

THE NORTH



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CHRIST CHURCH EXMOUTH

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Minister: Bishop Josep Rossello

The Minister's Council: Bishop Josep, Laura Empson, Simon Pike and Patrice Rossello.

Church Council: Bishop Josep, Julia Lowrie (Minister's Warden), Jon Liggins (People's Warden), Maggie Liggins and Simon Pike.

SEEKING CHRISTIAN WRITERS

If you believe you have a writing gift and are engaged with the Purpose, Vision, Mission and Core Values as well as the doctrines of Christ Church, we are searching for authors to participate in a variety of projects, such as writing for "The North" newsletter or Christian devotionals for Advent and Lent. If you want to pursue this calling. Please get in touch with Bishop Josep.

Why We Gather on the First Day of the Week

Why do Christians come together every first day of the week? Is this just an arbitrary choice we have made, or is there something else special about it that we ought to recognize? Even if we recognize it as special, we still may think that it just seems like an arbitrary choice. Why not just do all of this on Saturday? Not that we cannot meet on a Saturday or any other day of the week, but that should never diminish, in our minds, the importance and significance of the first day of the week. Why?

What are the biblical considerations for recognizing the importance of this day?

Creation: When we think about the importance of the first day of the week, we might think about some connections to the First Day and Creation. On the first day of creation, God said, *“Let there be light”* (Gen 1:3-5). Light, throughout Scripture, is a manifestation of God’s glory. God

dwells in unapproachable light (1 Tim 6:15-16), and in His presence, He is the illumination (Rev 22:5).

Next, the connection John makes to creation in John 1 is important. *“In the beginning was the Word...”* Jesus is the Word, the One through Whom all things were made: *“In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it”* (John 1:4-5). Jesus is the Light, and the connection between Jesus as the Light and the separation from darkness is vital: *“For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ”* (2 Cor 4:6).

In Him, Light is separated from darkness: *“This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light and does not come to the Light for fear*

that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God” (John 3:19-21).

Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life” (John 8:12).

The point is that Light is associated with the first day. The first day, from the beginning, celebrates the Light, and ultimately this points to the Light who has brought us out of darkness. To this we are called: *“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light” (1 Pet 2:9).*

Sabbath: At the end of the creation week is the concept of the Sabbath. Later, by telling His people to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy, He was indicating every Sabbath would be a holy day for them. There was significance in this because the sabbath meant rest, and this was patterned after the creation week (Exodus 20:8-11). This was

intended for the children of Israel because they were brought out of Egypt (Deut. 5:15).

A sabbath was also to be observed every seventh year, with the special observance of the jubilee every fiftieth year (Lev. 25). The land would receive its proper rest during this time. Land would be returned to the rightful families. Slaves would be set free. It was like a reset button to put everything back to its original status (Lev 25:10). The Sabbath represented freedom, rest, and holiness.

While we are not given the Sabbath in the same exact way under Christ, and the first day is never called the “Christian’s Sabbath,” the Sabbath still typologically represents the freedom and rest that we have in Christ. As Hebrews 4:8-11 tells us: *“For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Therefore, let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.”*

The Sabbath is fulfilled in Christ, and we still share the benefits and blessings of what the Sabbath was meant to be: freedom, rest, and holiness. As Jesus said, *“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest”* (Matt 11:28-30).

The point is that when God chooses a particular day for something to be

observed, then we need to see that there is a depth, a meaning involved that helps us appreciate even more why He did this. The first day is not the Sabbath per se, but it points to the ultimate Sabbath, and, like the Sabbath, there is a depth of meaning and richness we ought to be thinking about.

Boasting in the Cross

Paul said it: *“But far be it from me that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world”* (Gal 6:14).

That’s a statement that really captures the heart of what it means to be a Christian. We have nothing in ourselves about which we can boast. We are saved by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves; it is God’s gift (Ephesians 2:8-10). Central to God’s grace is the sending of Jesus to die for our sins. *“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace...”* (Ephesians 1:7).

The cross is such a central part of the Bible that we can hardly forget about it if we are reading the Scriptures at all. Though the events of the cross are found within the pages of our New Testament (gospels), the cross is still a vital and central part of the Old Testament. How so? Because in the Old Testament we find the cross:

Planned: from the time sin entered the world, God was putting the plan of salvation into effect. This plan was surrounding the cross, and even though “cross” is not explicitly mentioned, we can see how God worked this plan out from the beginning (see Gen 3:15; 12:1-3). Further, this plan was not an

afterthought; this plan was THE plan all along. We are saved by the precious blood of Jesus, and He was “foreknown before the foundation of the world” (1 Pet 1:19-20). God was not caught by surprise and then quickly came up with a fix. The cross was planned and carried out according to God’s wisdom and knowledge: “this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men” (Acts 2:23).

Foreshadowed and Pictured: The cross is foreshadowed through a number of events. These events serve as types or pictures of what was coming in the cross. For example, the sacrifice of Isaac is like a pre-snapshot of Jesus. The Passover lamb (and all the sacrifices for that matter) picture Jesus as our great sacrifice. Indeed the entire Old Testament is like a giant picture that points to Jesus and His salvific work.

John the immerser was already preparing the path for Jesus, and when he saw Jesus, he was able to make the connection: “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29) Paul, writing to the Corinthians, uses a similar

concept: “Christ our Passover has been sacrificed” (1 Cor 5:7). Jesus is the bread from heaven (John 6). He is the Light of the world (John 1). The Scriptures pointed to Him, and students of Scripture were expected to see it: “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me” (John 5:39).

Prophesied: While there are many individual prophecies that are fulfilled in Jesus, the entire Old Testament itself is fulfilled in Jesus. That is, Jesus is prophesied about right from the beginning through the end of the Old Testament. Speaking to the ones he appeared to on the road to Emmaus, He said, “Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:26-27). Jesus said that “everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled” (Luke 24:44).

Boasting in the cross, then, is not about anything great that we have done. Rather, it is a recognition of

what the Lord has done for us in giving Himself up for our sins. The cross is central to everything we can read and know in the Bible. It was no afterthought of God that brought Jesus to the point of death. It was the plan all along. Boasting in the cross means accepting this fact. It means accepting that plan for our own lives as well. It means understanding the benefits of the shed blood of our Saviour.

The New Testament, of course, is all about the cross of Jesus. This is not

about the physical wood that made up the cross, but rather what the cross stands for. Paul wrote, “*For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified*” (1 Cor 2:2). Clinging to the “old rugged cross” means clinging to the salvation brought about through the death of Jesus. It means we are redeemed, forgiven, reconciled with God, and fitted for eternal life with Him. Is anything on this earth or in your life more important than what God has done for you through Jesus?

Ukraine Mission

In October 2023, the next mission trip to Ukraine will take place. We intend to bring a team with us. In order to have a lasting impact on the churches in Ukraine, we believe that a variety of ministry areas are vital.

- Mission among the children and youth, i.e., football and food.
- Mission among women, i.e., fellowship and biblical teaching.
- Mission among pastors: a pastors' conference.

If missions are an area in which you would like to be active, you may join us this year, not only to Ukraine but also to other countries. Please consider carefully taking a step of faith. Come and have a chat with Bishop Josep.

Please, do not allow money to prevent you from carrying out God's will. When we act in faith, money follows our vision and mission. We are committed to find creative ways to help those that may have limited resources.

The Passover

The Passover event, connected to the exodus of the children of Israel out of Egypt, is one of the most well-known episodes in biblical history (Exodus 12-14). It also serves as a model for helping us understand something of the death of Jesus Christ. The question we want to ask here is this: How can understanding the connection between Christ's death as the Lamb of God and the Passover event help us in understanding Christ's death as it relates to God's wrath?

First, the connection between Christ's death and Passover is given by Paul, in discussing the problem of sin's leavening influence, wrote, "Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (1 Cor 5:7). When John the Immerser pointed to Jesus, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" Both Paul and John are referencing the Passover as a background for what Jesus would accomplish. He is the Lamb of God, sacrificed for the sins of the world.

Second, we cannot deny that God's wrath is a reality that is present in the

absence of repentance and forgiveness. This is seen several passages: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men..." (Rom 1:18). "But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed" (Rom 2:5). "...but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury" (Rom 2:8). "Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God" (Rom 5:9). Pointing out various sins, Paul wrote, "On account of these the wrath of God is coming" (Col 3:6).

There are more, but these should suffice to remind us that God's wrath is real and will be felt by those who refuse to repent of their sins. We must admit, then, that in some way Christ's death had to deal with God's wrath. One way to think about it, among others, is to see this connection to Passover.

We often think of the Passover as God “passing over” the houses of the children of Israel who had slaughtered a lamb and put blood on the doorposts. It’s passive in nature when thought of that way. Without going into detail, however, I am convinced that it is better to think about the idea here (pesach) as an active protection, a pushing back at the door if you will. In other words, as the Lord comes to kill the firstborn, the blood is a sign of protection, and the Lord actively provides a push back to the death that would otherwise enter. * Compare Isaiah 31:5 where God said He would protect, deliver, “spare” (pesach) and rescue Jerusalem. Here he would not just “pass over” Jerusalem but would actively keep it from the damage that would otherwise come without His protection. In the Passover, God actively protected His people who applied the blood to their house.

That picture of God’s protection is significant, for the blood of Christ serves us in that same way. By being washed in the blood of the Lamb, we have the protection, the barrier against the wrath that would otherwise come our way. God’s wrath is turned back by the blood of the covenant because it serves as active protection. It is more than

forgiveness; it is the basis for the hope of salvation as a helmet and a breastplate of faith and love, as Paul indicates: *“But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:8-10)

The Passover paradigm for Christ’s death sees God’s wrath as being turned back so that the firstborn ones—those purchased by the blood of Christ—in the house of God are actively guarded by the Lord Himself. Therefore, Christ died for us. We are justified and saved from the wrath of God because He protects and provides for us through the blood of the Son (Rom 5:9).

Like the Thessalonians so long ago, we can turn from idols to serve the true and living God and *“wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come”* (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10).

Just be warned if we refuse repentance. The Lamb of God, who died for the sins of the world and was

raised again, makes God's
deliverance possible for us now. His
blood applied to us actively turns

back wrath. Praise God for what He
does!

Declaration of Principles

The Declaration of Principles affirmed by Christ Church in its Trust Deed. It explains our historic standard and why Christ Church was founded in 1896. Christ Church remains true to the declaration while also embracing the liberty of worship that is contemporary, Spirit-filled, and God-honouring.

Christ Church [...], which is a branch of the Holy Catholic Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, united by faith to Him, who is the Head over all things to the Church which is His Body, and recognising the essential unity of all who, by a like faith, are united to the one Divine and Common Head, makes declaration of its Principles as follows:

The [...] Church, holding “the faith once delivered to the saints,” declares its belief in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God, and the sole Rule of Faith and Practice; in the Creed commonly called “The Apostles’ Creed”; in the Divine Institution of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper; and in the Doctrines of Grace substantially as they are set forth in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion.

This church recognises and adheres to Episcopacy, not as of Divine right, but as a very ancient and desirable form of Church polity.

This Church, retaining a liturgy which shall not be repressive of freedom in prayer, accepts the Book of Common Prayer, as it was received, prepared, and recommended for use by the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, A.D. 1785, reserving full liberty to alter, abridge, enlarge, and amend

the same, as may seem most conducive to the edification of the people, “provided that the substance of the faith be kept entire”.

This Church CONDEMNS and REJECTS the following erroneous and strange doctrines as contrary to God’s word:

First – that the Church of Christ exists only in one order or form of ecclesiastical polity;

Second – that Christian ministers are ‘priests’ in another sense than that in which all believers are a ‘royal priesthood’;

Third – that the Lord’s Table is an altar on which the oblation of the body and blood of Christ is offered anew to the Father;

Fourth – that the presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper is a presence in the elements of Bread and Wine;

Fifth – that regeneration is inseparably connected with Baptism.

In accordance with the liberty given in Article 3 of the above Declaration of Principles, this Church accepts the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, with such revisions as shall exclude sacerdotal doctrines and practices.

This Church, as a Reformed and Protestant Church, hereby reaffirms its constant witness against all those innovations in doctrines and worship, whereby the primitive faith has been from time to time defaced or overlaid, and which at the Reformation were disowned and rejected.

This Church will maintain communion with all Christian Churches and will set forward, so far it lies within its ability, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people.

All evangelical Christians should have no problem accepting such a declaration, which represents classical evangelical beliefs and practises within our Reformed Episcopal heritage. To God be the Glory!!!