

Jesus, the Holy Lamb of God (New Testament Figures)

A life for a life, and a holiness that is not ours but his

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, July 24, 2022
PASSAGES	John 1:35-36; Exodus 12:3-13; Leviticus 17:11; Leviticus 27:9-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 Corinthians 1:27-30; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Mark 14:22-15:38; Luke 23:44-47
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:03:57 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

Christianity is not a vibe, a lifestyle or a set of virtues. It stands on historical facts and what they mean: Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose. He died as the holy Lamb of God – a life given for a life, his divine blood offered as the sacrifice God himself provided. So our redemption, righteousness and even our holiness are not our achievements; they are him. The response is to believe it.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ The gospel Paul received is a set of fact claims with meaning: Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures.
- ◆ A bad mood on the drive to church does not make you less of a Christian. Your standing rests on what Jesus did, not on how you feel.
- ◆ The Passover lamb died instead of the firstborn; its blood on the door was proof of its death.
- ◆ In the sacrifices, “the life is in the blood”: a life in exchange for a life, compensation for sin – and God himself gave the blood for the altar.
- ◆ Holiness is not the same as purity. Something is holy because it is set apart for God or touched by him; the opposite of holy is common.

- ◆ Jesus' blood carries his divine life, which cannot be exhausted, so it can give life to many mortals.
- ◆ Christ is our sanctification. We are holy because he gave us his life, not because of our prayer life.

► 1:03:57

During worship Steve had read Paul's hymn – “who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” (Romans 11:33–36) – and reminded the room that every invented god runs on a deal, while the real God simply loves. Matt picked up both that and the worship team's theme of choosing to worship regardless of feelings, as he continued the mini-series on Jesus: God of the Old Testament, later greater Moses, teacher of the Torah, and now the holy Lamb of God.

Not a vibe

► 1:06:04

“Christianity is actually not a vibe or a mindset or an emotional headspace. Christianity is founded on the work of Jesus in real life.” When Paul reminds the Corinthians of the gospel by which they are saved, he lists events:

► 1:06:46

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.”

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3–4 ↗

► 1:07:20

Christianity should inform our lifestyle, but it is not a lifestyle. “Some of y'all probably got in a fight on the way to church today, and you're like, I'm not Christianing right now.” It is not a feeling – are you less Christian when you are upset than when you are “happy clappy”? – and it is not a set of virtues your atheist colleague might outperform you on this week. Even a non-Christian reading the Bible can see it is built on fact claims, and those facts carry meaning: “died *for our sins*” is history and theology together. So, whatever you ate or argued about this morning, Matt set out the facts, then what they mean.

The facts

► 1:10:34

Judas, one of the Twelve, goes to the chief priests. Jesus celebrates Passover, breaks bread and shares the cup – “this is my body... this is my blood” – and warns that all will fall away as sheep scatter when the shepherd is struck (Mark 14:22–27). In Gethsemane, among crowds camped on the hillside in the dark – which is why a betrayer was needed – he is greatly distressed while his friends sleep, and Judas identifies him with a kiss.

► 1:12:07

The council has its conclusion and is hunting for testimony when the high priest asks, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven” (Mark 14:61–64) – riding the clouds being, in the ancient Near East, a claim to deity. Condemned for blasphemy, he is taken to Pilate, who finds him innocent; the stirred-up crowd chooses an insurrectionist and shouts, “Crucify him!” He is nailed to a cross between criminals to suffocate and bleed out slowly; soldiers cast lots for his clothes; he gives a loud cry and breathes his last, and the temple curtain tears from top to bottom (Mark 15:12–38). “None of these are vibes.”

Like a Passover lamb

► 1:14:21

Why did he die? Jealousy, yes. But at bottom, “because he is the holy Lamb of God.” Start before the tabernacle, on the night of the last plague:

► 1:14:58

“Every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons... Your lamb shall be without blemish... The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you.”

EXODUS 12:3–13 ↗

► 1:16:41

The benefit could be shared by a household. And the blood was not about the colour red or odd decorations or DNA; it was proof the lamb had died – instead of the firstborn. A substitute, of a kind.

A life for a life

► 1:17:32

The sacrifices say more. Someone who realises he has sworn a rash oath brings a lamb or goat as “compensation for the sin that he has committed,” and the priest makes atonement for him; if he cannot afford it, two pigeons ([Leviticus 5:4–9](#)). It is bloody by design. Why?

► 1:19:15

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.”

LEVITICUS 17:11 ↗

A life in exchange for a life – to avoid death under wrath, as at Passover, and as compensation for sin, as in [Leviticus](#). And notice who gives: this is an offering *to* God, yet God says, “I have given it for you.” “That sounds backwards, but it’s actually not.”

► 1:20:37

At the tent of meeting, God says, “it shall be sanctified by my glory... I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God” ([Exodus 29:43–46](#)). God supplies the animals and their life-blood, and his own glory consecrates the altar – because he wants to be with his people. Why a death at all? Life versus death runs back to Eden, where God barred the tree of life so humans knowing evil would not live forever ([Genesis 3:22–23](#)). “The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life” ([Romans 6:23](#)), and the animals foreshadowed the sacrifice of Jesus.

What makes something holy

► 1:23:37

Matt has often heard holiness defined as purity. Related, but not the same. Picture a perfect sheep on a hillside – shampooed, conditioned, organic grass-fed. Pure, but not holy; it is just standing there. Set it apart and give it to the Lord, and it becomes holy. Or perfect dirt, no broken glass – just dirt, until God shows up and says, take off your sandals, you are standing on holy ground ([Exodus 3:5](#)).

► 1:25:27

“You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine” ([Leviticus 20:26](#)); “a people holy to the LORD... his treasured possession” ([Deuteronomy 7:6](#)). Holiness is being special because you belong to God or come from him.

► 1:26:03

“If it is an animal that may be offered as an offering to the LORD, all of it that he gives to the LORD is holy. He shall not exchange it or make a substitute for it, good for bad, or bad for good; and if he does in fact substitute one animal for another, then both it and the substitute shall be holy.”

LEVITICUS 27:9–10 ↗

“Well, that’ll preach all by itself. I guess you can transfer holiness through substitution. Foreshadowing.” Holy is the opposite not of impure but of common; clean is the opposite of unclean. God communicates his holiness by setting something apart or by his presence and glory touching it.

Behold, the Lamb of God

► 1:28:07

John the Baptist, seeing Jesus walk by, said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” ([John 1:35–36](#)). Read the crucifixion through that lens: darkness from the sixth to the ninth hour, the curtain torn, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” and the centurion: “Certainly this man was innocent!” ([Luke 23:44–47](#)). The Lamb’s purity matters:

► 1:29:16

“You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.”

1 PETER 1:18–19 ↗

► 1:29:57

Jesus did not just happen to die bloodily, with God then making a motif of it. The life was in the blood long before. And since the Gospel writers have told us he is God in the flesh, “when he sheds his blood, it’s God blood.” His blood conveys his divine life, which cannot be exhausted – “there’s no pit deep enough” – so he can give life to many mortals, giving it so completely that it kills him.

Foolish, low, and entirely his

► 1:31:03

Couldn't God have just said abracadabra and forgiven? People ask. Paul says, "God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise... what is low and despised... so that no human being might boast in the presence of God" (1 Corinthians 1:27-29). Watching criminals mock him and passers-by say, "He saved others," you might have thought it shameful and ridiculous.

► 1:32:50

Matt appreciates the happy-clappy days, the repentance, the fruit and service (and, for the record, he and Mandy did not fight on the way to church). "But the way God set all this up is that we are forgiven... entirely based on things Jesus did, not how I feel today." "I am his child not because I shouted in tongues in my closet for ten minutes this morning or raised the dead on the way to church. I am who he says I am because of what he did." Even those who thought they were stopping God that day lost: "Sorry, you lose again." Prophecies and healings are wonderful, but Jesus was not most impressed by prophesying or casting out demons (Matthew 7:22-23). He wants to know you.

He is our holiness

► 1:35:08

"And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption."

1 CORINTHIANS 1:30 ↗

► 1:36:28

"He is our redemption" – and Matt stopped: "Did it get real deep all of a sudden? That wasn't just me." Redemption, because the holy Lamb gave his blood as compensation for our sins so we would have life and not the wrath we deserve. Righteousness, because he cleanses and restores. And sanctification – literally *holification*. Like the sheep set apart or the ground under Moses' feet, we are made holy by what comes from God, and what could be holier than God himself?

► 1:37:29

Many of us think of sanctification as a lifelong project of doing better at morning prayer. "Whether you do that very well or don't... our sanctification, our holiness, is Jesus the person." He gave us his life, and we now possess something precious and from God; we are "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). "It is because of that – not because of my prayer life – that I am a holy, forgiven child of God."

Believe it

► 1:38:36

Back to the beginning: these are historical facts, so the response is to believe them. He already forgave you; he already died for you and gave you his life. Many struggle to believe they are God's children because of their failures; it is hard to stop thinking in the vending-machine, make-a-deal way, crediting a good life to a great prayer life – and then, when life is on fire, wondering, “Am I a Christian?”

► 1:39:41

“Christianity isn’t about you – and that may sound harsh, but honestly, it’s probably a relief. It’s entirely resting on what Jesus already did.”

► 1:40:11

It will shape how you live, but it is always because of the gospel. Christ died for your sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and rose on the third day. “I don’t know how you feel on the inside about how Christian you are, but you are a child of God. You’re not an orphan. You’ve not been abandoned. You might feel like you are, but you aren’t.” Rest in believing that.

FOR FURTHER STUDY**SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE**

- Romans 11:33–36
- 1 Corinthians 15:3–4
- Mark 14:22–27
- Mark 14:61–64
- Mark 15:12–38
- Exodus 12:3–13
- Leviticus 5:4–9
- Leviticus 17:11
- Exodus 29:43–46
- Genesis 3:22–23
- Romans 6:23
- Exodus 3:5
- Leviticus 20:26
- Deuteronomy 7:6
- Leviticus 27:9–10
- John 1:35–36
- Luke 23:44–47
- 1 Peter 1:18–19
- 1 Corinthians 1:27–29
- Matthew 7:22–23
- 1 Corinthians 1:30
- 2 Peter 1:4

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Matt said Christianity is not a vibe, a lifestyle or a set of virtues. When are you most tempted to measure your faith by your feelings or performance?
2. What do the Passover lamb and the sacrifices of Leviticus add to your understanding of why Jesus died?
3. How does Matt's distinction between holiness and purity change the way you think about being "holy"?
4. What difference does it make that the blood shed on the cross carried God's own life?
5. If Christ himself is your sanctification, how might you approach your spiritual disciplines differently this week?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel's senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church's governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope's own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

Watch the full message:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tn95rQMiyWY&t=3837s>

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.