

September 6, 2026 Sharing the Lamb, Sharing the Load Exodus 12:1-4 & Matt. 18:15-20

*If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with neighbor (Ex. 12:4).*

*For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them. (Matthew 18:20).*

I believe we are all familiar with the two stories in today's scripture passages. The Israelites' final act on their last day in Egypt and the most important part of the process for reconciliation in the Christian community! As human beings, despite the commandment of love, we occasionally hold grudges against one another. Jesus Christ knows human nature and gives us a way to love despite our differences. These two passages show us that God forms His people through shared life. In Exodus 12:4, God teaches Israel to share the lamb. In Matthew 18:15-20, Jesus teaches the church to share the work of reconciliation.

One passage is about a meal. The other is about relationships. Yet both reveal the same truth: God's people cannot live faithfully without one another. Community is not optional—it is essential. We see this in Exodus 12:4: "If a household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor." Community cooperation begins at the table. This is the night of Passover. The night of deliverance. The night God breaks the chains of Egypt. But before the miracle, before the Red Sea, before the journey—God teaches them to share.

**God builds cooperation into Salvation.** God could have said, "Every household fend for itself." But instead, He says, "Look around you. Notice your nearest neighbor. Share the lamb." Why? Because salvation is never a solo event. God saves a *people*, not isolated individuals.

**Cooperation protects the vulnerable.** Some households were small. Some were elderly. Some had limited resources. God's command ensured: No one was left hungry. No one was left alone. No one was left ashamed of their lack. No blessing was wasted. The lamb was too holy to be hoarded. The meal was too sacred to be privatized. **In God's community, lack is never a private burden—it is a shared responsibility.**

In Matthew 18:15-20, we move from the table to the heart. From sharing food to sharing responsibility. From cooperation in provision to cooperation in reconciliation. Jesus says: "*If your brother sins against you, go and point out the fault just between the two of you...*" Then He describes bringing witnesses, involving the church, and finally says: "*Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I with them.*"

**Jesus teaches cooperative reconciliation.** Matthew 18 is not about punishment—it is about restoration. It is about protecting relationships. It is about healing wounds. It is about refusing to let conflict destroy community. Jesus gives a process: Maintain privacy to protect dignity. Involve witnesses to safeguard truth. Include the church to uphold unity. This is collaboration in the difficult work of love.

**Christ is present when we cooperate.** Jesus says His presence is revealed when:

- We gather. We reconcile. We agree. We pray. We restore one another.

Christ stands in the middle of cooperative community. He is present when we share the lamb. He is present when we share the load. He is present when we share the work of forgiveness.

**Both passages highlight the importance of recognizing our neighbors.** In Exodus, we learn, “Who is near you? Share the lamb.” In Matthew, the message is, “Who has hurt you? Go to them.” Both require courage, humility, and community. They also show that God dwells in cooperation. In Exodus, God provides through shared resources, while in Matthew, His presence comes through reconciliation. Ultimately, both passages remind us that faith is a shared journey. We cannot eat the lamb, heal relationships, or grow spiritually alone. Faith, salvation, and healing are communal experiences.

**Today, as we follow these instructions,**

**First, we need to share the Lamb.** This means sharing what God has given us: our time, wisdom, resources, encouragement, and faith. No household should be left behind.

**Second, we must share the Load.** In Matthew 18, we are called to have difficult conversations, seek reconciliation, protect unity, pray together, and discern together. Christ is present as we do this important work.

**Lastly, we should build a culture of nearest-neighbor ministry.** Who is nearby? Consider: - A struggling family - A discouraged member of our community - A hurting friend - A lonely neighbor - Someone you need to reconcile with.

**Community cooperation begins by noticing those whom God has placed around us..**

Exodus teaches us to share the lamb. Matthew teaches us to share the load. Together they teach us this truth: **God’s provision and Christ’s presence are revealed when God’s people cooperate.** When we share what we have, God supplies what we lack. When we reconcile with one another, Christ stands among us. When we gather in unity, heaven touches earth.

May we become a church where:

- No one walks alone
- No one suffers alone
- No one worships alone
- No one heals alone

May our cooperation become the place where God dwells.

**Let us pray:** Lord, teach us to share the lamb and share the load. Make us a community that protects the vulnerable, heals the broken, and gathers in Your name. Let Your presence dwell among us as we cooperate in love. In Jesus’ name, **Amen.**