

# Sermon for Maundy Thursday

**Date:** April 9, 2020

**Location:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

**Old Testament:** Exodus 12:1-14

**Epistle Reading:** 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

**Gospel Reading:** Mark 14:22-25

**Sermon Text:** Mark 14:22-25

**Sermon Title:** "More Than Meets the Eye"

**Hymns:**

CW – Our Eyes Behold the Savior's Face

LSB 609 – Jesus Sinners Doth Receive

LSB 617 – O Lord, We Praise Thee

**Absolution:**

LSB 609 – Jesus Sinners Doth Receive

**Distribution:**

LSB 435 – Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain

LSB 431 – Not All the Blood of Beasts

**Liturgy:**

Divine Service: Creative Worship



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**Text: Mark 14:22-25**

As they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

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Grace to you in Jesus' name. Amen.

Tonight, there's blood all over the place. It is in our liturgy, hymns, and Scripture Readings. You need to look under all this blood by hearing the Word of God to find that there is more there than meets the eye.

Our Old Testament Reading sets the stage for the first Passover. The Lord had brought nine plagues on Egypt; the Passover marked the tenth and final one. To every house that was not protected by the blood the Lord came and struck that house, but He passed over houses marked by the blood of a lamb. This was such an important event that God commanded His people to celebrate the Passover every year to remember what He had done, and to keep in their minds something of what He would do.

Dwelling only on the blood and violence, it might cause question to wonder. It shocks our eyes. What kind of God would bring such wrath?... but then look deeper. There's more here than meets the eye. After Moses announced the Passover, Scripture records, "The people bowed their heads and worshiped."<sup>1</sup> They recognized that when the Lord speaks the only proper response is worship.

The Passover is all about the First Commandment: "You shall have no other gods."<sup>2</sup> The Lord said concerning the Passover, "On all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments. I am the LORD."<sup>3</sup> The tenth plague was divine warfare against the Egyptian false gods and the oppressors of His people. Later in Exodus, God said:

I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate Me.<sup>4</sup>

This means that under all the Egyptian blood, you should not see innocent victims, but impenitent sinners receiving just judgment from the one true Holy and living God. All of God's acts of judgment—from the flood to the Passover to the conquest of Canaan—are intended to warn us about the consequences of our sin. They are previews of the final judgment. This judgment is what you deserve. For your sins, for every time you have not feared, loved, and trusted in the Lord your God with all your heart, you deserve the same thing.

Israel deserved the same fate as the Egyptians, but now look at the blood of the Passover lambs and see more there than meets the eye. The blood of lambs would

1 Exodus 12:27

2 Exodus 20:3

3 Exodus 12:12

4 Exodus 20:5

appear to be a horrible mess, but God attached His Word of grace to the lambs' blood and gave His people a means of salvation. Under the blood of Passover lambs, you do not find any worthiness in Israel, but only the promise of deliverance from the gracious and merciful Lord.

This leads us to find more than meets the eye in the Upper Room on the night when Jesus was betrayed. It was a Passover Meal, so Israel's deliverance from Egypt was in view, and the recently shed blood of Passover lambs would be fresh on the disciples' minds. Surely they had celebrated this meal many times from when they were children, and they knew the Passover liturgy by heart. They thought they knew what was coming as they sat with Jesus, but there would be way more than meets the eye, when Jesus, the Lord of Israel, changed the Passover liturgy.

The Bible records, "As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them."<sup>5</sup> So far, so good. No surprises yet, but then Jesus said, "Take; this is My body."<sup>6</sup> The disciples must have looked at one another with bewildered glances. Then Jesus seems to slip back into the regular liturgy: "He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank of it." Okay, back to normal, the disciples must have thought, but then another change. Jesus said to them, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."<sup>7</sup>

At this unprecedented Passover Meal, Jesus teaches three things to His disciples.

- 1) Soon His body would be given and His blood shed on the cross. They should see His death as a ransom for the all humanity. This is God's final judgment on sin, and from that day forward, the only sin that condemns to Hell remains rejecting Jesus and His death for the life of the world.
- 2) Jesus teaches there is more than meets the eye under the simple bread and wine of an ordinary Passover Meal. Now, by the power of His Word, the bread the wine are the means by which His true body and blood are carried to our mouths. By His word He instituted the Lord's Supper for His Church, to proclaim His death until He comes.<sup>8</sup>

5 Mark 14:22

6 Mark 14:22

7 Mark 14:24

8 1 Corinthians 11:26

3) Jesus was teaching them the Passover and the sacrificial system of Israel were predictions of His once-for-all sacrifice on the cross. Now these Old Testament ceremonies must give way to the New Testament in His blood.

The Word of God was fulfilled when God's holy spotless Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ, offered His life as a ransom for us, so that sinners would not have to get what they deserve but instead what Jesus has earned for them. Everything in the Old Testament was pointing forward to the coming of Jesus.

There's another peculiar part of the Old Testament that finds its fulfillment here. The Lord had told Israel:

If any one of the house of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn among them eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.<sup>9</sup>

The blood of animals in the Old Testament was reserved for payment for sin, but the prohibition on its consumption would end with the institution of the Lord's Supper, the New Testament in Christ's blood, now and until Christ returns is the atoning blood fed to God's people in, with, and under the wine of Holy Communion.

What is in that blood that doesn't meet the eye? Life! Life eternal! The blood of Jesus delivers to us the forgiveness of sins and serves as the antidote to death. God said, "The life is in the blood," and that is what Jesus' disciples receive as the life-giving blood of Jesus is given to us in the Lord's Supper.

As you come in faith to Jesus to feed on His body given and His blood shed for you, Jesus promises:

Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.<sup>10</sup>

Amen.

9 Leviticus 17:10-11

10 John 6:54-56