**Waiting For The Lord: To Provide The Lamb**

**Genesis 22:1-14**

4th Mid-Lent – 03.23.2022

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As you know, our mid-week Lenten sermons are looking at the Old Testament readings from the Easter Vigil. Our over-arching theme is: ***Waiting for the Lord: Joining the Old Testament Saints in Vigil***. Today, we are Waiting for the Lord: To Provide the Lamb.

On Ash Wednesday we considered God’s use of Jonah to bring Nineveh to grant repentance. The next Wednesday we went back to Creation, waiting for the Lord to provide rest. However, it did not take long before Adam and Eve were disobedient, eating the fruit of the tree from which they were to abstain. At the end of chapter 3, after promising that Eve's seed would crush Satan's head, God provides garments of skin to cover their sinfulness. Animals died to pay for their disobedience and cover their sin. What kind of animals? I join Luther in believing it was probably a lamb.

Last week, we considered the account of the flood. Noah and his family came off the ark and offered a sacrifice of Thanksgiving on the altar. What was that sacrifice? What gave its life in thankfulness that these eight people had been brought through the waters of the flood and granted life? It was from the seven pairs of the clean animals that were on the ark – or maybe a young one born the past year enclosed on the ark? Could it also have been a lamb? Many believe so.

We now come to this text in which we find Abraham and Isaac going up to the mountain which the Lord had shown Abraham. As they were on the way, Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here am I, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together.

When we gather together on Maundy Thursday, we will read the account of the final plague, the Passover instituted as a perpetual feast for the people of Israel. It will involve the sacrifice of a lamb – a lamb without blemish. And when the Lord gives instructions to the people about the sacrificial system to be instituted lambs – without blemish – will play a big role.

We see throughout salvation history, the continued use of lambs. It is why Luther and many other superimpose the sacrifice of lambs as part of the sacrifice of thanksgiving when Noah and his family come off the ark. It is also why many believe it is the animal which shed its blood and gave it’s life to cover the sin of Adam and Even in the garden.

Going back to our text, Abraham’s words are guided by the Holy Spirit. He is pointing forward, showing the great desire of God’s people as they are waiting. He is prophesying about God providing The Lamb that would be sacrificed to bring life from the jaws of death.

Abraham built the altar, laid the wood in order, bound Isaac, laid him on the wood, and was about to sacrifice him when the Lord spoke, stopping him from making the sacrifice of His son. Lifting up his eyes in what we could only imagine as incredible relief, there was a ram caught in a nearby thicket which was then sacrificed. Was this the Lamb God provided so that Isaac might have life, as Abraham had promised?

What Lamb was it exactly to which Abraham referred to earlier?

To understand, we must come forward about 2000 years from the time of our text. There we find John the baptizer in the wilderness, he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.” (John 1:29-31)

John identifies the Lamb about which Abraham prophesied. It is Jesus! God’s Christ is the One whom God had promised Abraham as the offspring by which the whole world would be blessed. Christ is the Lamb to be sacrificed, taking sin and death captive in His own body, and putting them to death in His own flesh upon the cross.

What is the sacrifice necessary to pay for your sinfulness, to keep death from claiming you? We join those Old Testament saints in vigil, waiting for the Lord to provide The Lamb of sacrifice, the sin offering.

The Lamb does not bleat or complain, allowing Himself to be led to the slaughter. saying to His Father, “not my will but yours be done.” He allows Himself to be crucified. On the cross, knowing that His Father has laid on Him the sins of the world, and can no longer abide with His presence, He faithfully entrusts Himself to His Father, “Into Your hands I commit my spirit.”

You wait for the Lord to provide The Lamb. Confessing your sinfulness, you cling to Christ, begging for forgiveness. It was as if you were saying, “God will provide for himself the Lamb!” The absolution was spoken, the blood of The Lamb covered you. Your ears are open! You hear the Word of Christ’s sacrifice proclaimed into your ears. Your sins are gone, for God provides for Himself the Lamb!

Waiting for the Lord to provide The Lamb, you come to His Table. You come on bended knee. You come with the blood of the Lamb marking the doorposts and the lintel of your heart. Waiting for The Lamb to feed you His own flesh and give you to drink of His precious blood so that the angel of death – eternal death – pass over you, and you might enter the promised land. You come to eat and to drink, for God provides for Himself the Lamb!

Behold, Christ the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world – who takes away your sin. As you desire, so it has been done for you. You have not waited in vain, for every time you gather in this place, God provides for Himself the Lamb – for you! You are His redeemed children. Life is granted to you – eternal life.

Yes, we still wait for God to provide the Lamb – the Lamb seated upon the throne in His eternal kingdom. Thanks be to God, it is our future hope – our confident hope, for we know it is ours. We have already washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. All we await now is for the Lambe to return on the last day, and the Lamb’s final summons. In the name of Jesus. Amen.