

**“Until I Drink It Anew in the Kingdom of God”
Or “Truly a blessed meal”**

Tonight, as you know, is Maundy Thursday. It’s the annual worship service in which we remember those important events that took place the day before Jesus’ death on the cross. There were many important things that happened that evening. But in this brief time we have together this evening, we’re going to focus on the institution of the Lord’s Supper.

But let me start first by asking a question: Do you feel you’re in need of a blessing this evening? We go through seasons of life in this world when we especially feel the curse of sin. That curse always looms over us, but sometimes it’s more evident than at other times. You especially feel the curse of sin when you are in conflict with someone close to you. When a husband and wife are fighting, or parent and child aren’t getting along... when two members of a church don’t see eye to eye... the conflict happens because we aren’t getting what we want. When there is tension in a relationship, you don’t feel blessed, do you?

We feel the curse of sin when we suffer in this world. If you are dealing with health issues, you are faced with the reality that your body isn’t functioning like it was designed. Something is off. When a loved one is sick or hurt, you are reminded that this world is broken. When you hear about yet another tornado touching down in Moore, Oklahoma... or when you hear about a co-pilot intentionally flying a commercial airliner into a mountainside, killing 150 people... you’re not feeling blessed. You feel the curse of living in a sinful world. When you hear about robbery or theft on the evening news, or far worse, when you are the victim of it, you know this world is cursed under sin. When someone you love is dies, the final result of living in a sinful world is especially in your face.

So, how would you like to have the assurance of God’s favor and the benefits of all of his many and varied gifts? Would you like to be reassured in your relationship with him and confident in your standing with him? Would you like to have the confidence that one day you will be in a better place... a perfect place... compliments of God? Then listen carefully today.

All of this God gives through the Lord’s Supper. It is **truly a blessed meal**. What we will discover this evening is that it is meal that reminds us of amazing blessings of the past and leads us to cherish them even more. It is a meal that gives us critically important blessings from God right now in the present. And it is a meal that prompts us look forward to blessings in the future.

We heard the text already in our Gospel lesson from Mark 14. We heard how Jesus, during the Passover meal, **took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take it; this is my body.”**

23 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it.

24 “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,” he said to them.

In this special meal, then, we are reminded of and connected to amazing blessings of the past. That’s really what the Passover meal was that they were celebrating that night. It reminded the Israelites of blessings God had given 1500 years earlier. While they were slaved in Egypt, God promised he would set his people free. The Pharaoh was stubborn and would not let God’s people go. Plague after plague failed to change his mind. Then a spectacular 10th plague was

announced by God that would finally break the back of the Egyptians and grant the Israelites freedom.

The 10th plague was horrific. God said that the firstborn son in every household would die. In fact, he even said the firstborn of the cattle would die too. And this plague was not limited to the Egyptians. God said that the firstborn in all of the land would die... that included the Israelites. However, God provided a way to spared from the angel of death. God told the Israelites that they must sacrifice a one year old lamb without blemish or defect. Its blood would was to painted all around the doorposts of their house. That house would be spared from death.

So, yes, Passover was a celebration of freedom from slavery. But even more directly it was a celebration of being saved from God's wrath and from death. It was a clear reminder every year for 1500 years that deliverance from the wrath of God requires the death of an innocent substitute.

No lamb ever truly satisfied the wrath of God. It was a foreshadowing of the perfect, innocent Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who would take away sins of the world and turn away the wrath of God by the shedding of his blood as a substitute for the sins of the people.

On that evening when Jesus celebrated the Passover with his disciples, he gave them a new meal with a new reason to look back and thank God for his blessings. When Jesus gave his body and blood, he said, "**Do this in remembrance of me.**" When we receive the Lord's Supper we remember. We remember Jesus' perfect life. For him to be our lamb of sacrifice, he had to be a perfect sacrifice, or else his death would be for his own sins. And he was indeed perfect. To his enemies, Jesus once said, "**Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?**" They could not! He was blameless and perfect. We remember then how he gave that perfect and innocent body given and shed his holy blood for all of our sins. We remember the perfect sacrifice Jesus gave on the cross 2,000 years ago. We remember what it looked like for Jesus to suffer under the wrath of God. We remember his blood shed. We remember his death as the full payment for sin.

So tonight as we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we look back at the past and remember the payment for sin made by Jesus, and we fell a connection to Christians who have lived and died over the past 2,000 years who have believed these same promises. We look back and we know we are blessed.

But the Lord's Supper is not just a looking back. It's not just a remembrance. There are real, present blessings received when you receive communion. Satan likes to try to lead you to despair... so we doubt that God's blessings and favor could be directed toward you personally. He whispers to you: "Maybe this blessed people in the past, but it is not for you today." Or he says, "God's forgiveness is for others, but not for you. Your sins are too bad. You are not worthy of his love. And so it is not for you." The Lord's Supper answers these lies:

When you receive the bread and the pastor says what Jesus said, "Take and eat, this *is* the true body of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, given into death for *your* sins" understand that it truly is his body. And when your pastor gives you the wine and says, "Take and drink this is the true blood of your Lord and Savior, shed for the forgiveness of all your sins." Understand that today, now, at that very moment you are truly receiving his blood. And by receiving the very body and blood of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ given and shed *for you*, you are indeed receiving the forgiveness of all of your sins. Today. Now. For *your* personal forgiveness.

Such a close communion with the Lord Jesus Christ certainly requires special preparation. Scripture is clear that we need to examine ourselves before Communion. 1. Have you sinned against God and your neighbor. (Confess.) 2. Are you sorry for your sins?

(Contrition) 3. Do you trust the Jesus is your Savior from sin? (Faith) 4. Do you believe that his body and blood are truly present as he says? 5. Do you sincerely desire to change your sinful life? These questions prepare our hearts to receive Christ's body for our benefit, rather than our harm. And that benefit is a present benefit... a present blessing... TODAY... *for you*.

A remembrance of celebration of Jesus salvation which he accomplished in the past 2,000 years ago on the cross. But also a real blessing in the present as you receive forgiveness together with the body and blood and Christ. And as if all of this wasn't enough, you also receive the assurance, promise and hope of blessings for your eternal future! Because Jesus also said: **"I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."** In the Lord's Supper we are encouraged to keep an eye toward the future when we will eat and drink with Jesus in his eternal kingdom!

So much comfort is packed into the little word, "UNTIL." I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine UNTIL that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God." That means you will be dining with Jesus again someday. I mean *with Jesus*. Directly in his presence, having dinner with Jesus in a banquet and celebration that never end.

The Lord's Supper keeps us looking forward to Jesus second coming when he will put an end to this sinful world and we will begin an eternity in his presence that never ends!

We don't know what that heavenly banquet will look like exactly. We haven't yet seen or experienced anything remotely like it. It won't be a meal where we eat with Jesus sacramentally. It won't be a meal where we'll just have to *believe* Jesus is there. We will see Jesus face to face. We won't need to examine ourselves before those meals with Jesus. There will be no more sin. We will be confirmed in holiness. We will be wearing white robes of righteousness provided by Jesus himself. We will celebrate perfect unity in heaven. We will be overwhelmed with joy... a joy that never ends! There's a hymn in our hymnal that we'll be singing on Easter Sunday. It summarizes the future feast in heaven with Jesus with these beautiful words.

At the Lamb's high feast we sing
Praise to our victorious King,
Who has washed us in the tide
Flowing from his pierced side. Alleluia! Amen. (CW 141:1)

So dear friends, do you feel you're in need of a blessing this evening? At the Lord's table, remember and cherish the past blessing Jesus accomplished at the cross and guaranteed at the empty tomb. Enjoy and celebrate the present blessing of sins forgiven and your connection to Christ being strengthened. Anticipate, and receive the hope of the future blessings that are guaranteed when we join Jesus in eternity eat with him at the Lamb's high feast! Amen!

A TRULY BLESSED MEAL
Cherish blessings of the past
Enjoy the blessings of the present
Look forward to the blessings of the future.

Exodus 12:21-30

21 Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. 22 Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. 23 When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.

24 “Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. 25 When you enter the land that the Lord will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. 26 And when your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ 27 then tell them, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.’” Then the people bowed down and worshiped. 28 The Israelites did just what the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron.

29 At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. 30 Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead.

Mark 14:12-26

The Lord’s Supper

12 On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus’ disciples asked him, “Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?”

13 So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. 14 Say to the owner of the house he enters, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ 15 He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.”

16 The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

17 When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. 18 While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, “I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me.”

19 They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, “Surely not I?”

20 “It is one of the Twelve,” he replied, “one who dips bread into the bowl with me. 21 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”

22 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take it; this is my body.”

23 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it.

24 “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,” he said to them. 25 “I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God.”

26 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.