

Exodus 12:29-13:16

“Remember This Day”

March 19, 2017

Psalm 136

Luke 2:22-40

Moses commands Israel to *remember* the story of the gospel.

Remember the good news of salvation from bondage to Egypt.

In spite of all the failures in Israel’s history,

we do have some beautiful examples of faith

recorded in the Psalms.

Our Psalm of response is Psalm 136 –

a hymn to the steadfast love of the LORD!

Sing Psalm 136

Read Luke 2:21-40

What are Mary and Joseph and Jesus doing in the temple in Luke 2?

They are there for the purification of Mary – and the redemption of Jesus.

Did you know that Jesus had to be redeemed?

This is not a redemption from sin – per se –

but the redemption of the firstborn – as commanded in Exodus 13.

The firstborn males of the flock and of the herd are sacrificed to the LORD

but the firstborn son is redeemed

(by sacrificing a sheep or a goat – or if the family is poor, like Joseph,
two turtledoves or two pigeons).

The redemption of the firstborn is all about remembering the Exodus.

Israel is my son, my firstborn – let my son go that he may serve/worship me.

If you do not let my son go, I will kill your son – your firstborn.

Every time a mother gave birth to a firstborn

Israel is reminded of the Exodus.

Right here in Luke 2 there are two rituals

that show how Jesus is connected to the history of redemption.

The circumcision of Jesus connects him to the Abrahamic Covenant –

the promise that through Abraham’s seed, all the nations would be blessed.

The redemption of Jesus (as Mary’s firstborn) connects him to the Mosaic Covenant –

the promise that Israel is my son, my firstborn.

And all of this brings to fruition the promise to Eve

that the Seed of the Woman would crush the head of the serpent.

All of the rituals and practices of the Christian life

are designed to remind us of God’s great redemptive acts in history.

The story of the gospel is to be remembered –
not just by retelling it,
but by organizing our lives around the story of the gospel.
The routines and habits of our lives *will* show forth the message that governs us.

“Remember this day” – Moses said.
Not just “remember it” intellectually –
but have a regular pattern – a habitual practice of remembering the Exodus.

What are the routines and habits that characterize your life?
And what do they say about the story that governs you?
If you worship the God who made the heavens and the earth in 6 days,
and rested on the 7th day,
then your life should reflect that pattern.
The rituals and habits of your days, your weeks, your months, your years –
will reflect what really drives you.

That’s why I find it distressing when I fall into bad habits –
because I *know* what that says about me!
When I default to computer games –
so that I am spending more time playing computer games
than playing with my children –
that says that I am finding my identity and purpose in a very different story
than the story of the gospel.

And that’s why I’ve titled the first point:
“The Story of the Gospel.”
The story of the gospel is the story of the redemption of the firstborn –
through the death of the firstborn.

In the Exodus, the firstborn of Egypt must die –
so that the firstborn of God may live.
(But remember the reason for this:
Pharaoh had been murdering the sons of Israel –
putting to death *all* the baby boys that he could find.
The judgment against Egypt is a sort of ‘poetic justice’ –
whereby God judges Egypt according to the standard that *Pharaoh* chose.
As Jesus will say, with the same measure you judge others,
you will be judged!)

But the story of the Gospel in Exodus
is setting up the more remarkable – the more amazing – story of Jesus,

where the firstborn son of *God* will die
in order to save the sons of Egypt (and all nations).

1. The Story of the Gospel (12:29-42)

a. The Death of the Firstborn and the Plundering of Egypt (12:29-36)

²⁹ At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. ³⁰ And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where someone was not dead.

We saw last time how the death of the firstborn fell upon every house in Egypt –
every house where the blood of the lamb did not mark the door posts of the house.

We saw last time that God is no respecter of persons:

if an Egyptian marked his door with blood,
then God would pass over that house;
if an Israelite did not mark his door with blood,
then God would strike down his firstborn.

If you believe God, then you will do what God says!

(I'm not saying that you will be perfect –

but the way that you demonstrate your faith is in your deeds!)

Failure to keep the Passover is to say, in effect, I want my firstborn to die!

And that is why Pharaoh's last words to Moses are so anguished –

because the Pharaoh that has cursed the Seed of Abraham for so long

now realizes that his only hope is in in the blessing of the Seed of Abraham (v32)

³¹ Then he summoned Moses and Aaron by night and said, “Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as you have said. ³² Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also!”

The Egyptian people are even more urgent.

They recognize that their lives depend on the favor of the LORD, the God of Israel –
and so they give the people of Israel whatever they ask for.

³³ The Egyptians were urgent with the people to send them out of the land in haste. For they said, “We shall all be dead.” ³⁴ So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls being bound up in their cloaks on their shoulders. ³⁵ The people of Israel had also done as Moses told them, for they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing. ³⁶ And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

Most of the gold and silver and fine clothes that Israel takes out of Egypt were “plundered” goods.

The people of Israel were slaves, after all!

But a few weeks later they will be giving large quantities of gold and silver for the building of the tabernacle.

Where did they get it?

“Farewell presents” from the Egyptians –
or more like *PLEASE* get out of here before we all die! presents.

But verse 36 says “Thus they *plundered* the Egyptians.”

Plunder is usually the term used for what a conquering army does with a defeated foe.

And the way that the book of Exodus talks about the “hosts of the LORD” (v40) fits with this military image.

God is the one who did all the fighting.

But his great host plunders Egypt and takes the spoils of battle with them.

b. From Rameses to Succoth – the Flight from Egypt (12:37-42)

³⁷ *And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children.* ³⁸ *A mixed multitude also went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds.* ³⁹ *And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had brought out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.*

We haven’t talked much about the *date* of the Exodus.

There are two likely dates that are often suggested:
the 1440s and the 1230s.

The use of the place name “Rameses” strongly points to the later date –
because Ramses II was the Pharaoh who did a lot of building in that region,
and named a city there after himself.

So, if the Exodus happened in the 1400s, there would have been no city called “Rameses”

As we’ll see in the coming weeks, there are lots of interesting connections
between what we know of Ramses and the Exodus narrative –
so I think it very likely that he was the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

But honestly, the text does not give us enough information to say “Thus saith the LORD”
about that – so I won’t make a big deal about the date of the Exodus.

What we *can* say is that Israel lived in Egypt for 430 years

(Of course, we are *not* told the “start date” for that 430 years.

Does this refer to the day that *Joseph* was brought to Egypt?

Or the day that *Jacob and his sons* came down to Egypt?

Or for that matter, does it date all the way back to *Abraham* –

since Canaan was actually under Egyptian rule
for pretty much the whole time!)

⁴⁰ *The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years.* ⁴¹ *At the end of 430 years, on that very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.* ⁴² *It was a night of watching by the LORD, to bring them out of the land of Egypt; so this same night is a night of watching kept to the LORD by all the people of Israel throughout their generations.*

The point is that Israel was in Egypt for 430 years –
reminding us of what God said to Abraham all the way back in Genesis 15:13,
that his offspring would be sojourners in a foreign land
and that they would be afflicted for 400 years
(which is why I would *lean* toward the idea that the 430 years of Exodus 12
refers to the 30 years when they were favored (during the time of Joseph)
and then 400 years when they were afflicted
by the Pharaohs who did not know Joseph.)

And as we have often seen,
400 years is a round number meaning 10 generations –
which means “for a really long time.”
We often say things like “for a thousand years”
when we mean – for a really long time.

But the good news – the gospel – is that at this particular time in history –
at the *right time* – God redeemed his people from slavery in Egypt.
Israel is my son – my firstborn.

And for all generations, Israel is to remember the gospel.
Even us – we who are grafted into Israel
are called to continue to remember God’s mighty deeds in history.
After all, as our NT lesson pointed out,
Jesus came to *fulfill* the whole story of Israel.

Why does the gospel of Jesus have something to say in 21st century America?
Why does the gospel continue to speak in China – in Congo – in Brazil?

Because the Word became flesh at a particular time *in history* –
as a first century *Jew*.
Jesus does not redeem all ages because he is *timeless*.
Rather, he makes all times valuable *because he came at a particular time*.

And in so doing, he made *all particular times* beautiful.

The gospel will take shape in a variety of ways in a variety of places.
Last night it took the shape of an African-American celebration
of an aggressive mime-ministry on the west side of South Bend –
a ministry that has now expanded to a number of *men* in their 20s
who have decided that they want to follow Jesus – not the gangs.
One woman who was present lost her nephew to a gang shooting just last month.
So yes, there was a lot of celebrating going on –
that these five men want to follow Jesus!

There was another man present who just got out of prison last week.
He's not quite sure what he believes –
but he knows that he doesn't want to go back there –

and he's not quite sure how to avoid it!

That's a different world than the one you live in.
It's only a few blocks away from where most of you live,
but it's a different world.
And yet all you have to do is change the words slightly.

No, most of you are probably *not* trying to avoid going back to prison.
Most of you are not tempted to join a gang.

Or are you?
Your gang may not be selling drugs and shooting each other.
Your gang may be a clique that gossips about other people.

Your prison may be the trap or snare of a way of life that is self-destructive
and harmful to those you love.

You may be living a comfortable middle-class existence –
and yet your gang – your prison – has its teeth in you
every bit as much as that brother last night.

And that's why we come to Part 2 of our Sermon:
How to Remember the Gospel.

It's all good and fine to say "Yes, I believe the Gospel!"
But how will you remember the gospel
when your gang calls you back into your old way of life?
How will you remember the gospel
when the walls of your old prison seem more comfortable
than the freedom of being in Christ?

2. How to Remember the Gospel (12:43-13:16)

And so here at the end of chapter 12 and the beginning of chapter 13,

Moses tells us that habits and rituals are essential to *remembering* the gospel.

We are creatures of habit.

And we are designed for community.

Why do former offenders go back to their old ways?

Because that's what's comfortable.

And that's where their friends are.

Not surprisingly, when God calls Israel to a new way of life

he *starts* by giving them new patterns and rituals

to build this new community around.

a. The Passover – to the Jew First and also to the Greek (12:43-50)

⁴³ And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner shall eat of it, ⁴⁴ but every slave^[b] that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him. ⁴⁵ No foreigner or hired worker may eat of it. ⁴⁶ 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. ⁴⁷ All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. ⁴⁸ 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. ⁴⁹ There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you.”

I want you to notice something about the Passover here.

Verse 46 seems to assume that the Passover will be celebrated at home.

The assumption is that Israel will celebrate the Passover in every city and village.

But in Deuteronomy 16:1-8 the Passover is to be observed

“in the place the LORD will choose as a dwelling for his Name” (16:2).

In other words, the Passover in its *origin* was celebrated in every home (in Egypt),

but there is a difference between the original celebration

and its ritual form – the Passover Feast.

So, for instance, if you read through the whole OT, you will *never* find an example of people celebrating the Passover in their homes.

The first Passover celebration recorded in scripture

is in Numbers 9 – where they celebrate the first Passover.

Then there is a gap for 40 years (celebrating the Passover when you are under God's curse might be a little out of place).

The second Passover celebration is held after Israel crosses the Jordan in Joshua 3-4.

Then there is no reference to the Passover until the time of Hezekiah (2 Chron 30),
and then again in the days of Josiah (2 Kings 23, 2 Chron 35).
2 Kings 23:22 says that there had been no such celebration of the Passover
“since the days of the judges who led Israel,
nor throughout the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah.”

This does not necessarily mean that *no one* celebrated the Passover during these years –
but we have no reason to believe that *anyone* was taking it seriously.
When you consider the state of Israelite religion and society
during the time of the judges and the kings,
it is very easy to imagine that even the faithful would think of the Passover
as a good idea that we will celebrate someday.

Then, after the exile, we hear about another Passover celebration in Ezra 6 –
after the rebuilding of the temple.

In other words, we see the celebration of the Passover at several key points in Israel’s history:
At Sinai (Numbers 9)
At the Conquest of the Land (Joshua 3-4)
By the reforming kings Hezekiah and Josiah (2 Chron 30, 35)
And at the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 6).

And from what we are told,
the *problem* was generally *not* that Israel did all the right things –
but simply went through the motions.
The problem was that Israel never got around to doing the right things!

Because notice the *content* of what the Passover is all about:
All the congregation of Israel is to keep the Passover.
The foreigner may *not* eat of it – until he is circumcised.
But once he is circumcised – once he has joined the people of God –
then he may eat of it.
There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile.
As verse 48 puts 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.”

Incidentally, this is why there is that big debate in Acts 10-15 about how to handle the Gentiles.
God had *said* that the Gentiles could become part of the people of God
by circumcision!
Once you are circumcised you are now a part of the people of God.
That was *God’s rule* – not just Jewish tradition!!

But in Acts 10, God makes it clear that circumcision is no longer required.
He pours out the Holy Spirit on Cornelius and his household –
and so Peter says let's baptize them –
since God has plainly made them part of his family.
In the New Covenant *baptism* is the sign of the covenant – not circumcision.

So Exodus 12 teaches us that there should be an *entrance ritual*
into the people of God.
If you want to be part of God's people, then you need to be marked by God's sign.
In the OT it was a bloody sign (circumcision) –
since pretty much everything in the OT was marked by blood!!
In the NT it is baptism –
where the water represents and applies to us
the blood of Jesus which cleanses us from all sin.

⁵⁰ All the people of Israel did just as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron. ⁵¹ And on that very day the LORD brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.

Then in chapter 13 we see another set of practices and rituals
that set apart the people of God for himself.

b. The Consecration of the Firstborn (13:1-2)

13 The LORD said to Moses, ² "Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine."

As one commentator puts it:

"The consecration of the firstborn is integrally related to the celebration of the Passover.
Israel is to be redeemed from Egypt, but that redemption requires blood.
Both the death of the Egyptian firstborn and the blood of the lamb on the doorposts
symbolize God's ownership of the firstborn
and his provision to protect his own firstborn son, Israel.
Hence, the ritual of redeeming every firstborn donkey with a lamb
symbolically represents what God did for Israel in the tenth plague:
the firstborn belongs to God and must be bought with a price." (Enns, 255)

Indeed, here that we can begin to understand the story of Abraham and Isaac.

God told Abraham to sacrifice his son – his firstborn.

Of course, by the time that story is written down in the book of Genesis,
the readers and hearers will *all* know the story of the Exodus.

They will understand the Exodus requirement of the redemption of the firstborn.

The firstborn belongs to God.

And Abraham, being a righteous man,

understands that the firstborn belongs to God.
God has a unique *right* to the firstborn.

Think back to Exodus 4 – when God said to Moses,

“Israel is my son, my firstborn.”

What happened next?

God met Moses on the way back to Egypt
and sought to kill Moses’ firstborn, Gershom.

Why?

Because Gershom had not been circumcised.

The shedding of blood is necessary to avoid death.

Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins.

And all of this will come together in Jesus – the firstborn Son of God

who gives himself as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God.

c. The Feast of Unleavened Bread (13:3-10)

³ 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. ⁴ Today, in the month of Abib, you are going out. ⁵ 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. ⁶ Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LORD. ⁷ 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. ⁸ You shall tell your son on that day, ‘It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ You shall therefore keep this statute at its appointed time from year to year.

And that is why the feast of unleavened bread is so important.

We need rituals.

Ritual and repetition is *good* for us!

Advertisers understand this!

“Ace is the place with the helpful hardware man”

“I want to be like Mike”

My guess is that you have more commercial jingles memorized
than you have Psalms memorized!

(I know that is true for me)

But this is why we use so much scripture in our worship service –
whether in singing it, reciting it, or reading it –
we want the scriptures to sink into our hearts and lives.
It is also why we have the weekly catechism quiz –
connected with scripture memorization.
How are we supposed to withstand the onslaught of commercial culture?
The world would catechize you into thinking that stuff can make you happy.

Some people think that ritual and repetition is a sign of spiritual dryness –
but the irony is that *every church* has repetitive rituals!
(Singing the chorus over and over and over...)
The problems is when we *forget* what our rituals are doing!
I remember one young man who came to us from an Anglican church.
He was a little bothered by our habit of explaining *what* we were doing.
It got in the way of the ritual!
But then he went home to his Anglican church
and realized that he had never understood *why* they did what they did.
And he wished that someone would explain it!!

So when your children ask, “What do you mean by this service?”
When your son asks “What does this mean?”
make sure that you have an answer!
It is because the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand.
It is because Jesus, the firstborn Son of God, gave himself as a sacrifice for our sins.

We need rituals.
The Lord’s Supper teaches us that rituals are good,
“and they are instituted and used by God to ‘connect’ his people with him.
We learn through ritual that the church is not just made up of individuals,
but is a corporate body.
It is not just about personal salvation, but a group of people,
the people of God, who are bound to one another
and to the faithful through the generations” (Enns, 263).

If we see ourselves as a bunch of isolated individuals
then we will keep our distance from one another.
But if we see ourselves as the *body of Christ* –
then we will seek to be connected to one other –
because we are all connected to Jesus.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was an annual ritual
that was designed to connect the people of God together
in the celebration of God’s mighty deeds in history –

but it also had a forward-looking component.

Because where does the Feast of Unleavened Bread leave you?
If you celebrating the Passover as a remembrance of God's mighty deeds in history,
where *are* you at the end of the Passover meal?

You are in Egypt.

You still have the long road through the wilderness ahead of you.
You are not yet in the Promised Land!

The Passover points *back* to redemption from Egypt –
but it also points *forward* to the entry into the Promised Land.

Likewise,

“As we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we are celebrating our redemption through Christ
and the glory that awaits us.

But we should also remember that the Lord's Supper is itself a fulfillment of that Israelite meal
at an earlier stage of God's redemptive work.

By partaking in Communion, we are participating
in the effects of God's redemptive work
that he began to execute in Israel's day
and that came to completion on Easter Sunday.” (Enns 260)

We not only remember the past, but in the Supper we participate in the body and blood of Christ.

Plainly Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper in the *context* of the Passover.

Many have asked, “Why then do we not use unleavened bread for the Lord's Supper?”

The reason is because the Lord's Supper is *not* a Passover meal.

The Passover meal consists primarily of lamb –
together with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

The Lord's Supper consists of bread and wine.

In the early church, they would have used unleavened bread during the Passover week
(because most early Christians were Jews who still celebrated the Jewish calendar),
but then they would have used leavened bread the rest of the year.

Likewise, if the Lord's Supper was a Passover meal,

then we would only celebrate the Lord's Supper only once a year.

But the Lord's Supper joins together all the feasts of Israel –
and indeed, all the *sacrificial meals* of Israel.

In the OT, the priests would partake *daily* of the sacrifices –

while the people would partake three times a year (at the three main feasts)

and perhaps at other times
(like when Mary and Joseph came for the redemption of Jesus in Luke 2).

But in the NT, all of God's people enter into the holy of holies –
and not just once a year (like the high priest in the OT).

The Lord's Day is not merely the continuation of the OT Sabbath,
any more than the Lord's Supper is merely a continuation of the Passover.

The Lord's Day – like the Lord's Supper – is the fulfillment of all the OT feasts.

On the Lord's Day
we celebrate deliverance from bondage to sin and death (like Passover),
we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit in the new creation (like Pentecost)
and how the Spirit leads us through the wilderness (like Booths).

On the Lord's Day we enter the family of God (through baptism),
and we restore those who have been disciplined
(like the restoration of the unclean).

Therefore, it is fitting that we should celebrate the Lord's Supper every week
as we gather together in the holy of holies with Jesus.

Think about how the elements of the Passover *fit* the occasion:
unleavened bread – representing the *haste* of the Passover –
bitter herbs – representing the bitter slavery that they were leaving behind –
and of course, the Lamb – whose blood was shed (and spread) for them –
and of which they partook.

In the same way Christ appointed bread and wine.

Why?

Because the bread represents the body of Christ.

The wine represents his blood.

Jesus is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

There *is* a Lamb in the Lord's Supper –

but no earthly lamb can represent him!

With the shedding of the blood of Christ – the blood of the Firstborn Son –
there is finally a propitiation (an atoning sacrifice)
that covers our sin and opens the way into the heavens.

And that's why it is fitting that we celebrate the Lord's Supper on the Lord's Day.

Later in Exodus we will talk about the Sabbath Day

and how it functions in the Old Testament.

But many have pointed out how our Lord's "Do this in remembrance of me"
connects to the 4th commandment's – "remember the Sabbath."

In our society, we frenetically run around day after day –
 busy with so many things – and usually many *good* things!
But God *made us* to work for six days – and rest on the seventh day.
 And so even the rhythm of the week – working for 6 days, resting on the 7th –
 is an important ritual that helps reorient us
 back to what God has done in Jesus.

That’s why the Lord’s Day is a fulfillment of all the “holy times” of the Old Testament.

d. How to Consecrate the Firstborn (13:11-16)

¹¹ “When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, ¹² you shall set apart to the LORD all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the LORD’S. ¹³ Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. ¹⁴ And when in time to come your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ you shall say to him, ‘By a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. ¹⁵ For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.’ ¹⁶ It shall be as a mark on your hand or frontlets between your eyes, for by a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt.”

The redemption of the firstborn was designed to remind Israel of their redemption from Egypt.

“For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go,
 the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt,
 both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals.
Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the males that first open the womb,
 but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.”

Now that Jesus has come as the firstborn son who has offered *himself* as the atoning sacrifice we no longer offer blood sacrifices.

But we continue to practice the rituals and habits that Jesus taught us –
Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, the Lord’s Day.

We also find it useful to remember the incarnation during Advent and Christmas,
 and to remember his death and resurrection on Good Friday and Easter,
 and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

But if these rituals and practices are to bear fruit,
 then they need to overflow into everyday life as well.
If you isolate your religious practice as your “Sunday morning” life,
 and allow other habits and rituals to dominate the rest of your week,

then don't be surprised when your Christianity feel pretty feeble
compared to the "real world."

This is why the rituals and practices of daily life need to be conformed to the gospel.

Family worship is a useful place to *start* –
take time to read the Bible together, to pray together –
to sing together – memorize the catechism together.
In that way, the rhythms and patterns of the Lord's Day
overflow into every day.

But also think about how these things overflow into your everyday interactions with others.

Six days of the week *God* calls you to devote to your ordinary labors.

How are you loving God in your daily calling?

How are you loving your neighbor as God has loved you?

Taking the time to listen – to really *hear* what they are saying?

To show interest and concern for the weak and the helpless?

To love *even* your enemies – those who would do you harm!?

You *know* that *your God* is the one who delivers his people.

You *know* that *your God* is our Lord Jesus Christ, who went to the cross
so that you might have life.

Conclude with PHSS 154