

**First Presbyterian Church  
Southampton, New York  
“Fast-Food that can Save Your Soul”**

**Exodus 12:1 – 14**

**Maundy Thursday**

**March 24, 2016**

You know, I have to admit that, my whole life, I’ve had a weakness for fast-food! Burger King, Wendy’s, Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, KFC... if it’s got a drive-thru window, I’ve probably eaten there. As a matter of fact, I had lunch today with my daughter... just up the street at our own local McDonald’s! And I loved it!

Which is a problem because, as we know, fast-food has received a boatload of criticism over the past twenty years or so... and usually for good reason. Too many empty calories, too much saturated fat, toxic preservatives, lack of nutritional value, runaway carbohydrates, sodium off the chart, and on, and on, it goes. Every new scientific study that comes out, makes it sound like you’d probably be better off grazing on your front lawn, than ordering a Big Mac and fries! Which is why most fast-food joints have taken steps to dramatically improve the healthiness of their menus.

But even *with* those dietary improvements, fast-food has pretty much taken up permanent residence in the culinary doghouse of our society. Which makes it all the more amazing that, when it came time for Almighty God to deliver His people from slavery in Egypt... He commemorated the event with the world’s first fast-food meal!

To quickly recap: God, working through Moses and Moses’ brother, Aaron, had unleashed a series of horrible plagues against the people of Egypt and the Egyptian king, or pharaoh... in order to convince the pharaoh to set the people Israel free after four hundred years of slavery. Locusts, gnats, flies, frogs, hailstones, and the river Nile being turned to blood... had all been thrown against Egypt. But as bad as these plagues were, they weren’t sufficiently bad to convince the Pharaoh to let the people go. So the Lord pulled one final plague out of His hat, which was destined to do the trick: that night, at midnight, every firstborn son of Egypt, human and animal alike, would die. It was an awful punishment... meant to make it clear that God Almighty was through horsing around. It was time for Egypt to let the Israelites go.

But, what about the Israelites themselves? Wouldn’t their firstborn sons also be wiped out by the terrible power of this final, decisive plague? No, they wouldn’t. Because, as described in our lesson this evening from Exodus, the blood of the sacrificial lambs, which had been spread around the doorframes of the Israelites’ homes... would be a sign to the Lord to spare those families; and His Spirit would “pass over” those homes, and leave them in peace. And in future time, this, of course, would be commemorated in the great Jewish holiday of Passover. So, death and heartache and God’s awful justice was being visited upon the people of ancient Egypt; but the people of ancient Israel were safe within their blood-marked homes, waiting for the Lord’s signal to get up, get out, and get themselves to freedom.

And while they waited, they were to eat a meal; a very special and specific meal... also described in our text:

*“That same night (you) are to eat the meat (of the lamb) roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. Do not eat the meat raw or cooked in water, but roast it over the fire – head, legs and inner parts. Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it.”*

And here’s where the fast-food dimension comes in:

*“This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the Lord’s Passover.”*

Eat it in haste; eat it **fast**; God is bringing about your deliverance... and you got to be ready to **go**, when He gives the word! The Lord was bringing deliverance to His people. God was bringing salvation to His children. Our Heavenly Father was bringing hope, and mercy, and new life to Israel. And He wanted them to **remember** it... with a fast-food dinner!

And, of course, it was that same fast-food dinner, that same Passover meal, that Jesus shared in the Upper Room with His disciples... on the night of His arrest. And, although on that particular night, the gathering that we remember **this** night... the meal wasn’t especially fast or hasty; it still pointed to the very same reality to which it pointed centuries earlier, when the people of Israel first ate it, with their cloaks tucked in and their sandals on their feet:

*God is moving to save His people; God is acting to deliver His children from the fears and worries that bind them; God is on the move to bring about our freedom from sin and death... forever.*

Only this time, the saving sacrificial blood to be shed wouldn’t come from any lamb, or sheep, or goat: it would pour from the veins of the Son of God Himself. And it wouldn’t be a doorframe to which God would look in order to find the bloodstained sign of deliverance; no, it would be on the cross that He would see the crimson markings which proclaimed that redemption has come, that forgiveness has been granted, and that new life is now available to all.

As far as we know, there was no drive-thru window for the Upper Room. But it was a fast-food supper just the same. Fast-food that attested to God’s invincible determination to give His people freedom, and grace, and life. It was fast-food that can save our souls.

Tonight we come to this table, just as Jesus and the disciples did... two thousand years ago. But we don’t have to rush. We don’t need to leave our car motors running, so we can make a hasty getaway. The ushers aren’t checking to see if we’ve all got our cloaks, and our staffs, and our sandals. We can eat this meal in peace; but as we do, let’s remember that the Lord who instituted it, and the God who delivered His people as they first ate it, is here to deliver us, too: From all the sin that stains us; from all the fears that bind us; from all the distraction that can rob our lives of meaning and joy.

Jesus has given this meal **to** us; to remind us that He’s given His life **for** us. And, just as with the people of ancient Israel, that sacrifice is the beginning of new, and abundant, and purposeful life, for us! In that spirit, and with that hope, may we come to the table this evening; and enjoy the fast-food that can save our souls.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, amen!