

John 18:33-19:7

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 September 2016

Preacher: Rev Iain Murdo Campbell

[0 : 00] I should like us, seeking God's help, to turn back to the second portion of Scripture that we read, although it would have been the first portion as well, but taking us a basis for what I think we should say today.

Some words that we find at the end of the verse 38 in chapter 18 of John's Gospel, where Pilate declares that in verse 38, I find no fault in him at all.

I find no fault in him at all. He says the same thing again in verse 4. I find no fault in him. And he says it again there in verse 6 of chapter 19.

For I find no fault in him. And really what I want to speak about briefly, well, in my own congregation here the word briefly, which we know that it's never brief, but we can be as brief as we can.

But I want to speak today really about the sufficiency of the Lamb and the sufficiency of the provision that God has made for our salvation.

[1 : 25] I think it's probably a great testimony to the sufficiency and the efficiency of that sacrifice, the fact that there will be a Lord's table here tomorrow.

2,000 years after that sacrifice was made, that in this little corner of the world, that there will be a table, and that you and I who are in Christ, that we will be at that table.

If that sacrifice had not been sufficient, and if it was not efficient, and the death of Christ would have failed away into the arms of history a long time ago.

But we are there and we will be there, God willing, because of the sufficiency of the Lamb that God provided for our salvation.

Praise God that he provided that Lamb, and that we might be in the position that we are in today. If there is anybody here today who know the power and the efficacy of that sacrifice in their own hearts, and have not yet professed that before men, well, all I can do is urge you to do so, for not doing so is almost a denial of what the Lord has done, and what God has provided for us.

[2 : 50] And so I want to just look for a wee while for our encouragement, maybe, and for our learning about the sufficiency of the provision that God had made, and how even a long, long time before the Lord, God had provided his own ultimate Lamb, how the Lamb in the Old Testament days was a great picture, of the Lamb that God would ultimately provide for our salvation.

We read there in Exodus chapter 12, how God laid down the instructions for the observance of the Passover, many, many years before the Lord Jesus Christ's Passover, the Lord's death, for 400 years, and many of you will be aware of the background of all of this, for 400 years, the Hebrew people had been in Egypt as slaves, and during these 400 years, I'm quite sure that the people of God there, and the Hebrew people, were crying out to the Lord to deliver them from the slavery of Egypt.

It would have been painful for them in many ways, to have been in that bondage, and in that slavery in Egypt, and they were crying out to the Lord, that the Lord would redeem them, and that the Lord would set them free from this slavery that they found themselves in.

And in response to their cries unto their pleas, God responds, as God always does, to our cries unto our pleas.

He heard our own cries and our own pleas, didn't he, when we cried out to him from the slavery of the Egypt that we were in ourselves, to free us from that slavery, and to free us from that bondage that we were in.

[4 : 53] And God responded to that, and responds to the cry of anyone who cries unto them from the depths, that they may be freed from slavery, and the slavery of sin and of death, that they might be released from that.

He responds, and in response, God, for these people, for the Hebrews, he made a provision, and he provided for them a deliverer, by the name of Moses.

But the thing was, you see, at that time, that Pharaoh wouldn't listen to Moses. He was not going to listen to a mere man. He was not going to listen to Moses' pleas to release the Hebrews from that slavery.

So the land of Egypt, as we know, was subjected to a series of plagues. And these plagues were awful judgments that came upon the land, and that came upon the people.

There was one thing, you see, dealing with Moses, and Pharaoh dealing with Moses. It was another thing, quite entirely, for him to deal with Almighty God.

[6 : 06] But yet, you see, even although these plagues came, Pharaoh, he remained unwilling to bow to the God of Israel. and so then, in the tenth plague, he is about to experience something else.

He is about to experience the death of the firstborn. You see, from the very moment that God had forewarned of this plague, he made his intention crystal clear, and he said, in chapter 11 of Exodus, and at verse 11, he says that he is going to put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.

He is going to make a distinction between the Egyptians and Israel. And the question is, what was the difference going to be between Egypt and Israel?

Well, that difference between the two was going to hinge upon the land. The land was going to be the difference. The land was going to be the distinguishing factor between Egypt and Israel.

All of it was going to hinge upon the land. You see, the death of the firstborn was upon all that were in the land of Egypt.

[7 : 27] The Israelites, you see, they were in Egypt. They were in Egypt as well. And failure to accept God's very prescription meant death would come to their homes just as readily as death would come to the Egyptian homes.

The land was just as central. The land was important. And the land was the prescription that God had made. You see, whether an Israelite, even in Egypt, whether that Israelite lived or whether that Israelite died, it was all dependent on what Israel did with the land.

It was dependent on what the Israelite did with the land. The difference, though, you see, between the Egyptian and the Egyptian men and the Jew, I suppose, was not in their behavior.

That was not where the difference was. The difference was not in their nature because the Israelite, the Hebrew, was a sinner and the Egyptian was a sinner.

Both were sinners before God. But the difference was going to come through the blood. That is where the difference would be, in the blood. And so God gave these specific instructions concerning the Passover lamb and the observance of the Passover.

[8 : 57] And you see, my friends, you know, there is one detail, I suppose, in all of this that has a bearing on the outcome of the trial of the Lord Jesus Christ when he came before Pilate.

The lamb in the Old Testament, the lamb there that God required was to be a lamb without spot. It was to be a lamb without blemish.

And you see, in order to make sure that that lamb that was brought in to the household, to make sure that it was without blemish, that lamb was to be kept in that home for three days.

Three whole days it was to be kept there in the home so that they could examine to see if the lamb was without spot and if the lamb was without blemish.

There was to be, in this lamb's experience, there was to be a time of examination. They had to be sure and the household would have to testify and the head of the household would have to testify that the lamb was pure, that the lamb was clean, that the lamb was without spot and that the lamb was without blemish.

[10 : 14] and only when it was known and only when it was declared to be absolutely pristine and absolutely flawless could that lamb then be used in this Passover.

And all of that, you see, my friends, it has a bearing on the trial of the Lord Jesus Christ before Pilate. it is all there in the plan of God and in the purposes of God.

He was to be the true Passover lamb who died that the angel of spiritual death might pass over all those who trust in his sacrifice or that the angel of death might pass over all those whose hearts have been sprinkled in the blood.

You see, Christ, the Passover lamb, was he not examined to? Examined to the end that he was found to be without spot and without blemish?

Where was he examined? Well, you see, at the time of his entry into his public ministry, you could say there that the Lord has been brought in.

[11:44] He has been brought into the house of Israel. He has been brought into the household there for these three years, not for three days, but for three years to be examined, to be examined in the house of Israel.

and at the very beginning of that ministry, at the very beginning of these three years, he is brought in to the household and he is identified there by John the Baptist when John said, Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Was it out that his entry into the household of Israel? And from that very point, the Lord moved among the people of Israel.

And there he was examined by them. He was examined by his friends. He was examined by his enemies. He was examined by all alike.

Now, it's interesting that Exodus tells us that the Lamb was to be a male of the first year. And the Hebrew here is very, very specific because it says that he was to be a male, the son of a year, is what the Hebrew says.

[13:16] It was to be one year old. What does that say to us? Well, this Lamb that was to be slain there on the day of the Passover, in Egypt, that Lamb was not to be too young.

And that Lamb was not to be too old. It was to die in the very fullness of its strength. And you know, the ultimate Lamb of God died on the cross of Calvary and sacrificed on the cross.

and when he was brought into the house of Israel there and when he was slain as the ultimate Passover Lamb, we have to remember he was not in old age and he was not in childhood.

This was a man dying in the peak of his life and in the fullness of his strength. It was to be a Lamb of one year old.

But every nun could find fault with him. And now here in John's Gospel in what is virtually the last official word pronounced on earth concerning Jesus, the Roman procurator pirate comes forth in opposition to the determined will of the Jews and he declares him to be innocent.

[14:49] I find no fault in this man. This man is blemish free. He is without spot. And not only that, but interestingly as I mentioned John records for us here, the pirate makes this declaration three times.

Three times he makes the declaration. And I suppose one might ask the question why does the number three figure so much in all of this?

The three days, the Passover Lamb, and then you have the three years that the Lord himself was there being tested in a sense in the house of Israel.

There are other things concerning the life and especially the death of the Lord Jesus Christ that seem to have this figure three connected with it.

You have the three denials, don't you? There was the three denials of the Lord. You look to the Mount of Calvary, there are three crosses there on that mount.

[16:01] There were three trials before the religious leaders and then there were three political trials as well. There were three days in the tomb.

What does this number three mean? What are they trying to tell us here? What is going on here? Well, my friends, three is regarded as one author says, as the numerical signature of God.

God is putting his signature to all of this. God is putting his signature on all of the events leading up to the death of the Lamb.

It is all in the providence and according to the will of God. It is within the control of God and God signs it with his own signature.

It can also be said, as one author put it, it can be said to represent the three stages of life. Birth, life and death, he said.

[17:13] And what God is doing here is he is putting his signature, his signature of completeness and his signature of perfection on the birth, on the life and on the death of the Lamb.

His birth was immaculate, his life was perfect and his death is going to be sufficient. God signs it. Immaculate, perfect, sufficient, this is the Lamb.

But whatever pile would sink here, the leaders of the people, they were completely insistent and stirred up the people to cry out, crucify him, crucify him.

The congregation of Israel are crying, crucify him, crucify him. The leaders of Israel are crying, crucify him, crucify him.

and a Roman governor is saying he is innocent, he is without thought, he is without pledge, the very people that should have discerned who this was, couldn't see, because of the darkness in their own souls that this was the Lamb.

[18 : 39] And so at last, the pirate being completely unwilling to risk chaos in the land and to risk a riot, and maybe even risk his own position of power, he gave him over to die.

Even although he had declared him three times to be innocent, well he tried. And the simple point I am trying to make here, well it's simple in a way, is that one who is uncondemned and one who is declared blameless, it is in that manner that this one goes to the cross.

It is as God's blameless, blemish free land that Jesus dies for the household of God. He is blameless.

But I want to do something very quickly. what I want to do is I want to call up some testimonies. I want to call up some who can testify to this.

People and others who can come and give testimony that this lamb that it is without blameless and without spot. And I want to call these people and I want them to give an account.

[20 : 12] through their own understanding and experience that this one is blameless and spotless. I want first of all to look at just some witnesses to his innocence.

You see, it was not only by pilot that this important verdict was given. I find no fault in him at all. That very same verdict had been given by all who ever examined him in the house of Israel. nobody could ever say anything to the contrary.

Nobody could ever say through their experience of him or with him that they found anything in him. So whose testimony are we going to call here first of all?

Well, I want first of all to ask for the testimony of the one who made the provision of the lamb, the one who provided the lamb for his household.

[21 : 24] And so basically respectfully what I am doing is I am asking for the testimony of the father, the testimony of God the father as that was witnessed by John the Baptist.

At the very outset of his ministry, as we said, John the Baptist identified him as the lamb of God. And who was John the Baptist? John was a prophet.

He was the last of the Old Testament prophets. Surely John the Baptist, as a witness to all of this and giving testimony to all of this, is one that can be trusted to tell an accurate and truthful account of what he experienced.

But yet we might want to ask John if he is absolutely sure about his identification of the lamb of God who took away or was going to take away the sin of the world.

And what would John say? Well, surely John would say, well, well, people, I beheld him. And not only did I behold him, but I baptized him.

[22 : 31] And what happened then? The great voice came from glory. This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.

That is the testimony of the father. This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. And John would say, I heard it.

I heard the voice. I heard the declaration. I heard the voice of the father declaring that he is all that he claims to be.

And so the father bore witness to the perfection of the lamb. Oh, what greater, what greater testimony do we need than that the father of glory who provided the lamb can say that he was well pleased with what he provided.

But surely more than that, as well, John could also say, that the Holy Spirit bore witness to on that day to the purity of the lamb.

[23 : 45] If the father in heaven had declared by word the purity of the lamb, then the Holy Spirit by action declared the purity of the lamb.

John could say, I saw the spirit. I saw the spirit descend upon him in the form of a dove, and I knew when I saw that, that he was pure.

Remember when Noah sent the dove out of the ark, and away she went and she came back, she came back to the ark because she couldn't find anywhere green to put her feet.

feet. And here the Holy Spirit descends in the forearm of her dove, and she puts her feet on that which is clean, and that which is pure, and that which is holy.

She found a clean place for her feet, and so in word and in action, glory and heaven declare that the lamb is perfect, without blemish, and without spot.

[25 : 02] But is there anyone else's testimony maybe we should hear to help convince us that this lamb is what this lamb claims to be. We have heard heaven's testimony, we have heard it and seen it profoundly, but what about hell's testimony?

Remember when the devil, when he tasted and when he tempted the lamb in the wilderness, when he tempted the lord there in the wilderness?

What was the verdict from that? What was hell's verdict? The devil found nothing in him. Not a thing.

The prince of this world has found nothing in me. Even the devil could not find a spot or a blemish when he examined the lamb.

Surely he would have been the first one to save he had found one. But he found nothing in him. Heaven's verdict without spot and blemish.

[26 : 17] hell's verdict without spot and blemish. What about the testimony of those who were closest to him in the world?

The verdict of his own beloved disciples. Those who knew him best, those who walked with him, those who talked with him, those who for three years in that sense had that great opportunity to examine him.

Through their ups and through their downs, through the trials and through the testings that they experienced as they walked with him, surely there was no one maybe on this earth in a better place to examine the lamb.

And what does John call it? John called Christ the righteous. And Peter called Christ the Holy One. And in his first epistle, Peter says that Jesus was without blemish and without spot.

Even Thomas, the disciple, declared Christ's perfection by saying, my Lord and my God. All of these men had lived with him, walked with him and talked with him.

[27 : 42] And all they could do was declare him to be without spot and without blemish. There were others too that he could call.

Surely he could call for the testimony of the Jewish leaders, of the scribes, of the elders, of the Pharisees, of the Sadducees, and they found no fault in him at all.

They couldn't. Is there anyone else? Maybe. What about if we were to ask Nicodemus for his testimony?

And Nicodemus would say to us, well, there was one day I went to him and I went to him under the cover of darkness. I went to him by night.

I was intrigued by this man who I thought was a teacher come from God. I was intrigued at his teaching, intrigued at his miracles. And then for three years I watched him and I looked at him closely.

[28 : 47] But one day something happened. One day something changed. one day I saw him die. And I felt the power and I felt the efficacy of his death and of his sacrifice.

And with the centurion I could say truly, this is the Son of God. God. And I came out from under the cover of darkness and I went with Joseph of Anamathia for all to see to do with his body what needed to be done.

In whose dying I found life and I found it in all of its fullness when I came to the cross, when I came to that dead Christ and that dying Christ.

I found life in all of its fullness. I'm sure that would be Nicodemus' testimony.

He would testify to the power of the blood and the power of the death of Christ. What about the thief?

[30 : 00] What about the thief? Did he not declare him true to be innocent? He said to the other thief, we are here and we deserve to be here, but this man, not this man, this man is innocent.

And through that experience the thief himself, he lost his view of the crown of thorns and he saw a crown of glory in Christ. Whew, gods, mal it big, who truly puppies, he stands more. And I believe that in all this his testimony is really important. We might ask today, well, who can this be? Was there anyone else who could look at and examine the Lord really closely in his life but who at the same time could never be accused of being partial to the Lord himself? Well, God in his wisdom has provided just the right person. And I should now like to call for the testimony of Judas Iscariot, to call for the testimony of him who betrayed him. And here was one of the twelve who was with Christ throughout his ministry.

He had every opportunity to see if there was any spot or any blemish in the lamb. But yet you remember what happened after the betrayal. As Judas goes back and tries to return the thirty pieces of silver which he had got to sell and to betray the Lord. And he came to the chief priests and to the elders saying, I have sinned for I have betrayed innocent blood.

I find no fault in him at all. Three years the lamb is in the house of Israel and no spot and no blemish can be found. But then today, my friends, we ask, well, what of those who have been associated with them since then? Our own verdict today is not identical. Has the verdict of God's people down through the centuries and through the years not been identical? Do you ever remember or ever, ever remember hearing that a Christian, even a Christian on their deathbed, has ever said he is a deceiver? He cannot help, he cannot deliver.

I remember being at the deathbed of an old dying Christian some years ago. And the last thing she said to me when I was leaving her bedside was he has and he is all sufficient.

[33 : 27] And as we sit at the Lord's table and partake of the elements of his broken body and his shed blood, are we not there to testify to the sufficiency of the sacrifice of the lamb and the efficiency and the efficacy and the power of the blood that has cleansed us from all of our sins? That is why we are there.

That is why we remember his death, because through his blood we have been given life. Through his sacrifice and his death we live. And we will live eternally. We shall not die but live. And shall the works of God discover.

We testify there that the lamb provided by the head of his own household was perfect, was without blemish, and was without spot.

He was the lamb without blemish. He was innocent. But just a word only yet he dies. Innocent but yet he must die. You see that's why the lamb in the house of mystery died. It died because it was innocent. It died because it was blemish free. If there had been a blemish in it it would not have died. It would have been returned to the flock. And he's going to die because he is blemish free. And they believed that the lamb was not dead. And they believed that it was not dead. And they believed that that is possibly where the lamb's blood was shed. That it was poured into that hollow. And then it was sprinkled up onto the doorposts and onto the lintels. Just outside of the door of the Israelites house of Egypt.

[36 : 00] He died just outside the city wall. The ultimate lamb. And he passed through every examination that could possibly be made of him. And declared to be innocent. But yet he dies. Why?

He dies because death is the result of sin. But his death was for sins. But they were not for his own sins. And this is the crux of it all. He was innocent. But we are guilty.

And we deserve to die. And we deserve to die. Every one of us deserves to die. And we all deserve to die eternally.

We deserve to die. And we deserve the unmitigated fire. And we deserve to die. Really, that is what we deserve.

But then comes the glory of the gospel. Jesus, the righteous one, has died for us so that we might be saved from the condemnation that we were due.

[37 : 25] and so the ultimate Passover lamb is taken from the house and the lamb is slain and the lamb is laid on the grace and altar of God's judgment upon sin he is innocent so he must be taken from the house to die what a sin it must have been when you look at it in your mind's eyes as you read the narratives as he comes out of the household outside the city wall bearing his cross broken and bleeding others bearing him others holding him up he who was going to bear the sins of the world borne by others and carried by others part of his great humiliation and the lamb in Exodus was taken from the house and it was to be slain and it tells us that it was to be roasted all these things are important it was not to be boiled it was not to be eaten raw there must be fire there must be fire it's a bit like the tabernacle in the wilderness and just inside the gate of the tabernacle there was the brazen altar and the sacrifices were placed on that brazen altar and the fire burned continually day and night you think maybe there of an old Israelite man in the tents outside the tabernacle and maybe his young son was with him and the son was saying to the father father what do these flames represent and the father saying son these flames they represent the sleeplessness of hell as they burn 24-7 they are an emblem of the justice of God against sleep and the son saying that's scary father that puts fear into me father and the father saying oh son there's more than fear in it because when I look at that fire there is comfort in it for me what comfort father what comfort is

in the fire for you my comfort son is that there is a victim on the fire and that victim is there on that fire in my place consumed by the justice and the wrath of God against sin for me and outside that city wall on that cross and on that brazen altar when we look upon it and we look at the justice of God coming upon the ultimate lamb there is comfort for us because we know that there is a victim there that he was the victim that he did have a place on that altar there had to be fire and nothing was to be left until the next morning it was all to be consumed and the ultimate lamb

I would say in the same manner was because of the Sabbath day in the way it came in he was removed from the cross and there was nothing left the following morning there was nothing left but probably just the tomb bush where he died nothing was left it was all gone the holy lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world he was wounded for our transgressions he was bruised for our iniquities the justice made of our peace is upon him and by his stripes we are healed and tomorrow we will remember that death and we will do so until he comes again we will remember the sacrifice we will remember that there was a victim there in our home and in our place bearing shame that a writer said and scoffing wrote in my place condemned he stood sealed my pardon with his blood hallelujah what a savior what a savior indeed what a Christ what a love sufficient and efficient and if you're in Christ you know it and I know it I think we'll leave it at that and I know it