



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

Celebrating God's Goodness

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Joshua 5:10-12

Clint Pressley

¹⁰ While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho. ¹¹ And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. ¹² And the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

(Pastor prays)

What a great passage for us to be centered on as we prepare to take The Lord's Supper, a cleansing, worshipping, hope-filled passage that promises to feed our souls and heal our hearts. And Lord knows we could use it. So for all of you struggling, hurting, suffering believers— for all of you hurting and tired children of God—let's turn aside today and have God's word minister to our hearts as we prepare to take The Lord's Supper and rejoice in our good God.

That's what we find the people doing in Joshua chapter 5. They've come through hardship and, by God's grace, they've made it through the desert. They've passed through the Jordan and they've been made ready to start a new day. And really that's what I want to point you to in this next few minutes we have together. Regardless of the anxiety you feel or the depression you might be fighting or the hole you're in, I want you to see that...

In All Things We Can Celebrate God's Goodness

Celebrate dignity

Go with me to the passage right there in verse 10. Right out of the gate it says, *while the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal*. Do you remember what “Gilgal” means? Back up one verse and there you will see it. Let's read verse 9. *And the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” And so the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day.*

“Gilgal”—it means “to roll away.” Because at Gilgal God *rolled away* the reproach of Egypt. That was where the people were captive and held as slaves. They were looked upon with disgust, treated like animals and shamed into believing they were less than human. And Gilgal is the promise of God redeeming His people's dignity. He's rolling away the shame. It's a great reminder that if the Bible were a song, the refrain would be redemption and restoration. And if you take that principle found in Joshua chapter 5, you can follow the path through the pages of the Bible right to the cross of Christ. And the whole theme of the whole Bible is summed up in verse 10 at Gilgal.

God created men and women in His image and, as image bearers, every life has dignity. But that inherent dignity is disfigured in all of us because of the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden and because of our own sins. The narrative of the Bible starts at the Creation, continues to the Fall and ends at the Redemption, at the cross of Jesus Christ where He redeems sinners and forgives sinners and restores sinners.

But there's something else we often overlook. When you come to Christ, your shame (and shame is a powerful thing) your shame is washed away at the cross so that today when that wafer touches your tongue and that juice passes over your lips, remember that Christ has dignified you, not so you can hold your head up high but so that you can glorify the name of Jesus.

What makes you feel ashamed? What is there in your life that, if people knew about it, you'd be ashamed? Come to our own Gilgal. It's the cross of Jesus where God rolls away the shame and restores dignity. God brought you into that pain and struggle and history so that you might look to Him to restore your dignity. In all things we can celebrate God's goodness. We can celebrate dignity.

Celebrate grace

Let's go back to verse 10 and watch as something amazing happens. For only the third time in Israel's history, they kept the Passover. They came through the Jordan, were circumcised, the

shame of being slaves was rolled away and now they remember God's saving grace. That grace was established in Exodus 12 when during the tenth plague, at midnight, God struck down all the first-born in that land and the only exception was for all the households that had slaughtered a lamb and put the blood of the lamb on the doorpost. And when the avenging Angel saw the blood of the lamb, he would "pass over" that home and spare everyone in it.

And this is where we get the language of Jesus as the Passover lamb. The Lamb of God for sinners slain. Here is the Christian Gospel. It's a gospel of grace rooted in the cross, given by grace and expressed in love. Let's not forget how good grace is and what grace does. Grace is God loving us while we are rebels, self-righteous, judgmental and unholy.

And today when the wafer touches your tongue and the juice goes down your throat, it's right for you to remember and celebrate the gospel of grace. When I say "the gospel," I want to make sure I'm explicit. The gospel of grace goes like this. God is the holy creator who created all of us in his own image. The image of God has been disfigured by each of us by our own sin. That sin separates us from God. That's the problem that the Gospel fixes. We can't get to God, and because of our sin, He can't come to us. The solution that God had from the very beginning of this world, before all this happened, is Jesus. He lived perfectly, kept all of the law like we can't.

That's not all He did. He went to the cross, and there on the cross He died as the substitute for sinners. Jesus took all of the sin of all of the sinners who will ever be saved on the cross. He died there in the place of sinners. God raised Him from the dead, and the way that Good News is appropriated is you turn from sin and believe. Have you experienced the grace of God? In all things we can celebrate God's goodness. We celebrate dignity and grace.

Celebrate God's word

Let me show you where I get that, and I won't stay here long but I think it's worth mentioning.

Let's read verse 10 and, as we do, notice the detail. ¹⁰ *While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho.* The 14th day of the month in the evening. That's not an arbitrary date. That is *exactly* the day and the time that God gave them when He outlined the Passover celebration in Exodus 12:6. And here in Joshua you have God's people following God's word. And by way of application I want to call you back to God's word. Especially in the pain, tragedy,

depression, confusion, hurt, abuse, divorce, death, shame, mistreatment and your own sin, you need to come to God's word for strength, assurance, clarity, healing, forgiveness and direction.

Look, don't hate the pain of a hard season. The hard season is fertile soil for your growth as a Christian. If you will turn to the Bible while you suffer, the words you find here are going to be more meaningful and more true and more powerful than you ever imagined. And if you do that, you will find yourself being thankful for the pain that made you grow. And you start to realize that in *all* things you can celebrate God's goodness. You can celebrate dignity, grace and God's word.

Celebrate hope

Read verse 10 with me again and pay attention to where they are. ¹⁰ *While the people of Israel were encamped at Gilgal, they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening on the plains of Jericho.* The plains of Jericho. Right there in the presence of their enemies.

We live in a world that hates the God of the Bible, a world that will scorn, malign and misunderstand all that we are. But we live here with humility and trust and hope and joy. Humility. God brought us this far, He got us here and He will keep us. Trust. Just like the people in Joshua 5, we don't know exactly where we are going or what is going to happen when we get there, but God has gone before us. He is our rear guard behind us and because of that we can celebrate with hope. Let me give you one last thing to celebrate.

Celebrate Providence

I'm going to read these two verses, and as I do, listen for what is mentioned three times. ¹¹ *And the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain.* ¹² *And the manna ceased the day after they ate of the produce of the land. And there was no longer manna for the people of Israel, but they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.* Two things happened. They ate the produce of the land and the manna ceased. I want to put these in two categories: Remarkable providence and ordinary providence.

The remarkable providence is the manna. For 40 years God miraculously fed a million people every day. Their shoes didn't wear out and food fell from the sky. That's remarkable and miraculous. When diseases are healed, when a car wreck is survived, when an adoption went through, when you got a job at the last minute, for some of you that you graduated high school— these wonderful things that happened against all odds that increase our faith is remarkable providence. It brings tears of joy and we should be so thankful for those miracles.

Ordinary providence. We are told three times in verses 11-12, that now the people would eat what is naturally in the land. They will eat the ordinary fruit and produce and grains from the land, which isn't anywhere close to being as dynamic as the manna. But it's providence, nonetheless. We have clean water, donuts, deodorant, coffee, air conditioning, soap, cotton fibers, gasoline, cell phones, rain, food, shelter, shoes— 100,000 things that God provides that should make us pause and thank God for ordinary providence. So that in *all* things we can celebrate God's goodness.

And today that's exactly what we will do with The Lord's Supper.

(Pastor prays)