

# **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VILLA RICA, PCA**

## The New Beginning

By

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*Exodus 12:1-13*

<sup>1</sup>Now the LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, <sup>2</sup>"This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you. <sup>3</sup>"Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, 'On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers' households, a lamb for each household. <sup>4</sup>'Now if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons *in them*; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb. <sup>5</sup>'Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. <sup>6</sup>'You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. <sup>7</sup>'Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. <sup>8</sup>'They shall eat the flesh that *same* night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. <sup>9</sup>'Do not eat any of it raw or boiled at all with water, but rather roasted with fire, *both* its head and its legs along with its entrails. <sup>10</sup>'And you shall not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire. <sup>11</sup>'Now you shall eat it in this manner: *with* your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste—it is the LORD'S Passover. <sup>12</sup>'For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the LORD. <sup>13</sup>'The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. Ex. 12:1 through Ex. 12:13 (NASB)

The start of a new year is always a time for hope and faith. Judy is an inveterate New Year's Day optimist, especially if you eat black eyed peas and collard greens on New Year's Day, which she did this year at Piccadilly Cafeteria.

Today as we approach the Lord's Table I want you to have a truly Biblical optimism about 2004. I believe the Lord wanted Israel to have a New Years' optimism when Moses began to lead God's people out of the slavery of Egypt to the promised land. He told them, <sup>2</sup>"**This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you.**

Their optimism was born of their deliverance from bondage in Egypt to a new life under God's guidance to a land flowing with milk and honey. The Israelites had been a people dominated by an

oppressive regime in Egypt. What had begun in Joseph's day as a deliverance from famine under very cordial and benevolent conditions had become after the death of Joseph and a new pharaoh an intolerable yoke of slavery and misery. But they cried out to the Lord for relief and the Lord sent Moses.

Moses arrival didn't seem to help at all at first. The king of Egypt made their lot harder after Moses had come, increasing their workload and making it more difficult to make bricks without providing them with straw. The plagues that God sent on Egypt because of Pharaoh's stubborn refusal to let the people go and worship the Lord only made Pharaoh's hand heavier on them.

Isn't that the way it can be? When a person takes a stand for the Word of God the world is angered. There really can be no compromise with Satan and his crowd. Pharaoh and the Egyptians didn't get converted when God sent plagues of judgment on them. They only hardened their hearts more against those who followed Moses and the Word of God. Many hearts were searched. Faith is never an easy road to travel. God had already forewarned Moses that Pharaoh would not hearken to his Word. But God would save his people in spite of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.

The Lord established Moses' credentials as a true man of God through a series of events. The final and most important sign of God's delivering power was the tenth plague or tenth judgment on Egypt. It came about with the institution of the Passover. Every household was to take an unblemished lamb of a year old and on the fourteenth day of the New Year at twilight they were to kill the lamb and take its blood and smear some on the doorposts and lintel of the houses in which they lived and then they were to eat of the flesh of that roasted lamb. They were to eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. On that night the Lord's angel would pass through the land of Egypt and slay the firstborn in Egypt from Pharaoh on down to every family, even to all the firstborn of the livestock. Only in the houses that had been marked with the blood of the Passover lambs would be passed over and spared. After that night the people of God and all who joined forces with them would move out of Egypt into the fresh air of liberty. A new era would open up for them. God would be their pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. He would lead them to new land of hope and promise, a land flowing with milk and honey. He would be their God and they would be his people. No wonder God said it would be the beginning of months. A new life of faith and hope commenced on the day following the night of the Passover.

But this did not mean that their faith would never be tested or face adversity. If time would permit we could talk about some of the many tests that came to those Israelites after they departed from Egypt. The first test, of course, was the pursuit of Pharaoh with his army. We are facing some tests in the current war against terrorism at home and abroad but our God can fight our battles as he did in the wilderness just across the Red sea from Saudi Arabia. As the Egyptians pursued Moses lifted his rod and the Red sea parted to allow the Israelites to go across dry-shod but when the Egyptian army followed the sea closed over them and they all drowned.

Today I want you to recognize that God put into effect his Word of deliverance on the heels of the Passover. Christ is our Passover Lamb and the Lord's Supper is the institution of Christ on the eve of his betrayal and death at Calvary, as he became the sacrificial Lamb of God who takes away your sin and mine. He becomes the Leader and Protector from all our foes. It is not black-eyed peas and collard greens that assure us of success in the New Year. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who has died for our sins and shed his blood for our redemption. It is by appropriating his shed blood and applying it to ourselves personally that we have the assurance of God's blessing and protection. He provides a table for his people even in a barren land. There is food and drink and all things necessary for life in the here and now plus the promise of everlasting life in heaven when we leave this life behind.

But one thing that should be emphasized is found in verse 11 that finds its parallel in Ephesians 6:10-18. Moses told them to eat the Passover this way: <sup>11</sup> **'Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your**

staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste—it is the LORD'S Passover. <sup>12</sup>For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the LORD. <sup>13</sup>The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

In other words, they were to be expectant as they ate it. There were to understand that this sacramental meal was going to dramatically and suddenly change their lives. They would be leaving Egypt behind. They would begin a new life of faith in Christ and his promise. They would be breaking with the past and start on a pilgrimage through the wilderness to the Promised Land.

Let us come today to His Table with great expectancy and faith in His promises to us, to save us and keep us as we walk in the light of his Word.

Beloved in the Lord, hear what gracious words our Savior Jesus Christ says to all who truly turn to Him.

**Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.**

**I am the bread of life: He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst. Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. Blessed are they, which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled**

**Truly, truly, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.**

We invite all who repent of their sins and who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and desire to live as becometh followers of Christ; also all communicants in good standing in any evangelical church to participate. We also invite all non-communicants to remain as well.

#### WORDS OF INSTITUTION 1st Corinthians 11:23-34

Hear the Words of Institution of the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Apostle Paul delivers them:

*(NKJV)* <sup>23</sup>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; <sup>24</sup>and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." <sup>25</sup>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."

<sup>26</sup>For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

<sup>27</sup>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.

<sup>28</sup>But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. <sup>29</sup>For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. <sup>30</sup>For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. <sup>31</sup>For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. <sup>32</sup>But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

<sup>33</sup>Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. <sup>34</sup>But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

## LET US PRAY

We give Thee thanks, O Lord, for thy great goodness to us and to all men, for Thy faithfulness which never faileth, for Thy mercies which are more than we can number, and for Thy Fatherly hand ever upon us, in health and sickness, in joy and sorrow, in life and death.

Above all, with Thy whole Church throughout the world, we adore Thee for Thy love in the redemption of mankind by our Lord Jesus Christ.

We bless Thee for Thy gift of the Holy Spirit; for the Church filled with Thy presence; for our baptism and nurture in the faith; and for Thy blessed assurance of everlasting life. For these and all Thy gifts, glory be to Thee, Lord God Almighty. *Amen*

Most gracious Father, who calls us to the Holy Table of our Savior, to show His death and to receive His gift of life: enable us to come with earnest faith and kindled devotion,. Help us to make the memorial of our Saviour's sacrifice with adoration and praise. Open our eyes to behold the vision of His love, and pour into our souls the fullness of His grace. And grant that, yielding ourselves to Thee, we may henceforth live as those who are not their own, but are brought with a price; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*.

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