

St. John's Lutheran Church
Maundy Thursday
April 01, 2021

"Given and Shed For You"

In the name of our risen Lord and Savior, ✠ Jesus Christ. Amen.

Matthew 26:17-30 Theme: **"Do This in Remembrance of Me"**

The first Passover came the night before the children of Israel walked through blood-stained doorways into freedom and life as God's people. Passover was the night of the remembrance meal. The hard-unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, the roasted lamb; the lamb's blood painted on the door frames and lintels of their homes. It was a night of judgment and death as the Angel of Death sought out the blood. Under the blood of the lamb, the Israelites were saved. Death passed over them. Without the sacrifice of a perfect male lamb and the shedding of its blood, they would have died! This foreshadowed Christ the perfect male Lamb of God who would shed His blood once for all.

The Lord spoke to Moses and the Israel community saying: **"This day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance" (Exodus 12:14)**. For years afterward, the Israelites killed a Passover Lamb and ate the Feast of Unleavened Bread to remember their deliverance from Pharaoh and the Egyptians.

About 1,600 years later Jesus sat at a table with His disciples. It was the Lord's Passover. Jesus took the bread of the Passover meal, the hard, unleavened bread like the bread that the Israelites ate on that first night of freedom from bondage. Christ took the bread, gave thanks, and broke it into pieces and gave it to His disciples saying: **"Take, eat; this is My body." (Matthew 26:26b)**. Jesus told them what we could not know for ourselves or by our own reason, senses, or by science. This bread is the sacrificial Body of Christ which would soon be given into death on the Cross **"for you."**

This bread was used to deliver His disciples then and us now. Jesus, the Bread of Life, the Living Bread, which came down from heaven as manna to feed His people in the wilderness continues to come to us and feed us. The Body of Christ which is in, with, and under the Bread continues to save us from sin, death, and the devil. But blood must also be shed to make atonement for our sins! To remove sin! Why blood?

Moses explained: **"The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11)**. Blood is life! This blood of the new covenant is the blood that was poured out **"for you,"** in your place, for your sins, for forgiveness. Where the blood of the Lamb flows, death passes over. It gives life!

The seriousness of sin is seen in the fact that blood must be shed to make atonement for sin. Life's blood must be given. Someone or something must give its life. God's wrath needed satisfaction. But God didn't require that we die and shed our own blood, you and me, the ones guilty of sin. God, in His grace, and love for you allowed the sacrifice of animals through the Old Covenant and now the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, through the New Covenant.

Christ, **"took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'" (Matthew 26:26-28)**. The blood of the new covenant is given to drink as wine. When used in this way wine finds its ultimate purpose; delivering the blood of Jesus to the disciple's lips and to your lips and joining together all who drink His cup in a blood covenant.

The disciples understood the necessity of shedding blood according to the old covenant. But they didn't understand the meaning of Christ's words as He lifted up the cup and spoke of His blood of the new covenant that first Maundy Thursday. They didn't understand that Christ was to be the once for all sacrifice and that by the shedding of His blood and by the sacrifice of His body all who believe in Him would be saved.

The body and blood of Christ received at this altar is the food of immortality. When we eat and drink of it in a worthy manner we are forgiven and receive eternal life. Jesus put an end to all the Old Testament sacrifices. Jesus became the Passover Lamb. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The old covenant has been replaced by the new covenant the true Body and Blood of Christ shed on the Cross of Calvary.

We are all conceived in sin. We are all born in sin. We all live and die in sin, because of sin. **“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8).** What must we do before we can be forgiven for our sins and come to the Table of the Lord? We must recognize that we are sinners and recognize our need for a Savior. We must repent of our sins to be forgiven and to be washed clean by the blood of the perfect male Lamb Christ Jesus.

We must confess our sins for we are by nature sinful and unclean. **“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).** We Justly deserve God’s present and eternal punishment. But for the sake of God’s only Son, Jesus Christ, He has mercy on us. “Forgives us, renews us, and leads us, so that we may delight in, His will and walk in His ways to the glory of His holy name.”

Sin entered the world through Adam and Eve. Since then, all mankind has been steeped in sin and the only way out is through Christ’s death on the Cross. And it’s through the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood at the Lord’s Supper that we are given forgiveness, eternal life, and strengthened in our faith.

This spiritual food is also a food of remembrance as Christ tells us in Luke: **“This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19).** In 1 Corinthians we’re told: **“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26).** When we eat the body of Christ and drink His blood it calls to mind all that He is and all He has done **“for you.”** We are reminded of His incarnation, His life, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension. This is how Jesus wishes

to be remembered by our receiving the fruits of His Cross as our food and our drink through which we are strengthened and preserved in the one true faith unto life everlasting.

This also is how Christ remembers us. As we are joined with Him through His True Body and Blood. This food of remembrance marks us, just as our Baptism marks us. We are His children. We are redeemed by His death on the Cross and by His resurrection.

When we come to this altar and receive this Blessed Sacrament, we hold the body of Christ in our hands. We drink His blood. We hear His Words proclaimed. We taste Him. We smell Him. We see Him. He enters our bodies. He enters our lives and into our death. He remembers us. Remembered we are forgiven and raised. Through Christ’s Body and Blood, we have abundant life!

Only Christ, true God, and true man can give us His body to eat and His blood to drink. We are united with Him in His death and life through His Body and Blood. He is the vine and we are the branches. Apart from Christ, we can do nothing!

Through this Holy food and drink you are refreshed, renewed, and restored in faith toward Him and in fervent love toward one another. You receive the gifts of Christ. Heaven and earth are united. Christ’s real presence is there before you. In faith, you see His image now at the Lord’s Supper and on the Last Day you will see His real presence in visible form as **“every eye will see Him” (Revelation 1:7b).**

Christ gives His all to you! To save you! All of you! Nothing can separate you from His love. In His Supper, at His table, Christ gives you the gifts of His Cross and says, **“Take, eat; this is My body; drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant; do this in remembrance of Me.”** There is no greater love! Christ laid down His life **“for you,”** for your sins that you may have life and have it to the fullest! In the name of Jesus. To God be the glory. Be still and know he is God. **Amen.**