

King Of Peace: Meal With His Friends

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We are going to begin this sermon on this Sabbath just three and a half weeks before we keep the Passover with the King of Peace by going through a portion of the Scriptures we will be reading that night.

On the evening of March 31st, shortly after sunset, which is the start of the 14th day of the first month on God's sacred year, we will be participating in a very solemn, but God-appointed memorial.

In my last sermon in this series on the King of Peace in preparation for Passover, I spent a good deal of time on the memorials of men, specifically those times of remembrance regarding George Washington and Abraham Lincoln.

I tried to show you the farther we got away from what was the original intent of those memorials, the more distorted and obtuse men became in their understanding regarding the truth that those times of remembrance should have evoked. As a matter of fact, I showed you that most people who were observing the day that had been set aside as a remembrance of the first President of the United States, who had set the standard for the other presidents, had been muddled into the distorted meaning of the day.

Even your calendars show the congressionally mandated holiday as President's Day, when in fact the congressional bill had made the third Monday in February a holiday memorializing only the first President of the United States, George Washington, although during the debate it was proposed that Washington's birthday be renamed President's Day to honor the birthdays of both Washington, February 22nd, and Lincoln, February 12th, which had also been celebrated in many states, but was never an official holiday.

After much discussion, Congress rejected the name change. However, after the bill went into effect in 1971, the President's Day designation crept in to water down the memorial due in part to retailers' use of that name to promote sales and the holiday's proximity to Lincoln's birthday.

I spent a great deal of time doing this because I wanted us to see through the physical example of how distorted memorials could become from its original intention as we move it along the path that men will take it to do everything that suits them and is right in their own eyes.

But in our responsibility before God, we must make every effort to dig into the truth of God's Word so that we can keep God's set-apart memorial times in line with what He wants us to learn from them.

With this in mind, I hope what we are going to consider today will help us more properly examine ourselves within the Body of Christ as we approach and keep what should be one of the most solemn yet joyous occasions of our fellowship in peace with Jesus Christ, the Father, and one another.

It is the memorial that we are commanded to keep annually, as among other things, a clear reminder of the covenant we made at baptism to live as Christ lives when we were buried with Him in the waters of baptism.

Although we must never, ever take our focus away from the totality of the cost that was involved, we need to understand there is something very specific for us to consider as we keep the Passover and celebrate the peace offering as the memorial we have been given.

The portion that I am going to read hopefully will set up the remainder of the sermon and help us to more fully appreciate what we are going to be doing on the evening of March 31st this year. We are preparing to share that peace offering with the King of Peace while considering the inestimable cost which demands our absolute faith in action.

We are going to be reading a lot of Scripture today, so be ready to turn pages with me.

John 13:1-11 Now before the feast of Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And supper being ended [or as more correctly being laid], the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper, laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He had been girded. Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this." Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part in Me." Simon Peter then said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." For He knew who it was who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."

Brethren, it is important that we stop here for a second and understand something. Jesus Christ washed the feet of even the man who was going to betray Him, and He knew who that man was.

We have been given opportunities to really understand and love our brothers, but we cannot understand exactly as Jesus Christ did, who is clean and who is not. We just need to follow what He said.

John 13:12-18 So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If then, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you.

John 13:18 "I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He who eats His bread with Me has lifted up His heel against Me."

John 13:26-28 Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread which I have dipped." And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." But no one at the table knew for what reason He had said this to him.

John 13:30-31 Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night. So, when he was gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him."

Turn with me to chapter 15, please.

John 15:12-17 "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask in the Father in My name He may give to you. These things I command you, that you love one another."

Now over in chapter 17, we will be picking it up towards the beginning of Christ's prayer, alone toward His Father just before He began the terrible suffering He went through. In verse 4 of chapter 17, Christ said,

John 17:4-6 "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You

before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

John 17:9-11 "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world, but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.

John 17:16-21 "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I have also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; and that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."

Continue to hold all these in your thoughts.

Jesus Christ said that He had finished the work He had been given. He then shared the peace offering with His disciples at that time and, by extension, with all those who would be His through their word, us.

Brethren, we must consider this vital point that we are no longer servants without understanding of what the Master was doing, but His friends to share His way of life together, as only He can give us the privileged opportunity to do.

We are going to expand on this theme of our privileged responsibility together of being friends of God, and we are going to get to it in Isaiah 41:8 in a minute, but first I want us to consider just who it is who we are such close friends with.

So please turn with me back to Isaiah the 40th chapter. And although this is an end time prophecy toward physical Israel, the friends of Christ with

understanding should find this a breathtaking reality of who it is that we have been given the privilege to share the Passover meal with.

Isaiah 40:1-5 "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" says your God. "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the Lord's hand double for her sins." The voice of one crying out in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

Isaiah 40:10-14 Behold, the Lord God shall come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and He will carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young. Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counselor has taught Him? With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of justice? Who taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding?

Isaiah 40:17-18 All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted to Him as less than nothing and worthless. To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?

Isaiah 40:25-31 "To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?" says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their hosts by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; not one is missing. Why do you say,

O Jacob, and speak, O Israel: "My way is hidden from the Lord, and my just claim is passed over by my God"? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. For the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Now drop down to chapter 41, verse 8. We are going to pick up this as one verse before going on to Galatians.

Isaiah 41:8 "But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham My friend."

Now please turn with me back to the book of Galatians, chapter 3, verse 26. This is speaking to us, brethren.

Galatians 3:26-29 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Galatians 4:1-7 Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ from that of a slave, though he is lord of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of this world. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God has

sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Now please turn with me back to the book of James in chapter 2, verse 1.

James 2:1-10 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, and fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or "Sit here at my footstool," have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into courts? Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you were called? If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

James 2:14-23 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to him, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works,

and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.

At this point, I would like us to go back to where we were in the last sermon in Genesis, the 14th chapter and we are going to be looking again at something that ties very well into the Passover memorial.

As I mentioned in the first sermon I gave on the King of Peace, in spite of what it said there at the end of the book of Judges, that every man did what was right in his own eyes, and there was no king in Israel, God has always been on His throne, and the King of Peace has always been there.

As we noted in that last sermon, the word for king, as it appears in Judges 21:25, was the Hebrew word translated as king, *melech*. It appears 2,525 times in the Old Testament, and the word first appears here in Genesis 14, and the very first use of it refers to a number of different area kings at the beginning of that chapter.

In Genesis 14 we see that Lot, who had looked to the physical things of this world, had gotten himself caught up in the ultimate division that comes from the minds of men, doing what is right in their own covetous eyes: war and captivity. He, along with his family and neighbors, had been taken captive along with all their physical wealth by the kings warring against the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah.

We see at the beginning of the chapter, Abram, who John Ritenbaugh has clearly identified in his Bible study as a man of great intellect, great authority, and great abilities, had a well-organized and well-trained personal armed force. Abram himself, as a brilliant tactician, led those he had trained to rescue Lot from the predicament that he had gotten himself into.

Again, at this point, I would like to quote from John Ritenbaugh's Bible study on that part of Abraham's life because it brings up a very important principle that we need to hold on to.

John said,

When Christ comes, He is going to make war. He is going to stop the madness through His warfare. God only makes war in righteousness. That is why He has forbidden men to go to war.

No man, including Abraham, should ever go to war because he does not have the nature, is not equipped with the nature and therefore the character, you might say, the heart to wage war in righteousness against each other.

Now I do not think that Abraham thought of warfare in terms of being a noble idea. His warfare symbolized his depth of feeling and love toward Lot, his brother, as it said, but literally his nephew. It exemplifies his willingness to lay down his life for him.

Does that remind you of anything? Jesus said there in John 15:13, that "greater love has no man than to lay down your life for his friends." Lot was Abraham's flesh and blood. He risked everything. He did not calculate at all the cost that was going to be to him. His only thought was to rescue his nephew Lot. And this comes out as we get closer to the end of the chapter. He was willing to lay down his life for Lot.

We are involved in this war. Abraham, in an uncalculating way, is willing to lay down his life for his brother. And that is the lesson for you and me. It is not the fact that he went to war. It is the fact that he was willing to lay down his life. Abraham did not go to war to see what he could get for himself.

He was not after glory. He was not after money. His only thought was to preserve the life of someone he loved. We have to begin to ask ourselves questions in this regard: Do we love our brother?

Brethren, up to this point, Abraham was still relying heavily on the physical gifts God had given to him. Let us pick it up right now in Genesis 14.

Genesis 14:16-20 So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the

valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him. Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave Him a tithe of all.

At this point, as I pointed out in the last sermon, although the king of Sodom went out to meet Abram in the King's Valley to collect his booty, Abram was first met and refreshed by Melchizedek, the king of Salem, the King of Peace, who brought out bread and wine to share a meal with him that He had provided.

The King of Peace was the Priest of God Most High, as it says in verse 19, and he blessed Abram and said,

Genesis 14:19 "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand."

This was the preincarnate Son of God as the King of Peace, refreshing Abram at a meal with bread and wine, a satisfying and refreshing meal with the King of Peace.

We know from this point forward Abram, Abraham as a friend of God, continued through things that personally showed his faithful dedication to the God of peace, most specifically when he offered in faith the sacrifice of his own son Isaac.

However, as far as I could tell from this point forward, we never saw Abram go into physical battle against men again.

Let us pick up one verse.

Genesis 15:1 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."

From this point forward, the King of Peace would continue to do what He needed to do to assure Abram's courage going forward. Do not be afraid. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.

Now regarding the rest of Genesis 15, we are not going to have time to go there, but I hope you have spent time going over David Grabbe's two-part article, "Why Was Jesus Christ Not Crucified at the Beginning of the 14th." And if you have not, I would suggest you do that between now and Passover.

This is certainly something we must understand as Jesus Christ's friends, but for the purpose of this sermon, I only want us to focus right now on the peace meal Melchizedek offered to Abraham, returning from battle as a type of the memorial we are to keep at the beginning of the 14th.

From chapter 12 of Genesis through Genesis 14:18 we see Abraham, a man of great gifts who responded to God's calling out of Ur of the Chaldeans and began his walk to follow God and His promises in faith, but still relying more heavily on his own great physical gifts God had given him when he rescued Lot.

But it is here in chapter 14, verses 18 through 20 we find him participating in a type of the shared meal, peace meal that Jesus Christ gave as a memorial for His disciples on His last Passover as a man on the night beginning the 14th.

Perhaps for Abraham it was a type of our own baptism as we were called out of this world from living by our own forces and into the peace that only Jesus Christ can give when we have committed to Him fully in our own baptism. As John has noted in his Bible studies on Abraham in those 13-plus chapters in Genesis, God gives us a good road map of our own journey as friends of God.

With this in mind, please turn with me ahead a little bit to Genesis 18.

Genesis 18:1-10 Then the Lord appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were

standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass by Your servant. Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said." So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes." And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.

Genesis 18:16-22 Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way. And the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him." And the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry which has come to Me; and if not, I will know." Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the Lord.

I would like us to consider here what I said before, that there does not seem to be any place in the Bible from the time that Abraham marshaled his troops to war to save Lot the first time.

I would also like us to consider what the King of Peace had previously done for Abraham. With the peace meal that He provided gave Abraham an example of what he should do going forward. So here in chapter 18 we see Abraham humbly serving, providing water for washing the feet, providing everything for the meal, with his focus on outgoing concern.

And here we see the same One who later became Jesus Christ said the same thing regarding His friend Abraham that He had said to His disciples on the night of the Passover. Here He said,

Genesis 18:17 "Shall I hide [anything] from Abraham what I am doing, . . . ?"

Genesis 18:19 I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken of."

We also see another example that in spite of what was going to happen to Sodom and Lot's jeopardy in the circumstance, Abraham was no longer going to take things into his own hands. But he laid everything before the King of Peace and righteousness, who was the only One who could really save Lot and his family with *His* clear goal in mind.

Quite a difference from the man who relied on his own strength, power, and physical might to do what he thought was right. We see here in Abraham another example of our walk as we go before our great God on behalf of our brethren seeking His rescue of them.

Now please turn with me to Genesis 22, verses 8 through 12.

Genesis 22:8-12 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together. Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there, placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

Brethren, we see here in this event with Abraham the ultimate work of the friends of the King of Peace, in faith doing whatever it takes to follow His commands, knowing that it will always work for good to those who love the King of Peace and are called to His table of unity, no matter how much it costs.

The main focus of Passover that we are going to participate in, in three and a half weeks is the peace meal, a meal that was shared with the Father, the Son, and one another in unity. And this needs to be our focus.

We are living in a world that is divided and will never find unity by doing what is right in their own eyes, but we are living within the Body of Christ that is also divided but which must find unity within Christ's command to His friends to humbly serve one another without any partiality whatsoever.

As we draw to the close of this sermon about sharing the peace offering with the King of Peace on the Passover, I would like to cite again something very important for our consideration in the Passover memorial we are to share. It comes from one of John Ritenbaugh's articles on the sacrificial offerings in Leviticus. In the "Offering of Leviticus, Part Six," John wrote the following.

The Bible provides two different orders, the teaching order given from the beginning of Leviticus 1. God, it seems, wants us to learn about devotion to Him and fellow man portrayed by the burnt and meal offerings, as well as our devotions, fruits, gratitude, peace, and fellowship pictured by the peace offering.

Following that, His instructions proceed on to the sin and trespass offerings. However, when the rituals were enacted, performed at the altar, the sin offering happened first, and Leviticus 9:8 clearly states that the calf of the sin offering was killed first.

Aaron then placed the blood from the calf upon the horns of the altar and poured the remainder of the blood at the base of the altar. Following that, its fat, kidneys, liver lobe were burned on the altar, but its flesh and hide were burned outside the camp. Not until those

ceremonies were fulfilled was the ram of the burnt offering killed, its blood caught, and all its parts burned atop the altar along with the meal offering.

Investigating why the instruction order was given one way and the practical application order another should prove both logical and helpful. It helps us to remember that Christ is the object of all the offerings.

The burnt offering pictures His perfect devotion and obedience to God in keeping the first four commandments. The meal offering depicts Jesus Christ as an equally perfect devotion and obedience in keeping the remaining six commandments which apply the relationships with other men. The peace offering shows the perfect communion produced.

This sequence portrays His sinless performance in living 33½ years, enabling Him to become the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. This describes what made Him the perfect sin offering.

We cannot approach God as a whole burnt offering because we have not devoted ourselves to God and man in perfect sinlessness. Our devotion is flawed. We are not qualified to be a sin offering because we have sinned. We are imperfect, to say the least.

The only way that we can approach God is to have the way cleared before us by the perfect sin offering made in our behalf, which in turn prepares the way for us to become acceptable burnt and meal offerings. The perfect sin offering must precede us.

So we cannot be accepted before God. We cannot come before God through our own works, because they are badly tarnished. We may come to Him only through the work of the life and sacrifice of Christ.

Once God accepts us into His presence, the love of God begins to shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. This works to change our hearts, preparing us to yield and keep His commandments faithfully in both the letter and the spirit of the law.

Brethren, when Jesus Christ kept the Passover with His disciples on the last Passover of His life as a man, He said He had completed the work that God had given Him to do at that meal.

And although it is vital for us to keep in mind the incredible cost that was involved, our main focus has to be on the peace offering that was made that night because only Jesus Christ could show us the perfect burnt offering, the perfect meal offering that could produce the peace offering that brought unity to the body of Christ.

He spent the evening very carefully telling His disciples what they must do if they were to be His friends and keep His commandments and humbly serve one another, treating each member of the Body of Christ as if they were submitting to Jesus Christ Himself.

Brethren, how well have we been treating each other member of the Body of Christ with outgoing concern and humble service that will produce through Jesus Christ unity? This is what we should be examining ourselves for as we approach the Passover.

Nancy and I were baptized 43 years ago, two days ago, and I have been thinking about these things myself so much over the last I do not know how long.

As we approach the Passover, how well have I done to treat my brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ the way that Christ would, and especially as a minister, how well have I done over the last 20 years of keeping people from stumbling? I am ashamed to say I have not done as good a job, but this should be our point of examination.

And I would like to leave us with one more very sobering thought regarding our participation in the peace offering with the King of Peace before we end this sermon in I Corinthians. So please turn with me back first to Leviticus, the 7th chapter, starting in verse 11 and we are going to pick up on just a few of the instructions regarding the peace offering.

Leviticus 7:11 'This is the law of the sacrifice of the peace offerings which shall be offered to the Lord: If he offers it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving.'

Leviticus 7:15-16 'The flesh of his peace offering for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day it is offered. He shall not leave any of it until morning. But if the sacrifice of his offering is a vow offering or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offers his sacrifice; but on the next day the remainder also shall be eaten.'

We are keeping the peace offering through Christ to be eaten together, both with thanksgiving and as a renewal of our vow to remain faithful to Him and each other.

But now I want to turn you to a very sobering lesson. Turn with me to Proverbs, please, the 7th chapter and consider this as instructions from God Himself to us.

Proverbs 7:1-20 My son, keep my words, and treasure my commands within you. Keep my commands and live, and my law as the apple of your eye. Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," and call understanding your nearest kin, that they may keep you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words.

For at the window of my house I looked through my lattice, and I saw among the simple, I perceived among the youths, a young man devoid of understanding, passing along the street near her corner; and he took the path to her house in the twilight, in the evening, in

the black and dark night. And there a woman met him, with the attire of a harlot, and a crafty heart. She was loud and rebellious, her feet would not stay at home. At times she was outside, at times she was in the open square, lurking at every corner.

So she caught him and kissed him; with an impudent face she said to him, "I have peace offerings with me today. I have paid my vows, so I came out to meet you, diligently to seek your face, and I have found you. I have spread my bed with tapestry, colored coverings of Egyptian linen. I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning; let us delight ourselves with love. For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey. He has taken a bag of money with him, and will come home on the appointed day."

Proverbs 7:24-27 Now therefore, listen to me, my children; and pay attention to the words of my mouth: Do not let your heart turn to her ways, do not stray into her paths; for she has cast down many wounded, and all who were slain by her were strong men. Her house is the way to hell, descending to the chambers of death.

Brethren, those who participate in the peace offering and then continue to follow a faithless, self-serving path of life do so to our peril.

Now please turn with me for closing scriptures to I Corinthians, the 11th chapter. We will pick it up in the middle of verse 18.

I Corinthians 11:18 I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.

I Corinthians 11:23-29 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; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 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." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. 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. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

Now I Corinthians chapter 12 and in verse 12.

I Corinthians 12:12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many.

I Corinthians 12:18-20 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.

I Corinthians 12:25-27 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

Brethren, let us carefully examine ourselves over the next three and a half weeks to determine if we truly are Christ's friends together, and determine how better we can live as Christ lives, with outgoing concern for every member of the Body of Christ. And if we truly walk in faith as Abraham, we will be heirs according to the King of Peace.