

Maundy Thursday Sermon April 14, 2017

Sermon Text: 1 Cor 11:23-29

Sermon Theme: Turn to Jesus: For the Forgiveness He Gives.

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴ 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." ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

²⁷ Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.

²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.

We often feel loved when people go beyond saying they love us, to showing us they love us. When children are little they show their love by coloring pictures for mom or dad, grandma or grandpa. Then they run up and give them to grandma and grandpa with a big hug. For a child these are important ways to show love.

As we get older the ways we show our love might change. We buy gifts for the one we love: flowers, chocolates, jewelry, and engagement rings.

The way we show love might change again after we are married or have children. Love might show itself with a late night feeding, changing an extra diaper, making dinner, doing the dishes, or even a surprise date night.

Saying we love someone is important, but we often feel that someone loves us when they show us they love us.

Jesus told us he loved us many times. Jesus also showed us that love in many ways. Jesus love carried him to the cross and on that cross we see just how much love was willing to do for us.

Jesus also shows us his love in Holy Communion. He shows that his love lasts for much longer than a moment, his love lasts forever. In Holy Communion, Jesus shows us love by inviting us to come into his presence to know and feel the love and forgiveness that he wants to give to us.

God is a God that has always done more than just saying he loves us, he has always shown his love for all to see. He not only tells us he will preserve us, but he also gives us this wonderful planet to live on and enjoy, and he supplies the earthly things we need every day. He doesn't just say he will protect us, he also provides for us the 10 commandments which lead us away from the danger of temptation to a life of God-pleasing words and actions. Even in death God shows us his love. God's love will not allow us to live in this sinful world forever, he will take us from this world to a world where there is no sin and pain.

The Passover and the Passover meal was another sign of God's love to his people. God had delivered his people from their captivity in Egypt with an amazing display of his almighty power. God had commanded that the people should remember his love by eating the Passover meal every year. By doing this, the people would be joining together with their ancestors in the deliverance that God had brought them. Eating this Passover meal had a dual purpose for the people and was a dual reminder of God's love.

The Passover meal was eaten to look back. The people joined together to look back at God's love and deliverance and to see his amazing and powerful hand in the plagues. They prepared themselves and the meal and ate the meal in the same way their ancestors did to remember the night that God had sent his angel of death to pass through the city, passing over the houses of the faithful, and bringing judgment on the unbelieving. They ate to remember that God had shown his love to them in passing over their houses and saving his people.

The Passover meal was also eaten to look forward to the Lamb, the Messiah whose blood would save them forever. The lamb and its blood was central to the deliverance. The blood of this lamb was spread across the doorframes of the houses of the Jews. They ate to remember that it was through the blood of this lamb, this sign of their belief in trust of their God, that the angel passed over their houses and they were delivered.

They looked forward in hope to the day the blood of the Messiah would do the same for them and deliver them from their sins.

It is during this meal as they were looking forward and backward, at God's promises and love that Jesus tells his disciples that they would not have to look forward anymore for the Messiah to come. He was the Messiah, the Lamb of God, and his blood would be shed to take away the sins of the world. During this meal, he instructed them to eat another meal in which they would join together to remember and celebrate God's promise fulfilled. Paul writes: **The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴ 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." ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

There are a lot of parallels and similarities between the Passover and the Lord's Supper. The Passover meal showed God's love and made a promise to the people, the Lord's Supper shows us Jesus' love and makes a promise to all people of all time.

The Passover was eaten to remember how God delivered his people and set them free from their captivity in Egypt. The Lord's Supper shows us how Jesus delivered us and set us free from our captivity to sin, death and the devil.

During the Passover meal, the love and deliverance of God was seen in powerful ways through the plagues, especially through the angel of death. But the Israelites had no reason to fear those plagues, they were to rejoice because God had brought deliverance through them.

As we eat the Lord's Supper, we hear of Christ's body and blood given and shed for us. As we look at the cross we may see pain and death, but we have no reason to fear it. We can and should rejoice because by Christ's sacrifice on the cross we are delivered.

The Passover pointed ahead to the great blessing of the Messiah and what he would do, the Lord's Supper also points ahead to Messiah and the great blessing he has given to us. In the Lord's Supper we have a brief glimpse and taste of the great blessing of heaven, where all who believe in our Savior will join together in the great heavenly banquet, praising and thanking Jesus for all he has done.

Don't we need love like this in our lives? How often would you like someone to tell you and show you that they love you? I don't know as many of us ever truly get annoyed with someone showing and sharing their love with us. But, we certainly notice it when it stops.

Jesus never stops inviting and offering us his love. Jesus says, "Come, see the love I have for you. See how love took away your sins and be at peace because those sins are forgiven.

And yet, just as Jesus' shows great love for sinners, there is a warning that not everyone who comes to his table will receive that love and mercy. **Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.**

Jesus longs to forgive all who turn to him in repentance, that they may know and experience the joy of the forgiveness he has won for them. Yet, for those who are confused about this Holy Supper, who do not know what it means, or what Jesus is offering, for those who don't believe that Jesus is their Savior, or for those who are living their unbelief by refusing to repent of their sins, there is no such promise of hope and comfort in this sacrament. It is better for those who do not understand what the Lord is offering and bringing to repentant sinners to stay away from the Lord's altar rather than to make a mockery of the blood and sacrifice of the Savior and to bring judgment on themselves.

These are pretty strong words aren't they? Do they include you and me? As we come at Jesus invitation and examine ourselves, what do we see? Do we believe that we are sinners before God? Do we believe that Jesus died to take away our sins? Do we believe that Jesus is the only way to heaven? Do we believe that through this sacrament that we receive the body and blood, together with the bread and wine and through these Christ works to strengthen our faith and give us the forgiveness life and salvation he brings? Do we believe that we are proclaiming all that God says in the Bible about Jesus is real and true and that confession of faith and hope unifies us as a body of believers? If we have answered no to any of these questions, why? What do we believe? Is what we believe what the Bible teaches us?

As we examine ourselves we certainly should see sinners who need this forgiveness. This meal is for sinners like you and me, who long for the forgiveness that Jesus offers and that is what he gives to us. Jesus

offers as much forgiveness as we need as often as we need it. He doesn't just want us to hear him say he loves us, he wants us to experience that love in a very real and visible way. During Holy Communion, we see love in action for us. We see that the love that was spilled out on the cross, spilled out for us and we hear the blessed news that this took place so that we are forgiven now and forever.

As we come to the table in a few minutes, our hearts turn to Jesus in repentance and we see and hear the love of our Savior who allows to leave in peace because our sins are forgiven.