

# The Bread of Life

James Smyda

Recorded on March 22, 2025

Brethren, during Christ's ministry on earth, there was a particular point where He made comments that the audience listening to Him found, quite frankly, shocking and even offensive. It actually resulted in a number of people just thinking He was nuts, and they stopped listening to Him. Even the Apostles were scratching their heads thinking, how do we wrap our mind around what this guy just said? Because He commented to them that He was the bread of life. In further explaining this, He made a comment they found just absolutely shocking because He made the statement to them, "Unless you eat My flesh and drink My blood, you have no life in you". Well, as you can imagine, to the audience that was hearing this this sounded like cannibalism to them. They were like "This guy has lost his mind," and they were scratching their head trying to figure out how do we understand this?

Christ was speaking symbolically. What Christ was actually getting at was the significance of His role as our Passover sacrifice. By saying that you must eat His flesh and drink His blood, He was actually referring to what the Bible refers to as "eating the Passover". So, with the Passover coming up here in just a few weeks, what we're going to do today is take a look at these particular statements that Christ made to understand the significance of what He was really getting at, and the appreciation that we should have for what He did for us as our Passover sacrifice. So, if you'd like a title for this sermon, it's:

## The Bread of Life

So, if you turn with me over to John 6, that's where He makes this particular statement. Now, the symbols of the Passover service are referred to in numerous places in the Bible, but this is the only chapter where He ever directly says that He is the "bread of life". Now, there's a context as to why He made this statement that we're actually going to skip over. But in the earlier parts of John 6, Christ actually performs a miracle where He feeds 5,000 people and He does this with just five loaves of barley bread and two fish. So, as you can imagine, this gets a lot of people's attention as to how He could pull this off. Because He not only feeds all of these people, but there's lots of leftovers that they're able to collect after everyone eats. This catches a lot of people's attention.

Well, later, as we're going to see here in the latter part of the chapter, it's a conversation where people are basically tracking Him down after this. But as Christ points out, they're not really pursuing Him because of realizing that there is spiritual significance to what He has to offer. They just got a free meal from Him earlier and they're hoping to get another free meal. That is really what they're thinking. This is the context we're going to start off with here. In John 6 and verse 26 is where we're going to pick up the story.

**John 6:26** *"Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled." (NKJV)*

In other words, you guys are just looking for another free meal. That is where you're coming from. But then He goes on to explain the spiritual significance going on here.

*"27) Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." 28) Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" 29) Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." (NKJV)*

Now obviously, He's referring to believing in Himself. As James 2 explains, we won't take the time to turn there, but this is much more significant than just professing an intellectual belief. Anyone can say, "I believe X", and that's maybe an intellectual acknowledgement of saying, I believe something, but we demonstrate our faith through our works. In other words, it's how we behave. And that's really what He's getting at here. It's not just an intellectual belief. Picking up in verse 30.

**John 6:30** *"Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? 31) Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32) Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33) For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34) Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." 35) And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." (NKJV)*

Now, skip down to verse 41 and we'll see He follows up in His explanation for this statement that He is the bread of life by making comments that the audience finds very shocking because He's talking about eating His flesh and drinking His blood, which you can imagine, sounded to them like cannibalism, and they think He's lost His mind. But pick up in verse 41.

*"41) The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." 42) And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?" 43) Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. 44) No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. 45) It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God.'" Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. 46) Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. 47) Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. 48) I am the bread of life. 49) Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50)*

*This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. 51) I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” 52) The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?” (NKJV)*

Again, they're taking this very literally, and it sounds like cannibalism to them. They don't realize He's speaking symbolically. In verse 53.

*“53) Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. 54) Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55) For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. 56) He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 57) As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 58) This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.” 59) These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.” (NKJV)*

Now, as you can imagine, these words sounded absolutely shocking to the audience that was hearing Him because they're not realizing that He's speaking figuratively and symbolically and teaching a lesson here. They're taking this literally like this guy's talking about cannibalism, and they think He's lost His mind. But what He's actually referring to here is the significance of what is accomplished through His role as our Passover sacrifice. What He's hinting at here is what He's going to establish later, which is a new definition for “eating the Passover”. That is how the Bible refers to it.

So first of all, let's just turn over to 1 Corinthians 5, and we'll notice here where Paul explains directly that Christ is our Passover. He's our Passover sacrifice. Because a significant thing to understand when you study the term “Passover” is the Passover by definition is a sacrifice. Now, oftentimes we tend to use the term and think of it as a calendar day. Now there is a day designated for the Passover sacrifice. But again, it's important to realize that the definition is a sacrifice because Christ isn't our Nisan the 14th, but He is our Passover sacrifice. He's our atoning sacrifice.

We won't take the time to go through Leviticus 23 today, but that's where it lists out all the Holy Days and appointed times that God commands. But sometimes when we read over Leviticus 23:5, we don't really get the significance of what it's saying because that's the verse that specifically defines the Passover for us. Of course, it does say it's on the 14th day of the first month. But oftentimes because of that, we think of it as a 24 hour day as what's being defined by that verse. If you dig into the Hebrew, it's saying Yehovah's Passover is on the 14th “between the two evenings”, is what it means in English. But the Hebrew is “ben ha-'arbayim”. What it's giving you is a window of time on the 14th. It's not referring to the 14th as a 24 hour period. It's referring to a window of time. Well, if you look at what happens during that window of time, it's the sacrificing of the lamb is what takes place there because the Passover, by definition, is a sacrifice.

I'll only briefly touch on that subject today. On my website -- my website is [SearchingTheScriptures.org](http://SearchingTheScriptures.org). If you're watching this on YouTube, just look below this video. There's a direct link there. You can just click on it, and it'll take you straight to the website. But the reason I mentioned that is on my website, there are two study papers that address the Passover. One addresses the Old Covenant Passover. One addresses the New Covenant Passover. Particularly the one that addresses the Old Covenant Passover -- it'll show you lots of scriptures to make it very clear that the Passover, by definition, is a sacrifice. Again, that's very important to understand. But just notice here in 1 Corinthians 5 and verse 7.

**1 Cor 5:7** *"Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us."* (NKJV)

The reason Christ is our Passover is because He's a sacrifice. He was sacrificed for us and that's what basically atones for our sins and enables us to have a relationship with God the Father. To reconcile us to Him and to offer forgiveness of sins for us. Because again, what Christ was getting at when He made this very puzzling statement to all who were listening to Him that day when He commented that He was the bread of life. He talked about eating His flesh and drinking His blood. Now, what He was really getting at -- He wasn't speaking literally like a lot of the audience interpreted the statement. He wasn't talking about cannibalism. He was speaking figuratively and symbolically to what the Bible refers to as "eating the Passover". So, turn over to Luke 22, and we'll see this. Because to understand when the Bible refers to "eating the Passover", there's actually two definitions to that term.

Again, the study papers that I just referred to will go into this in a lot more detail than I'm going to cover today. But with the Old Covenant Passover, the definition of "eating the Passover" was eating the sacrificed lamb. There was a specific meal that they would get together that evening and then eat the sacrificed lamb. That was considered "eating the Passover". Again, that wasn't a leg of lamb that you just go buy at the grocery store. That was a lamb that was officially sacrificed at the temple under Biblical instructions. That was the definition of "eating the Passover" in terms of the Old Covenant Passover.

Now, in the New Covenant Passover, that's not about Israel's deliverance from death and coming out of Egypt physically. This is about Christ's sacrifice. What we will see here in just a moment is, when Christ instituted the symbols of the New Covenant Passover, He was introducing a new definition for "eating the Passover". So, notice here in Luke 22 and verse 14.

**Luke 22:14** *"When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. 15) Then He said to them, 'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16) for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'" (NKJV)*

Now, if you notice, as we read the next couple of verses here, when He's talking about eating "this Passover", He's basically establishing a new definition for what it means to "eat the Passover". Because He's not talking about a sacrificed lamb that they sacrificed at the temple. This is not about that. This is about the symbols of His body and His blood and what He accomplished for us in the New Covenant. That is what He's referring to. So, pick up in verse 17.

**Luke 22:17** *"Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18) for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' 19) And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' 20) Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.'"*  
(NKJV)

This is what He meant by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. He was speaking figuratively and symbolically. But notice again, He's establishing a new definition for "eating the Passover". Because in the Old Covenant Passover that was eating a lamb sacrificed at the temple. For the New Covenant Passover, it's about eating the symbols of Christ's body and His blood. But what we're going to see here is there's a significance to both of these symbols. They both have different meanings. And there's a significance to why they are placed in this order. Because what we're about to see here is the bread, which is broken. It refers to His suffering. The beatings and the torture that He went through. That He had to endure before He actually died. The wine is a symbol of His blood, which isn't just a symbol of the shedding of His blood. That's part of this, but it's really getting at the concept of His death. You'll see that as we break the details down here.

So, turn over to 1 Corinthians 11. We're going to look at several of the accounts here that talk about what He did that evening establishing the New Covenant Passover. Because in some of the different accounts that talk about this, there's different wording that gives you the specific details we need to emphasize here. But just notice here in 1 Corinthians 11, we're going to start in verse 23. But also, just take note of the fact that this is the Apostle Paul, and he is addressing this to the Church in Corinth. Now, the reason I point this out is, Paul is not even called to be a Christian until the Book of Acts. The reason I point this out is sometimes people try to basically explain away the Passover or say that we don't have to do this today or even arguing the timing. They say, well, Christ just did what He did in establishing the New Covenant Passover at the beginning of the 14th as a one-time exception and He didn't intend for people to do this ongoing or He was just explaining these symbols and wasn't establishing something that we had to continue doing every year.

Well notice here, as we just read in Luke 22, Christ specifically said, "Do this in remembrance of Me". In other words, He's establishing something you're going to keep doing in the future. Now notice what we're about to read here in 1 Corinthians. Paul says this several times as well. Christ said to do this in remembrance of Him. Paul makes it very clear when to keep it and he's teaching this too. Again, the Corinthian

Church well after the time that Christ has died and all of that has already occurred. Again, Paul wasn't even called until the Book of Acts. So, if that was a one-time exception for Christ to do it on the beginning of the 14th, you would think that Paul would make it clear here. Well, now we're supposed to do it the next night. Well, that's not what he says. He taught them to do exactly what Christ did, which tells us what we should do today. This is 1 Corinthians 11 and verse 23.

**1 Cor 11:23** *"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;"* (NKJV)

Now there's a lot of arguments in regards to timing around the Passover issue. I'm not going to get into all of that today. As I mentioned, that's addressed in the study papers that I mentioned. But everyone agrees when Christ was betrayed. That was on the night beginning the 14th. That's a pretty widely agreed upon statement here. This is what he's passing on to the Corinthian Church. In verse 24.

*"24) and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.'"* (NKJV)

Notice he specifically talked about His body being broken because you'll see as we read through these examples, He specifically broke the bread before giving it to them because that's following the symbolism of what this pictures. Continue in verse 25.

*"25) In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.'"* (NKJV)

Now notice, He's just twice now emphasized that we're supposed to do this in remembrance of Him. He's establishing something we're supposed to continue to keep doing every year. In verse 26.

*"26) For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."* (NKJV)

Now again, sometimes, particularly in the Protestant world, they take that statement in verse 26 and interpret it like, "Well, as often as you do it, well, you can do it every week." This is eating the Passover. When was the Passover done? Once a year. That's why we follow exactly what Christ did, and every year at the beginning of the 14th, we keep the New Covenant Passover exactly as He established it.

Now, as I mentioned, these two symbols have their own separate significance. Because notice it talked about the bread being broken. This was Christ's body that was broken. As we're going to see here, both the Old Testament and the New Testament connect this with Christ's suffering. The torture, the beatings that He went through, and it ties that to our spiritual healing. So, to notice that, turn over to Isaiah 53. We'll see a prophecy that speaks about this. So, Isaiah 53, and we'll start reading in verse 4.

**Is 53:4** *“Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. 5) But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.”* (NKJV)

Again, as you're going to notice, this is our spiritual healing because just notice the statement right after this.

*“6) All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. 7) He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.”* (NKJV)

Because notice, it was specifically referring to “we were going astray”. We were spiritually off track. That's what this is primarily referring to. It's our spiritual healing. This is further clarified in the New Testament in 1 Peter. So, just turn over to 1 Peter 2 and we'll pick up here in verse 19.

**1 Peter 2:19** *“For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20) For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. 21) For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:”* (NKJV)

In other words, one of the requirements that we have to face as well through our Christian walk is suffering. I won't take the time to turn there, but just like 2 Timothy 3:12 tells us, *“All who want to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”* In other words, it's going to be a hard road to go. It's something we have to endure our way through. That's part of the contract. But let's just keep reading here and notice how this is referring to the suffering Christ went through, and it directly ties that to our spiritual healing.

*“22) “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”; 23) who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24) who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.”* (NKJV)

Notice this is saying exactly what we just read in Isaiah 53. Now again, notice verse 25 because this is similar as well. It again ties it to our spiritual healing.

*“25) For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”* (NKJV)

So, we can see here, the symbols of the New Covenant Passover are in a particular order with the bread being before the wine specifically because it matches the symbolism of what it pictures. Because one of the first things that happened with Christ, He's arrested and then He's beaten and tortured. This all happens before His death because what we're going to see here is the wine is a symbolic representation of His blood. But again, it's more than just the shedding of blood in terms of just bleeding because what that's actually referring to is His death. But turnover now to Matthew 26 and we'll see here where another account of Christ the night He established the New Covenant Passover. But the wording here in Matthew 26 emphasizes a detail we need to look at. It's in Matthew 26 and verse 26.

**Matt 26:26** *"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' 27) Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. 28) For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.' (NKJV)*

Notice He specifically ties the shedding of His blood to the remission of sins. In other words, allowing us the opportunity to have our sins forgiven. To be reconciled to the Father and covering the death penalty for us. Because that's a significant point to remember. Because as we're going to see here, it's going to tie this in the Book of Hebrews with the sacrificial system. But keep in mind when an animal was sacrificed, and they used that blood to put on the altar as a symbolic atonement for mankind. They didn't just cut an animal and have it bleed and then collect that blood and stitch the animal back up and bandage him and let him heal and continue life. That's not how that worked. The animal actually died.

Because as you'll see, if you go through the sacrifices in the Old Covenant, they would put their hands on the head of an animal that's going to be offered as a sin offering before the animal is killed. What's taking place there is a symbolic transfer. It's like transferring the sins of the individual that this is a symbolic atonement for onto the animal and then the animal is then killed because it's facing the death penalty. Because what we're going to see is the wages of sin is death. There has to be a death to pay the penalty. That's really what this is getting at. But let's just notice here in Hebrews 9, we'll see here where it tells us the shedding of blood is a requirement for the remission of sins. But again, as we're going to see here, it's more than just the act of bleeding. It's actually referring to a death. It's Hebrews 9, and we're going to look here in verse 22.

**Heb 9:22** *"And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission." (NKJV)*

In other words, the penalty has to be paid, and that penalty is actually death. Again, if you go back through the Old Testament sacrifices, what you'll see is you don't just injure an animal and then use that blood to atone symbolically for sins. The animal has to actually die. The reason is that the wages of a sin is death. To see that, let's turn over to Romans 6. It's Romans 6 and verse 23.

**Rom 6:23** *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (NKJV)

As I explained in a recent sermon, oftentimes you'll see in the Protestant world, they assume that eternal life is a given. You'll see that in their theology because they oftentimes look at it as what's really being decided is where you're going to spend eternity. Is that going to be in a good place in heaven or is it going to be in a bad place in hell? Well, that actually assumes that eternal life is a given and not a gift. What it tells us is that it's a gift because sinners both the unrepentant humans and even the rebellious angels that rebelled and refuse to obey God, both of them have their end in the lake of fire, the second death. Well, that's because the wages of sin is death. That's the penalty. But the point to see here is Christ paid that penalty for us. So, you see, when He refers to the shedding of His blood was for the remission of sins, it wasn't just the fact that He bled. It was the fact that He lost His life. That He actually died because He took on that death penalty and paid the penalty for us. See, this is further explained back over in Hebrews 9. So, if you'll just turn back over to Hebrews 9, and this time we'll start at the beginning of the chapter. Hebrews 9 and verse 1.

**Heb 9:1** *“Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. 2) For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; 3) and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, 4) which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; 5) and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. 6) Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. 7) But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance;”* (NKJV)

Now obviously, it's referring to the ceremony in Leviticus 16 here that was performed on the Day of Atonement. But just pick up in verse 8.

*“8) the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. 9) It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience— 10) concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.”* (NKJV)

As I've explained previously, the “time of reformation” that's basically referring to when the New Covenant is offered to a human because as I've explained before, it wasn't just an issue of well, Christ died and therefore all sacrificing goes away because that's not what happened. The temple continued on, and they continued the sacrifices until it was destroyed in 70 AD. The sacrifices will be brought back, obviously before the return of

Christ. Prophecy tells us that and they exist during the millennium as well because they're applicable to people who are still under the Old Covenant system. What this was, is again, a symbolic teaching tool of the need for the sacrifice of Christ. But the sacrifices apply until the New Covenant is made available to mankind. Picking up in verse 11.

*"11) But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12) Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13) For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14) how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15) And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." (NKJV)*

See, not only did Christ being our Passover sacrifice enable us the opportunity for eternal life, He's saving us from death. He literally faced the death penalty for us so that we don't have to face the consequences that we deserve. Because see, that's an important thing for us to realize when we're going in to keep the Passover service. It's not just a ritual that we go through every year because it's just our tradition. We need to appreciate the significance of what He did for us, because He literally took on the penalty that we deserve. The suffering and the pain and the death that we deserve because of our sins. He literally took all that on Himself and freed us from that.

To really appreciate what He did for us and the significance of that, we need to think about that when we're going into to keep the New Covenant Passover. The significance of what took place and the appreciation that we should have for what He did for us. Because see, we really need to realize really who we are in comparison to Him. In comparison to Christ and His example, and to the Father, and to their law that they've established. We need to realize the comparison there. Because as we're going to see in this sermon, all too often, we tend to compare ourselves to the world around us. And we can feel real good about ourselves when we do that because we can always find people who are worse than we are. Who are less obedient or have a worse attitude than us. If we do that type of comparison, we can feel pretty good about ourselves and then we can feel we're doing pretty good.

But if we want to have a realistic view of things and an appreciation of what was done for us, we have to compare ourselves to the standard of Christ and to God's law and to the righteousness of God the Father and see ourselves through Their eyes because that's the reality of what's taking place. That gets us in touch with the reality of how things really are, and the significance of what Christ did for us. To get a view of this, turnover to Romans 3, because we'll see here, Paul talking about the reality of the human condition. We oftentimes in our world today compare ourselves to people around us and not in terms of how it looks through Their eyes, through reality. As I covered in

my last sermon, as carnal human beings, we tend to be delusional, and we don't have a realistic view of how things really are. But notice here in Romans 3 and verse 9. We're going to see here how Paul describes the reality of our condition and what we really look like if we look at it through the eyes of Christ and of God the Father from their perspective. How we really are. It's in verse 9.

**Rom 3:9** *"What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. 10) As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; 11) There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. 12) They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." 13) "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips"; 14) "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." 15) "Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16) Destruction and misery are in their ways; 17) And the way of peace they have not known." 18) "There is no fear of God before their eyes." 19) Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20) Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (NKJV)*

Now again, notice that what Paul is referring to here is comparing ourselves by the standard of God's law. See, once we do that, then we realize we don't have much to brag about because regardless of how well we might be doing in comparison to other people or comparison to the person we used to be, because hopefully we're growing and maturing and becoming more and more righteous as we go forward in our Christian lives. But again, it's easy for us to get delusional. We always look at the worst of humanity and think, well, I'm doing pretty good and compared to that. I'm a good person. Well, if we make that comparison to how do we compare to the standard of God's law and to Christ example? Well, if we do that, we start realizing very quickly, we don't have much to brag about. We have a lot to be grateful for, but not much of anything to brag about.

Because just think about it from Paul's example and his perspective. Now we know Paul is the author of the majority of the New Testament, nobody else writes as much as he does. He's held up as a superstar, as an example in the New Testament. But now also think of how Paul could do the comparison here. Because if you read through Paul's life, particularly the list that he gives in 2 Corinthians, Paul spent a lot of time running for his life from people who were attacking him and beating him and locking him in prison and stoning him, trying to kill him. Now, he could easily compare himself just to those individuals and say, "I'm a superstar. Look at my example. Look what those low lifes are doing. I'm constantly running for my life from these low lifes." But that's not how he looks at it. He compares himself to God's law and he realizes the reality of what a weak frail human being he is.

So, turn over to Romans 7 and we'll see this. Again, notice that this is coming from the man who wrote the majority of the New Testament. Again, if he just compared himself to the people that were always trying to kill him, he could easily justify that he's an upstanding good guy because look what all these other people are doing. But that's not the standard he used. He compared himself to God's law. So, notice here in Romans 7 and verse 13.

**Rom 7:13** *"Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. 14) For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15) For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. 16) If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. 17) But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 18) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find."* (NKJV)

In other words, he's very realistic. I don't have anything to brag about as far as inherently what I've done for myself. I can only take comfort to feel good about what God has done through me. Through what Christ sacrifice has enabled me to do and the Holy Spirit has brought about. In verse 19.

*"19) For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. 20) Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 21) I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22) For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23) But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24) O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25) I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."* (NKJV)

You see, to truly appreciate what Christ did for us as our Passover sacrifice and Him being the bread of life and sacrificing His life to be able to save us. To fully appreciate the magnitude of that, we need to see ourselves as Paul saw himself. Comparing ourselves to God's law and realizing, I don't have anything to be bragging about. I don't have anything to be beating my chest and saying, "I'm so great" about. I should just be thankful that They've redeemed me from who I am and are putting up with me and allowing me the opportunity to overcome. Because see, the pitfall that we as carnal human beings typically fall into is "judging ourselves among ourselves". That is how the Bible refers to it. Because as I mentioned, we tend to compare ourselves to the people around us. Of course, we always choose the people that are going to make us look good when our minds do that. But just notice here in 2 Corinthians how Paul told us that this is just not wise doing this comparison of comparing ourselves to other carnal human beings around us. This is 2 Corinthians 10 and verse 12.

**2 Cor 10:12** *“For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.” (NKJV)*

In other words, this is just not a smart thing to do because this is not the wise way to do this kind of comparison. Because again, it results in self-delusion is really what it results in. To see a good example of this, turn over to Luke 18 and we'll see an example that Christ gave in a parable. What I want you to notice here is the negative example here. The Pharisee in this particular parable. The comparison that he's making. He's not comparing himself to the standard of God's law or to Christ example. He's comparing himself to other people. Again, we can always pick another person to compare ourselves to where we're going to come out looking good. It's Luke 18 and verse 9.

**Luke 18:9** *“Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:” (NKJV)*

Notice he's not trusting in the sacrifice of Christ. He's trusting in his own righteousness. That he'll come out looking good just based upon his own works. That's a bad idea.

*“10) Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11) The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12) I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’” (NKJV)*

Now notice what he's doing. I look good because I'm better than that guy over there. That's basically the comparison he's making. Now, again, as carnal human beings, we'll always find somebody that we think we're doing better than. If we use that as the comparison, we can feel real good about ourselves. We can feel like, well, I can beat my chest and brag about my accomplishments because look at that guy. I'm doing so much better than that guy. But if we turn around and compare ourselves to God's law, the example of Christ, we get a lot more humble because now we realize we don't have much to be bragging about. See, that's how the positive example plays out in this particular parable. Continue on in verse 13.

*“13) And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ 14) I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (NKJV)*

See, what was happening here is the tax collector is comparing himself to God's law and realizing how much he falls short. He's appreciative of mercy and realizes how much he needs a savior because he realizes that he doesn't have much to be bragging about by himself. That's the realization that we all need to have when we go to keep the Passover next month. When we go to eat the New Covenant Passover and to follow Christ's command to do this in remembrance of Him. We need to do it with a proper

attitude. To do that, we have to do a self-examination. Again, not comparing ourselves to other people that we know or the worst of humanity because again, if we do that, we'll always feel good about ourselves. If we compare ourselves to God's law and the example that Christ set, we'll always see the areas where we need to grow. Again, we'll appreciate the significance of what Christ did for us, because then we're going to realize that we can't brag about anything. We can't beat our chest and say, "I deserve this, and I earned this". No, we can just say thank you and I'm so happy that You were merciful enough to do this for me because there's nothing I can do to earn this on my own.

If we turn back over to 1 Corinthians 11, we'll see here this instruction that when we come to keep the New Covenant Passover we need to have done that self-examination so that we come with an attitude of appreciation and reverence for appreciating what Christ has done for us and the fact that there's nothing that we can do to have deserved His sacrifice for us. It's just a free gift and we just need to come humbly before Him and appreciate what He did for us. This is in 1 Corinthians 11, and we'll start reading in verse 27.

**1 Cor 11:27** *"Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."* (NKJV)

Now notice again, it wouldn't make any sense for Paul to be saying this, if there wasn't a commandment that we should do this every year in remembrance of what Christ did. Again, it wouldn't even be relevant to be talking about this. So, obviously it's something we have to do. But he is warning us to do it with a proper attitude. Pick up in verse 28.

*"28) But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29) For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30) For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep."* (NKJV)

Again, he's referring to being spiritually ill or spiritually dead. That is what he's actually saying. In verse 31.

*"31) For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32) But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. 33) Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. 34) But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come."* (NKJV)

He's telling us to come together with an attitude of appreciation, of humility, of realizing how much we need a savior. How appreciative we should be for all that Christ went through, and the sacrifice He made to enable us the opportunity to live. To save us from our own sins, to save us from the death penalty and to give us the opportunity to even have a relationship with God the Father. Let alone having the opportunity for eternal life.

Particularly to appreciate that, I think we need to also understand that Christ did this for us before we were even trying to be obedient. Because if we think of this in terms of our

own life, of what would you be willing to sacrifice your life for? What would you be willing to take a beating for? I think a lot of people, particularly those who are parents, would say, well, yeah, I'd be willing to die for my child. I'd be willing to take a bullet for my kid. My spouse who I love, or maybe my siblings or my close friends, yeah, I'd be willing to die for that person. There are many people who would say that and might actually follow through on doing that.

But if we stop and think about it, would I want to do that for the drug addict who's homeless down on skid row? Or someone who's just living a total life as a derelict? Would you want to suffer and be tormented and killed for that person? I think most of us would go, I don't know if that really sounds worth it. That's hard for us to fathom when we think of it in those terms because again, we can think about dying for someone we dearly love. For your child, for your spouse, for your best friend. But someone who's totally adversarial to you? Are you willing to die for that? We don't tend to want to jump up and volunteer for that, but that's exactly what Christ did. So, turn over to Romans 5. We'll start reading in verse 6.

**Rom 5:6** *"For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die."* (NKJV)

As I mentioned, someone might be willing to die for their kids or for their spouse or someone they really care about, or just someone they heard about that they know has been in their view, a decent, upstanding, noble person and they think, well, I'd be willing to die for that person because they're a good person. But what about someone who's just living as a derelict? Would you want to die for that? No! That's hard for us to wrap our hands around. Now, let's pick up in verse 8.

*"8) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9) Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10) For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11) And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."* (NKJV)

You see, Christ was willing to volunteer His life to be killed. To be tortured, to be harassed throughout all of the years of His physical life on earth. Just solely to help us because it wasn't benefiting Him. He had eternal life. He could have just continued living His eternal life in heaven and never had to put up with any of this. He went through it all just to save us. He did it when we were adversarial to Him. We weren't even trying to obey and even trying to be good people. See, that's what we need to understand when we come next month to keep the Passover, to, as the Bible says, "eat the Passover" and to do this in remembrance of Him as He commanded us. We need to do that again with a proper appreciation for what He did for us.

As we all know we're commanded this time of year to do a self-evaluation to see where we're going and how we're doing with our spiritual lives. But again, it's important to realize that that comparison shouldn't be comparing ourselves among ourselves. Because if we do that we can always find people who are worse off than we are. Who are more rebellious or don't have a good attitude. People we can do a comparison with and come out looking good and feel good about ourselves and think like the Pharisee in the temple going, "Well, I'm better than that tax collector over there. I'm doing pretty good. I can beat my chest."

But if we compare ourselves to God's law, to Christ's example, we quickly get a lot more quiet and humble. Because now we realize, we don't have much to brag about. That's what we need to focus on as we get closer to Passover, realizing our own insignificance. How poorly that we perform if we compare ourselves to Christ's example and to God's law, because that's the standard that we're judged by. It's not how we are compared to other people. See, if we can focus upon that, then we can see how humble we should be coming before Them to keep the New Covenant Passover and to appreciate the significance of what Christ did for us.

See, when Christ said He is the bread of life and we have to eat His flesh and drink His blood, He was referring to his role as our Passover. Again, the New Covenant definition of "eating the Passover", which we'll all be doing next month. But brethren, as we do that self-evaluation to make sure that we're coming to keep the New Covenant Passover with a proper appreciation and reverent attitude. Let's make sure that we focus upon comparing ourselves not to the people around us, not to other Christians or other people in the world. But comparing ourselves to Christ's personal example and to God's law so that we can come with a proper reverent attitude through humility and proper appreciation for what Christ did for us. Because if we do that, then we can keep the Passover in a proper attitude and fully appreciate what Christ did for us when He came to earth and sacrificed Himself for us so that He could be our bread of life.