

Maundy Thursday, 2022
Good Shepherd, Beaver Dam
Matthew 26:26-28

We are about to celebrate the high point of a Christian's worship life: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday.

During Lent we gathered as a family. We spent time with one another as we ate and visited. We shared our joys and concerns. Those fellowship meals were like family gatherings.

Now we are in God's House. Everything is ready. Tonight there is a higher level of fellowship and there are greater blessings than just sharing a meal with friends. Tonight our Lord Jesus, invites us to feast with Him. He has prepared a banquet better than any meal we will ever eat. As we gather with the Lord, we hear Him say,

Take and eat; take and drink.

Jesus wants us to be here. Luke adds this detail to his account of the first Maundy Thursday. Jesus told His disciples, I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

- *Why would Jesus want to spend time with men who often proved that they were slow to understand?*
- *Why would Jesus want to spend time with disciples who would forsake Him in the Garden of Gethsemane?*
- *Why would Jesus spend time with men who acted like little boys, arguing about who might be more important to Jesus?*

It was certainly a motley group of men who gathered in the upper room. But in the Kingdom of God it doesn't matter who

the guests are; what matters is who the host is. And the host that evening was Jesus, the Friend of sinners.

I find comfort in the fact that Jesus eagerly desired to eat with His disciples as spiritually weak as they were, because I am just like them. Paul urges us to examine ourselves before we partake of the Lord's Supper, but that is hard to do, isn't it? After all, I look in the mirror of God's Law and see my weaknesses, my failures, and my sins. I don't like who I see in that mirror. I see my sin. I don't want to sin, but I do. And it happens again and again!

What does all my sinning accomplish? Nothing! I am not happy without Jesus. I will not go to heaven without Jesus. Without Jesus, my future would be hell's punishment!

As I think about what God expects of me and what I have done and haven't done, I know I don't deserve this holy supper.

Yet, in love Jesus says, Come! The Father loved us as only God can love. He sent His Son to take our place and suffer our punishment in hell. And Jesus was willing to do what had to be done! Jesus knew that the next day He would suffer unspeakable torture in body and soul – for us! And Jesus was willing to do it!

Jesus says to us, Take and eat; take and drink! Jesus wants us to eat and drink with Him and He is happy to see us here. This is not a meal for holy people; it is a meal for sinners. Do you remember your sins? Do you know your Savior? Yes? Then your name is on the guest list! The Lord wants us to come!

Jesus wants you to be His guest tonight because He has awesome awesome to give - forgiveness of sins, life, and

eternal salvation.

In His holy supper, something special occurs: The bread and wine on your lips bring you your Savior's true body and true blood.

And this is the blood of the covenant. The old covenant could not save; it could only condemn us. But the true body and blood of Christ is the new covenant that was announced by the prophet, Jeremiah: I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.

The old covenant called for perfect holiness and promised death to all who were not holy. The new covenant was established by the death of the Son of God and through faith in that Savior we are covered with the holiness of Jesus!

This new covenant is one-sided; God does everything and we do nothing. It is amazing grace!

There's more! At this meal Jesus also gives the gift of unity. We are all different: men, women, young, old, different income brackets, different ethnic backgrounds, as well as different health issues. We come here to this table as equals.

We stand next to one another as members of God's family. We receive the same bread, the same wine. Through this meal our God not only binds us to Himself, but also to one another. We work together and pray for and encourage one another. We live in peace – peace with God and with one another!

This gift also lifts our eyes above the mess of this world so we look forward to our new home, heaven. We gather here to enjoy the presence of the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. In this meal we enter into the presence

of the King of Kings.

Although you have certainly enjoyed some wonderful meals in your lifetimes, they don't compare to what will happen here this evening when our Savior says, Take and eat; take and drink, I give you forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation! That is awesome! Thank You, Lord Jesus!

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