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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749

Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
April 17, 2014
Maundy Thursday

Scripture Lessons: 1Corinthians 10:16-20,11:23-29,
Mark 14:22-26 Psalm 32

Hymns: 158; 156; 164; 653

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and
our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Matthew 26:26-30

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and
broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat;
this is My body." 27 Then He took the cup, and gave
thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of
you. 28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which
is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 But I say to
you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on
until that day when I drink it new with you in My
Father's kingdom." 30 And when they had sung a hymn,
they went out to the Mount of Olives.

(NKJV)

This is the Word of God!

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is
truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, our crucified Savior, dear fellow Redeemed.

INTRO: Remarkable incidents from Jesus' Passion

Sometimes we mistake the remarkable for the mundane. I am afraid that this is what happens when we are exposed to a truly amazing wonder frequently. Instead of marveling even more that this wonder continues to appear in our lives, we become jaded, and begin to take a marvel of grace for granted, as if it were not so special, not so remarkable. You are already aware of what I am addressing this evening simply from the reading of our text, but that is the **remarkable** incident from Jesus' passion that is before us this evening. May the Spirit of God richly bless our meditation upon --

THEME: Jesus' Institution of the Lord's Supper.

I. Seeing Is Believing.

“Seeing is believing” is a figure of speech usually applied to skeptics, but it is also a wondrous reminder of how our God uses imagery to bring a lesson home to His people, as He did with the Passover. However, in the Lord's Supper something even greater is going on, something beyond what can be seen.

Because of the suspension of most Jewish worship practices from our own New Testament worship, we may have forgotten the significance of the context in which Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. The Passover was an annual reenactment of the deliverance of the children of Israel from the slavery of Egypt. However, it was intended to be much more than that. It was also a visible symbol of the deliverance which God would bring His

people, freeing people from the slavery of sin and death. The pure and spotless lamb that was offered and then prepared and eaten by the family each year at the Passover was a symbol of the Lamb of God that would come into the world, who by shedding His blood, would cause the angel of death to pass over all those who believe. There was actually a script that was followed in each household to make sure they got it right, and specific psalms were sung as the feast was observed to bring the grace of God home to the family.

It was near the conclusion of the Passover feast, when the final cup of blessings was about to be passed around, and just before the concluding psalm was sung, that Jesus took bread and broke it and gave to His disciples with the words “**Take, eat; this is My body**” (v.26). With the passing away of the old in the Passover Jesus was instituting the new, a new supper to be observed that focused not on the image but on the reality of what He was to do, offer His body upon the cross for the sins of the world. Then Jesus took the cup of wine that was there, “**and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. 28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins’**” (v.27-28)

In the Passover feast they had been eating the lamb of the sacrifice that had been offered at the temple, which was only a symbol of the sacrifice that was to come. Now Jesus did something that had never been done before, which no one less than the Son of God could do. He gave them of the **actual sacrifice** that was about to be made for the remission of sins for the many sinners in this world. Jesus possessed the power to do this. He conveyed that power in His Word which He connected to that bread

and that wine. Jesus made it clear that this was to be done henceforth even to the end of this world when He would return to receive us to Himself in heaven.

This is remarkable, and it does indeed call for faith, for this miracle could not be seen, but it happened nonetheless. Jesus' body and blood were present and received by the eleven disciples present for the sacrament.

It is also remarkable that this is a recurring miracle. Or do we forget that every time we assemble here in church to observe the Sacrament we receive the very body and true blood given and shed for us upon the cross? When we connect this bread and wine with the Word of the Lord and then, according to the Lord's instruction, we each take and eat that little piece of bread and then drink that sip of wine we do receive the very body and true blood given and shed for us upon the cross. We see our brothers and sisters all doing this, and even as we taste that bread and wine in our mouths, **it is what we don't see that is remarkable!** This miracle of grace which Jesus did that night when He was betrayed that night leading up to His death, it happens again and again as each communicant receives that bread and wine. It is a constantly recurring miracle, but it isn't just the fact that Jesus in a supernatural manner makes His body and blood present in, with, and under the bread and wine that is remarkable, but what Jesus accomplished with His sacrifice.

This is the –

II. Body and Blood of the New Covenant.

Again the significance of the timing of the institution of the Lord's Supper is remarkable. The Old Covenant was

the covenant of the law given through Moses at Sinai. All these things the children of Israel had pledged that they would faithfully fulfill in serving the Lord. It had been delivered to them with the promise, “**Do this and you shall live!**” But they did not keep this covenant! Indeed, the Old Testament records a horrible pattern of violating the covenant they had made with the Lord.

The Old Covenant was flawed. It could not bring life to those in need. The flaw was not that the Old Covenant was unholy, or flawed in its claim that obedience would bring life. Its flaw was in the fact that sinful man could never keep the law of God, and so we all have sinned, we have all fallen short of the holiness that the law requires. There is none that do good, no not one (Psalm 14). The Old Covenant just couldn't work, because one side of the covenant couldn't fulfill what they had promised.

It was necessary for a New Covenant to be put in place. God presented this covenant in the promise of a Savior who would come into the world. This Savior would not only perfectly fulfill the law's demands in every way, but would also provide the perfect sacrifice for sin to atone for the sins of the world.

Jesus words used to institute the Lord's Supper are precious for our souls. “**This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many**” (v.28). The new covenant has been fulfilled by Christ. He is the world's Redeemer. God sees the covenant fulfilled in every way by the death of His Son. That message is a prominent component of the Lord's Supper. It is the message that Jesus wanted us all to comprehend by faith.

The application of that truth comes to us with the understanding that Jesus' body and blood were --

III. Given and Shed for the Remission of Sins. .

There is another spirit that works on our souls, that is the devil who would possess our souls. He is the great accuser. He would lead you into sin just so he might torment your soul. He wants your conscience to be troubled, so troubled in fact that you might despair, and conclude that God could not forgive you. Yes, you hear the gospel proclaimed that Jesus takes sins away, and that God is merciful to forgive, but you wonder, or doubt if that could actually include you. That is why the devil seeks to deceive us and to bring us into shameful sin and vice. He not only wants others to think that we are hypocrites. He wants us to think that of ourselves. He wants us to conclude that our own faith is false, and that we are only fooling ourselves.

Jesus comes to you in the Sacrament of the Altar. In the Lord's Supper He brings to you, personally, individually the very body and true blood which He offered upon the cross for the remission your sins. As you receive the sacrament you are assured that just as the miracle of the real presence of Jesus' body and blood in the sacrament does not ever run out, **NOT EVER**, so also the remission of sins purchased by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross does not ever run out, **NOT EVER**. The forgiving grace of Christ which brings to you the blessed assurance of peace with God doesn't run out, **NOT EVER**.

And so what is the conclusion of the matter? The conclusion that is brought to you through the Lord's

Supper is the conclusion Jesus anticipated even before He walked out to Gethsemane. He said:

Mathew 26:29 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

Even as Jesus abides with us in His grace here in time, so we shall see Him in His glory in heaven for all eternity. This was Jesus' gracious good will for His disciples that first Maundy Thursday. This is Jesus' gracious good will for you tonight. As you come to the Lord's Table come knowing that here you receive His body and blood given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins. Here you receive His peace and the assurance of everlasting life.

AMEN.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.