

Sermon for A Year with the Catechism The Lord's Supper How to Prepare for the Lords Supper

Date: April 3, 2022

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

Old Testament: Exodus 24:3-11

Epistle Reading: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Gospel Reading: Mark 14:12-26



Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Sermon Title: How to Prepare for the Lords Supper

Introit: Psalm 86: 10-13,16; Antiphon: Psalm 86:15

Hymns:

LSB 354 – Arise, O Christian People

LSB 516 – Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying

LSB 560 – Christ Crucified, I Come *(Vocal Quartet)*

LSB 629 – What is This Bread

LSB 503 – O Day Full of Grace

LSB 531 – Hail, Thou Once Despised Jesus

Songs:

He Knows My Name - Francesca Battistelli

Image Of God - We Are Messengers

Sanctus (Holy)

Agnus Dei (Michael W Smith)

All Who Are Thirsty

Yes I Will - Vertical Worship

Liturgy:

Divine Service I, p. 151

Liturgy:

Creative Worship



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Text: 1 Corinthians 11:23–26

I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, “This is My Body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way also He took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

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Pronunciation for difficult words are contained in { }

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

I like hearing the reading from Exodus, because even though it happened a long time ago, it is still so relevant to us today. Think about what happened.

First: The people of Israel are chosen by God and rescued from their slavery in Egypt, the results of that rescue being: their passing through the waters of the Red Sea, which, the New Testament tells us, is their baptism.¹

Next: When they get to Mt. Sinai, they are ‘catechized.’ We read, “Moses came and told the people all the Words of the Lord.” He taught them. Once taught, what happens next? They speak their confirmation vow: “All the words that the Lord has spoken we will do.”

Kind of like us when, in the Rite of Confirmation (which we will see next week), we are asked, “Do you intend to continue steadfast in this confession and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?” And we promise to do so.

And then, on the basis, not on their vow, but on the covenant God establishes with His people, by means of the blood sprinkled on the altar and then on the people, what finally happens? They eat and drink with God. They commune with God.

Do you see the pattern? Something very much like that is what is still happening among the people of God in the Church today. It will happen here before this altar next week.

First: God chooses us and rescues us from our slavery to sin, and we are Baptized into our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then we are catechized, or taught the words of the Lord. And then when we are taught, we speak our confirmation vow.

And then on the basis, not on our vow, but on the New Covenant, the New Testament, established by God with the Blood of His Son, what happens? We eat and drink with God. We have Holy Communion with God!

Now, what happened on Mt. Sinai is not the exact same thing that happens in our churches. The pattern is the same but what happened on Mt. Sinai with the blood of animals was only the picture, a foretelling, or a pointing to the reality of what would happen later on Mt. Calvary. There it would not be the blood of animals, but the Blood of the Son of God which would be shed to establish the

1 1 Corinthians 10:2

New Testament of God with His people. It would be the Blood of the Son of God which would be shed for the life of the world. After that event things would never be the same.

That is what we are celebrating today. What happened with Jesus in the upper room with His disciples when He gave the gift of His Supper, was the establishment of God's New Testament. The picture, the foretelling, from Mt. Sinai is completed and fulfilled by Jesus, the Son of God, as He eat and drinks with His people, and feeds them the food of the New Testament: His own Body and Blood of the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.

What happens with Jesus is not simply a picture, or a foretelling, or a memorial like at Mt. Sinai. What happens with Jesus is the fulfillment, the reality. That means: for we, who are gathered as the people of God in this place, what continues to happen here at this altar, as Jesus comes to feed us, is also no picture, or foretelling, or simple memorial, but the real thing, the reality. Here, still today, the Son of God comes to feed His people with the food of the New Testament, that being His own Body and Blood.

Now that's absurd to some. It sounds hard for some people to accept or understand, because quite frankly, memorials are easier for us to understand. We have a lot of memorials in our country. State capitals and our nation's capital are full of them.

The Lord's Supper is not just a memorial, and it is important and good, it is not! What happens at a memorial? We think back to a moment in history. We dig into our memory about an event from the past. All the 'doing' is done by us. The memorial doesn't do anything, it's just there, but here in the Lord's Supper, in Holy Communion, we have something much different.

We have not just a picture or a memorial, but the reality. Jesus is here for you. His Body and Blood are here for you. We are really and actually in the presence of God and eat and drink with Him. Jesus said: "This is My Body... This is My Blood..." Jesus said what He meant, and meant what He said.

That, of course, is not the only importance for us! It means the benefits we receive here in Holy Communion: the forgiveness of our sins, life and salvation, do not depend on us and what we do, or on our ability to remember, or reminisce. The benefits depend solely on God and what He does.

Why is that good? Think back to the beginning of this message and the "confirmation vows" I mentioned. The people of Israel at Mt. Sinai said, "All the Words that the Lord has spoken we will do." Standing before God's altar we say,

“We intend to continue steadfast in this confession and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it.” We make these vows before the throne of God.

So how long did it take Israel to break the vow? How steadfast have we been in keeping this vow? What if our standing before God, and our ability to receive His blessings really depended on our keeping our vows? Where would we be?

God does not leave it up to us. He did not simply establish a memorial and tell us to gather together to think about all He has done for us, in the past. In Holy Communion we don't just think about the past. He brings the past to the present. He brings the cross of Calvary here to us and makes us not just rememberers, but participants. It is not our work. It is His work. It is not our remembering, but His remembering. It is not our thoughts journeying to Him, but His journey to us. He is the One who came to us, and comes to us still.

From His body in a manger of hay to His body in a manger of bread. From His blood poured out on a cross to His blood poured out in a chalice. That true Body and Blood, given for you makes all the difference, because it is real and because it is present and because it is powerful. It forgives sins, it gives life, and it promises eternal salvation to all who believe.

We need that personal touch. We need that individual absolution in Holy Communion, because no position of faith is as challenging to believe as the real forgiveness of sins. It sounds too good to be true. It is not.

God wants you to know and be sure, absolutely sure, He has saved you, and forgiven you, and wants you to have no doubt. So here He gives you His pledge, He gives you His very Body and Blood, He gives you forgiveness one-on-one, because it is for you.

Think of it this way: Which would you rather receive: A third-class, bulk mail flyer addressed to “occupant” or A first-class priority letter address specifically to you from someone who loves you?

This Meal is for you. The New Testament in Jesus' Blood is for you. Here, as you eat the Body and drink the Blood of your Lord Jesus Christ, you become one with Him. Here you find the most intimate communion with Him. There is no way to get closer to Him than this.

Joined with your Savior, living in Him and He in you, His Father calls you His child, and we call Him Father. “Our Father who art in heaven...” You have a new life. We who are “dying to live” are given a new life to live. Joined to Jesus we die to sin with Him, in His death on the cross, and then we rise with Him in His

resurrection from the dead to live a new life.² Joined to Jesus. That is the reality in which we live right now.

The very Early Church, in trying to communicate this reality, used the picture of a pelican to represent Jesus. Now, if you've ever seen a pelican, its kind of a goofy looking bird. It doesn't walk or fly very well, and it dives into the water to catch fish a bit clumsily. Isn't that how many people thought of Jesus, as He walked and lived on earth? They really didn't think much of Him.

He had no form or majesty that would make us look at Him. He had nothing in His appearance that would make us desire Him.³

That, however, is not why they chose the pelican as a symbol for Jesus. It was because in times of great need and hunger, a pelican will sacrifice itself for its young. Tearing open its own body to let the babies feed on the flesh and blood rather than have them die.

That is what Jesus does for us. In our great need and hunger for forgiveness, life and salvation, He allowed Himself to be torn open on the cross and has us feed on Him rather than die. As we come to His Table here, and eat and drink His Body and Blood, that is the reality found here. We who are dying to live, are given life, in Christ.

Hear His words again and believe. Then in repentance, and believing, come and receive His Body and Blood, His forgiveness, His life, and His salvation for you.

Sing to the heavens: Christ crucified I come.

Amen.

**Proclaim God's Word,
Encourage one another in faith,
Witness to God's love and
Serve all people**



² Timothy 2:11
³ Isaiah 53:2