

Maundy Thursday

Text: Mark 14:22-24

²²While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." ²³Then 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."



Theme: A Meal for the Wounded

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me!" We might have all said that when we were kids. However, many of us were lying when we said it. Someone said something that hurt us deep down. We didn't want to show how much their words hurt us, so we tried to look tough.

The words that hurt the most, however, are God's words. They are His word of judgement for our sin. This evening I would like to look at the meal that Christ gives to us to heal our wounds from God's Word of judgement.

I. God's Word wounds us.

It shows what God expects of us. In tonight's Old Testament reading God made a covenant with His people Israel. The terms of that covenant began with the 10 commandments. In the following chapters (Ex 20:22ff) God gave some practical application to the commandments. He said, "*Do not make for yourselves gods of silver or gods of gold.*" (Ex 20:23) He said, "*Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall surely be put to death,*" (21:12) and also "*If men who are fighting hit a pregnant women...and there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.*" (21:22-25) God said, "*If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sell it, he must pay back five head of cattle for the ox and four sheep for the sheep...A thief must certainly make restitution, but if he has nothing, he must be sold to pay for his theft.*" (22:1,3) God gave the penalty of what a man had to pay the family of a woman if they had relations before marriage. (22:16ff.) He also said to the people, "*If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not be like a moneylender, charge him no interest.*" (V 25) "*Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong.*" (23:2) "*Do not deny justice to your poor people in their lawsuits...Do not oppress those [who are foreigners.]*" (23:6,9) He also gave them provisions for the Sabbath and for their festivals. The people responded by saying, "*Everything that the LORD has said, we will do.*" (Ex 23:3)

The disciples were very similar to the people of Israel. Jesus told them, "*One of you will betray Me.*" They all answered, "*Surely not I Lord.*" After the meal Jesus told Peter that he would deny his Lord. Peter answered, "*Even if all fall away, I will not.*"

God is clear. He says that He expects us to fear, love and trust in Him above all things, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Jesus summarizes what God expects in Matthew 6:28, "*Be perfect,*

therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Just like Israel and Jesus disciples, our answer is often, “I can do that.” Too often we think that we can follow God’s law perfectly.

But that law wounds us when it shows our sin. After God made His covenant with His people, Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive the stone tablets with the 10 Commandments. He was on the mountain for 40 days. It was during that time that Israel got impatient, and they built the golden calf. They said, “*These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you out of Egypt.*” The people held a great festival in which they got drunk and engaged in all kinds of immorality. God told Moses, “*They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them.*” Moses return and smashed the tablets into pieces, symbolizing that the covenant was broken before he even returned from the mountain. Many of the people died by the sword and disease.

Jesus’ words struck Judas when he heard that the Lord had been condemned to death. Judas was so filled with remorse that he hanged himself. When the rooster crowed, Peter remembered Jesus’ words, “*Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.*” Peter broke down and wept.

When we consider the Lord’s commands and our deeds, we see our sin. It is evident that we are not perfect. Our love and trust in God has been lacking. Too often we have thought of our selves more than others. We have become servants of our sinful desires. We think of the Lord’s word, “*The wages of sin is death.*” God does not take our sins lightly. He hates sin. His words condemn us for our sin. His word opens a wound that will kill us for all eternity.

II. In this sacrament, Christ heals that wound of sin.

After Israel made the golden calf Moses pleaded with the Lord, “*Please forgive their sin– but it not, then blot me out of the book you have written.*” (Ex 32:32) God forgave His people and continued to lead them with His angel. Hundreds of years later the prophet Jeremiah would promises a new covenant which would be based on the forgiveness of sins. (Jer. 31:31)

That new covenant has been made with the blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. Moses offered to give his life on behalf of the people of Israel, but God didn’t accept his offer. Moses was also a sinner. He was not able to atone for the sin of the people. But Jesus was the perfect lamb of God. He would offer His body and shed His blood for the forgiveness of all of our sins. He bore the price that we should have paid. When He suffered on the cross. He was bearing all the sins of the world. They were all laid on Him.

Because He bore our sins on the cross and paid for them all, this sacrament heals us from all of our sins. In the Lord’s Supper Jesus is giving us something very special. He gives us the medicine that heals the wounds of our sins. The bread which we take is a communion with the body of Christ. He says, “*Take and eat, this is My body.*” The wine that we drink is a communion with the blood of Christ. He says, “*This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.*” When we come to this altar and receive the body and blood of our Lord, the Lord is giving us the very things that won our salvation. In a very personal way, He is telling you, “I gave My body, and I shed My blood for the forgiveness of your sins.” This sacrament is medicine that heals our sins and makes us righteous in Christ. It gives us the forgiveness of sins. As Luther writes in the Small Catechism, “**Where there is the forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.**” The guilt, the regret, and

the penalty of sin is taken away in this meal. Christ heals us and gives us life.

That is why this is such a very special night, and why this is such a special meal. We sinned. God's Word shows us just how serious sin is. It opens a wound that will kill us. But here we have the food that heals the wound, Christ's body and blood that were given and shed for us. May God's Holy Spirit give us the desire to receive this meal often for our salvation and the healing of our souls. "Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood, be for My soul the highest good."

Amen.

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