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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
April 1, 2021
Maundy Thursday

Responsive Reading: Psalm 32

Passion Reading: Dying Thief, "It is Finished!"

Hymns: 149; 157; 163:1-4; 173:1

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

Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 11:23-29

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵ In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me."

²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

²⁷ Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." (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: It's All About Our Redemption

We continue that theme in this our Maundy Thursday meditation even though this evening's meditation isn't taken directly from Luther's explanation of the 2nd Article to the Apostle's Creed. This evening we consider the events in the upper room surrounding the Last Supper, the last true Passover Supper. With that feast of the Passover Jesus did something special, instituted something that is very precious to His Church on earth, and should be very precious to each of us as individual believers.

Indeed, what He did fits well with our broader theme, *It's all About Our Redemption!* Jesus communicates that blessing of redemption to us directly and personally, might we even say intimately through the blessings of the Sacrament of the Altar; what we commonly refer to as "The Lord's Supper." What the Spirit reveals through the sacrament concerning our redemption is that --

THEME: Jesus gave His Body and His Blood for Me!

I. Jesus started the Lord's Supper.

We use the word "institution" regarding the beginning of the Lord's Supper because it was something Jesus did with care and determination. He not only started the Lord's Supper He established it as something His disciples of all ages were to do, and do just as He presented it to us. So, Jesus presented this new Supper and how it was to be carried on with care.

This is confirmed by the Apostle Paul in our text. Paul needed to address certain abuses concerning the practice of the Lord's Supper in the Corinthian congregation to whom the words of our text were written. To establish his authority to teach them concerning the Sacrament, Paul began by making it clear that he didn't receive this information second hand. Our text reports:

1 Corinthians 11:23-25 "For I received **from the Lord** that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the

new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.”

Through direct revelation Jesus communicated to Paul the truth about the institution and practice of the Lord’s Supper. The words of our Lord are accurately recorded for our edification that the truth of what Jesus did might be established for all time.

It was on that night in which Jesus was betrayed. Jesus and His disciples were gathered in that Upper Room where they were observing the last Passover Supper before all was fulfilled in Jesus’ sufferings and death. That is what the true meaning of the Passover was all about. While it commemorated the deliverance of the Children of Israel from slavery in Egypt, from the very first time it was observed in Egypt, it looked forward to the coming of the true Paschal Lamb who was perfect in every way, and of whom no bones were to be broken.

As they kept the Passover the sacrifice was to be made in the temple where the blood of the lamb was offered at the altar as the symbol of Christ’s blood. Then the lamb was prepared and all in the household ate of the sacrifice, symbolizing how the sacrifice was including them in its benefits and blessings. Now all was to be fulfilled in Jesus, the Lamb of God who was to be offered upon the altar of the cross for the sins of the world. There was no longer any purpose for the Passover to continue. It was a shadow of things to come, but the substance was in Christ. (Colossians 2:17)

So it was that as the Passover feast neared its end that Jesus started a new and better Supper. It was new for it was not a duplication of the Passover but a replacement. It was better because it didn’t symbolize a sacrifice that someday would be made but was part and parcel of that real sacrifice of Jesus’ body and blood. Even as the believers of old ate of the symbolic sacrifice that was presented every year because it was only a symbol, so the believers in the New Testament age are presented with the actual sacrifice of Jesus’ body and blood in a supernatural way. Again, while believers of old received a symbol of the forgiveness that would be secured by the coming Messiah, we, the believers in the New Testament age, **receive forgiveness from Christ Himself**, even as

we partake of His body and blood that was given and shed for us for the forgiveness of sins.

There is a clear message, an important message connected to the sacrament of the Altar.

II. You Proclaim the Lord's Death.

Paul wrote in our text: *“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.”* (v. 26)

This isn't simply a matter of acknowledging that Jesus died on the cross. It is all about the why Jesus died, and what was accomplished in His death.

This evening we will once again celebrate the Lord's Supper and we will proclaim the Lord's death. We will testify that Jesus died for us, for our salvation. He died to appease the wrath of God over our sin. He did this once and for all by giving Himself into death, the holy and righteous for the lost sinner. We proclaim that His death was the propitiation for not only our sins, but also the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:1-2) The cross of Christ lies at the very heart of the gospel. The cross of Christ lies at the center of our faith. In his Small Catechism Luther taught us regarding the benefit of Sacrament, *“God gives forgiveness of sins, life and salvation through the Sacrament. For where there is forgiveness of sins there is also life and salvation.”* That is what we proclaim for all who see and know that we celebrate the Lord's Supper as an integral part of our Christian worship.

We proclaim the Lord's death as **often** as we eat this bread and drink this cup! What we find in these words is Paul's instruction regarding the use of the sacrament. While Scripture clearly presents the Sacrament of Baptism to be done once, and then held in our remembrance, we see here that the Lord's Supper is something to be done **regularly**, otherwise that expression, *as often as you do this* would be nonsensical.

We ought to look at this from both the perspective of the congregation and the perspective of the individual believer. Of course, for Christians to receive the sacrament regularly it must be presented regularly. Many have long discussions about just how

often a congregation should include the Lord's Supper in the worship service, and there are different associated practices. That is all within Christian liberty, **but it ought to be regular**, so the individual Christian has ample opportunity to receive the Lord's Supper. If done in a haphazard way people will not know to prepare, or even be present for the Sacrament.

Now a word concerning the diligence of individual Christians to receive the sacrament. It is a blessing; one that brings peace and strengthening to the soul. It is something that came to us from Christ Himself, which He presents to us that we might be blessed **by Him**. It should not be neglected. It should not be regarded as if it were insignificant. Too many Christians deprive themselves of this important and special presentation of the gospel when it should be cherished as the rare blessing of salvation it is.

To receive its full blessing there needs to be --

III. Proper Reception.

Paul writes in our text:

1 Corinthians 11:27-29 "Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

One immediately notes that receiving this sacrament in an unworthy manner is possible, and when that occurs **guilt** is associated with that reception rather than forgiveness. That should get our attention. Again, it gets our attention as a congregation of Christians presenting the Sacrament. It needs to be done with care, that a Christian congregation does not encourage an improper reception of the Lord's Supper that may be to one's harm rather than blessing.

One might ask, "How can one know?" Precautions can be taken. It starts with instruction; that those who are being communed have been taught the truth concerning the Sacrament. Many churches, **MANY** churches fail to comprehend, and therefore fail to teach the

truth of the Lord's Supper. The very things that Paul emphasizes in these verses of our text, Scripture truth **drawn from the words of our Lord Jesus Himself**, are found unreasonable, therefore they are found to be less than true by many Christian denominations. They fail to do what Paul exclaims as essential to a proper and worthy reception of the Lord's Supper, they fail to discern the presence of the Lord's body and blood.

Secondly, Paul teaches us that we need to examine ourselves before we receive the Lord's Supper. People need to understand that the Lord's Supper is for the **penitent** sinner. The penitent grieves over his sin., is repulsed by it, and seeks to turn away from sin as he turns to the Savior for forgiveness. Too many are invited to find assurance of peace in **impenitence**. Those who are hoping to find comfort for continuing in sin are most certainly receiving the sacrament in an unworthy manner. Such a one eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body, the precious sacrifice offered for our sins.

It is all about our Redemption! When we come forward to the receive the very body and true blood which Jesus offered upon the cross, we are receiving the redemption price offered for our salvation. One might say this is the same gospel we hear in the sermon, or that we read in the Scriptures, and that is absolutely true, and yet in the Sacrament it comes so personally. Christ comes to ME with His body and His blood, given and shed for ME for the forgiveness of MY sins. This personal, intimate application of the gospel to this sin burdened soul pushes aside those false doubts, "Could it be for ME that He died?" Yes, we each may know the peace of sins forgiven. He died for our redemption, and in this blessed sacrament He comes to us to proclaim, "Yes, your sins are forgiven." You, too, have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Oh, blest is each believing guest
Who in this promise finds his rest;

For Jesus will in love abide
With those who do in Him confide."

(The Lutheran hymnal 163:6)

AMEN.

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