day, 'It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.' And it shall be to you as a sign on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the law of the LORD may be in your mouth. For with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. (ESV)*

We must receive our gracious Savior's embrace through the Lord's Supper, which is a sacrament, sign, and seal.

#### I. Sacrament

We must receive the confirmation of God's love through the sacraments.

*Knowing:* The *Westminster Confession of Faith* says, "Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace. They were instituted by God along with that covenant to represent Christ and his benefits, to confirm our position with and in him, to demonstrate a visible difference between those who belong to the church and the rest of the world, and solemnly to engage believers in the service of God in Christ according to his word" (27.1)

*Being:* Our Father has always graciously made it his concern to encourage his people by accommodating to our need for tangible confirmation of spiritual truth. In other words, God gives us sacraments to convince us that he loves us.

*Doing:* Which of the benefits of sacraments resonated with you most and *how might you sometimes be tempted to view sacraments as your means of gaining God's love rather than his means of proving it?*

#### II. Sign

We must receive God's comforting presence through the sacraments.

*Knowing:* On the very day the Israelites observed the first Passover, the Lord brought them out of Egypt. The only people positively assured of the Lord's redemptive presence were those who obeyed him to observe the Passover meal. The Lord's loving presence was as real as the meal they ate. Therefore, the meal was more than a symbol of what God does for his people; it was a visible manifestation of his spiritual but no less real presence. Like the Passover, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a sign of God's comforting presence.

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*Being:* Three times, Moses emphasizes the Passover meal is God's calling card which he puts in your hand and says, "I personally brought you out" (Exodus 12:51; 13:3-4). Likewise, when the Lord's Supper is administered Scripturally, Jesus is saying, "I am here, even though you can't see me."

*Doing:* The Lord's Supper as a sacrament is not called a sign because it is symbolic; it is a sign he has shown up among us! *What comfort does this give you when you are suffering, struggling with sin, etc.?*

### **III. Seal**

We must follow receive assurance of our forgiveness through the sacraments.

*Knowing:* The Passover was for the people of Israel what the Lord's Supper is for us – an authenticating seal their sins had been pardoned. The only reason they could eat the celebratory meal without death having devastated their family was the blood of a spotless lamb covered the whole entry way to their home.

*Being:* Likewise, the very physical act of the Lord's Supper seals to your conscience your sins are pardoned.

*Doing:* Consider the way we often get this backwards. We often tend to use our attendance in worship and partaking of the Lord's Supper as a "measuring stick" of our devotion to God. In reality, it is when we come to worship and partake of the Lord's Supper that we are convinced of how much God loves us in Christ despite anything we have or have not done. *How might this shape the way you think about going to worship and taking the sacraments?*

#### **For further study:**

- Read chapter 29 of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* for more on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper and the biblical basis for it.