

Sermon – Luke 22.14-20 (Maundy Thursday – 2024)

**Let's Eat!**

Let us pray: O Lord Jesus Christ, we thank You, that of Your infinite mercy You have instituted this Your Sacrament, in which we eat Your body and drink Your blood: Grant us, we beseech You, by Your Holy Spirit, that we may not receive this gift unworthily, but that we may confess our sins, remember Your agony and death, believe the forgiveness of sin, and day by day grow in faith and love, until we obtain eternal salvation; through You, who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. Amen.

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

<sup>14</sup> When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him.

<sup>15</sup> Then He said to them, "With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;

<sup>16</sup> "for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

<sup>17</sup> Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide *it* among yourselves;

<sup>18</sup> "for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

<sup>19</sup> And He took bread, gave thanks and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

<sup>20</sup> Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.

Dear fellow redeemed,

It was the day for their redemption! They will be delivered from their bondage of Egypt. A final plague has been announced; a plague that will force Pharaoh to let Israel go. It will be a dreadful one, for God will send the Angel of Death, the Destroyer of the First Born, who will bring death throughout the land. And so as the Israelites are preparing to leave their homes into a wilderness to gain freedom from their enemies all the while while death is taking place all around them, what does God say, "Let's eat!"

God established the Passover meal. Each family would kill a 1-year old lamb without blemish. They took the blood of the lamb and smeared it on the doorposts and on the lintel. And then they would eat the lamb. Strange time to eat it seems with all that was going on, but this killing and eating of the lamb was very much part of their redemption. It was essential to it. Because of the killing and eating of the lamb, the people were spared from death, and were freed from captivity. It was a special meal. And this Passover meal was to

be celebrated year after year as a remembrance of how God redeemed them and delivered them from bondage through the lamb.

Let's go to another point in time. The hostility was mounting. The disciples already were wary about Jesus being in Jerusalem. They knew that there were important people there who wanted Him dead. And Jesus knew what was about to take place. This was the night on which He was going to be betrayed. And from there trial, beating, mockery, cross, and death, in a very short amount of time.

And what does Jesus say? "Let's eat." **"With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."** Jesus participates in this yearly meal with His disciples. But this is a Passover meal like no other ever celebrated, because this Passover meal has met its fulfillment.

How so? As I already mentioned, the Passover meal was meant to look back at God's work of saving the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. But it also pointed forward—forward to another meal, not of an unblemished lamb 1-year old. Rather a meal of the unblemished Lamb of God, who delivers us sinners from the bondage to sin, death, and Satan.

On this night, Jesus established this most holy meal, which deserves our highest esteem. He established it in sight of what He had before Him. He is the Lamb and he knows that He soon will be slaughtered for our redemption, that we may be brought back to God from our captivity to sin, death, and the devil. His shed blood saves us.

And that we may be made partakers of the redemption won by His death, He established this supper—the Sacrament of the Altar. No this isn't just a remembrance meal. But here is offered for you under the bread and wine the true body and blood of the Lamb of God who takes away your sins. And eating the true body and blood of Christ in faith, you receive that deliverance Christ won by His sacrifice, the forgiveness of all your sins, and life with God.

And so, you who bear that old Adam in you, that daily produces in you sinful thoughts, words, and deeds, that seeks to bring you back under bondage of sin. You know the sins, the jealousy you have in your hearts, the ungratefulness to God when you do not get thing the way that you want, or the lust that compels you to take another look. These are the tentacles of bondage. And these will take us down, hold us, and lead us to our condemnation. We need the Lamb for our salvation. We need His Sacrament to make us partakers of His deliverance and abundant redemption.

And if you feel the weight of judgment upon you, and you feel within you the filth of your sins and the stench of death within the limbs of your sinful flesh, if you feel unworthy of the grace of God, then Jesus with utmost compassion over your troubled heart which He redeemed, tenderly invites you, "Let's eat." The Lamb who was sacrificed for sinners is given exactly for such as you to forgive you, and if you have forgiveness from God you are completely free of His judgment. In fact, He is glad to have you in close communion with Him as you partake of Christ in the Sacrament. The grace of God, by definition, is unworthily shown to us. He loves you.

And if you keep struggling with sin, struggling in your fight for the sanctified life, and feel like you only have disappointed your God. Your Redeemer, calls you, "Dear friend, let's eat." It is because the Lamb has given His life for you that the Father is pleased with you. And this supper assures you of the Father's love for you, and strengthens you in your Christian lives.

And if you are troubled by the perverse and hostile world around you, and the devil afflicts you and threatens you with all sorts of evil and death, the victorious Lamb in whom you have redemption, invites you, "Let's eat." For in the Sacrament, you are joined intimately to the living Christ, who is with you, and will return again in glory. You are saved by His sacrifice, and each time you eat of His body and blood, you are boldly confessing in the presence of your enemies the Lord's death that has saved you until He returns again.

How greatly we are in need of the salvation of the Lamb and His Holy Supper. And on this night the Lamb. And we adore Him for His sacrifice and for His Sacrament. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.