

EASTER - THE FESTIVAL OF THE RESURRECTION

Hymns: 192, 187, 195, 205, 200

The INTROIT

(Ps. 139:18,5,6,1,2)

P: When I awake, I am still with Thee, Hallelujah!

C: Thou hast laid Thine hand upon me. Hallelujah!

P: Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;

C: it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

P: O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me;

C: Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising.

The COLLECT

Almighty God, who through Thine only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, hast overcome death and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life, we humbly beseech Thee that as Thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by Thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 52:13-15 (NKJV)

Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men; So shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; For what had not been told them they shall see, And what they had not heard they shall consider.

THE GRADUAL

(Ps.118:24,29; 1 Cor.5:7-8)

P: This is the day which the Lord hath made:

C: we will rejoice and be glad in it.

P: Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good:

C: for His mercy endureth forever. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

P: Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us.

C: Let us keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Hallelujah!

The EPISTLE

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 (NKJV)

Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The SENTENCE for the Season

(1 Cor. 5:7)

P: Hallelujah! Christ, our Passover:

C: is sacrificed for us. Hallelujah!

The HOLY GOSPEL

St. Mark 16:1-8 (NKJV)

Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they said among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?” But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away; for it was very large.

And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples; and Peter; that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.”

So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 — “Your Glorifying Is Not Good”

INTRODUCTION

- I. YOUR GLORYING IS NOT GOOD**
- II. THEREFORE PURGE OUT THE OLD LEAVEN**
- III. THEREFORE LET US KEEP THE FEAST**

CONCLUSION

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1 Corinthians 5:6-8 — “Your Glorifying Is Not Good”

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

The Epistle reading appointed for the Festival of the Resurrection of our Lord is 1 Corinthians 5:6-8:

Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Today is the Festival of the Resurrection of our Lord. Today is the day of the great feast. This is the day which the LORD has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it! This is the Festival of the Holy Communion of the LORD, the festival of the communion of the saints, the holy catholic Church. Today is the day of the good conscience by which we approach God without fear of judgment. This is the day by which our life as the Church is defined. Truly this is the LORD’s Day, a day for rejoicing in the fullness of the glory of the LORD.

I. YOUR GLORYING IS NOT GOOD

Indeed, this is why the appointed Epistle reading for this day begins by saying, **“Your glorying is not good.”**

To those who were known as the gathering of the communion of the saints in Corinth, those called out of the world to be one in Christ and to feast upon Him every day of their lives, St. Paul writes these surprising words of chastisement. **“Your glorying is not good.”**

Since these are words from the one that the Lord Jesus called to be the apostle to the Gentiles, on this LORD’s Day we do well to consider these words written to us as well. **“Your glorying, or your *boast*, is not good.”**

The word for *good* is a word that carries the sense of *beauty* or *loveliness* or *splendor*. The word for *boast* is a word that means the thing in which we boast or that which gives cause for boasting. So what the dear apostle is saying is that whatever it is that we are looking to that causes us to boast is not pretty. We tend to say when we observe something like this, **“Whoa! That is NOT a pretty sight!”**

There are many things to which we would respond with this response. There are many things in our lives which are not the least bit pretty. Many things in our lives are not pretty or glorious. In fact, there are many things in our lives for which we are ashamed. And if we are not ashamed of them, then we really need to hear the apostle's chastisement. If we are not ashamed of those things, we truly need to hear the word of the Law by which we see our boasts for what they are: **Not Pretty!**

Amazingly, the worst of these false boasts is often the blindness of our unbelief. This is, in fact, the boast of which St. Paul is speaking. The Corinthian congregation had become blind. They no longer embraced the pure doctrine and practice of the true Church. In fact, they had become joined to impurity. They had forgotten that they had been called out of the world by the Holy Spirit through the means of the Gospel and the Sacraments. They had forgotten the true reason that the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, and enlightens the Church on earth.

What is the reason for this calling of the Holy Spirit? Our sanctification!

The Holy Spirit does not merely call, gather, and enlighten the Christian Church, but He calls, gathers, enlightens, AND SANCTIFIES the whole Christian Church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

It is as St. Peter declares:

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (1 Peter 2:9-10)

Now, however, many in the Church pride themselves on being contemporary with the world and being accepting of people where they are. Within the Church people seek to establish little groups and alternative services to make everyone feel comfortable and part of the body of Christ. And so they have contemporary services and traditional services and blended services. They make a big fuss over being known for their friendliness and their nonjudgmental views. They take pride and boast in their willingness to see that they should not judge others who call themselves brothers. They boast that they are all one in Christ and one big happy gathering with enough flexibility and understanding to be inclusive of everyone.

In observing this boast St. Paul says, **“Your boast is not good, not the least bit pretty!”** He says that for all of the clever attempts to draw people into the oneness of the body of Christ and for all of the thoughtful gestures of making people feel welcome, **“Your boast is not good! Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?”**

II. THEREFORE PURGE OUT THE OLD LEAVEN

Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

What is the old leaven? What is it that St. Paul commands that we remove from the lump? We are to remove everything that is not Christ.

For the Passover of us, over us was sacrificed Christ!

This is the order in which St. Paul orders this sentence. For or because of the Passover that God promised to work for us, the passing over of us as those who have been called out of the world to be sanctified as belonging to the LORD, because of this, over us was sacrificed Christ. In order to cause death to pass over us, God put Jesus over the top of us, and beat the hell and crucified the hell out of Christ who covers us so that the death blows cannot reach us to harm us.

THIS and this ALONE, is our boast. This and this alone is our reason for being counted as a new lump that has no leaven in us. This is the one and only reason that we are counted as acceptable before God to stand before Him without fear of judgment. This is the only reason that we have loveliness and attractiveness to anyone. This is the cause for our boasting, that over us was sacrificed Christ!

This is why we dare not allow anyone to be called brother who brings the old leaven back into the pure and holy body of Christ, the holy catholic Church. If we admit into our gathering those who continue in the way of the Old Adam, then we are not the communion of saints, but just another gathering of the old mix. The true Church is not mixed. It is ONE. It is ONE in CHRIST! Christ is our Passover! As members of His body, we have union with Him alone. Anything and anyone else must be purged.

This was the lesson that the ladies and the other disciples still had not learned on that first Sunday morning of the New Testament. They had not yet let go of the old corruption. They were still thinking in the ways of death. And so they went to an empty tomb, still seeking the dead. But Jesus was not to be found among the dead. He was not to be found among those who were in communion with the corruption of the flesh. As the angel declared, **“He is risen! He is not here!”** But the ladies were bewildered and afraid and so rather than rejoicing and sharing the good news, they fled in fear. The rest of the disciples also were filled with fear, even though they gathered in the name of the LORD. And why? Why were they afraid? They were afraid because they had not purged the old leaven from the congregation. They still were gathering together according to their own faith, rather than in the faith of Jesus. They still were trying to be Christians by their own reason and strength rather than gathering into the name of Jesus, our Passover.

III. THEREFORE LET US KEEP THE FEAST

**For the Passover of us, over us was sacrificed Christ!
In this way we should keep the feast, not in old leaven, nor in leaven
of malice and wickedness, but in an unleavened of sincerity and truth.**

Don't you find yourself surprised at how prone we are to pervert everything that is good? That which is pure we always seem to pollute. That is because by our own reason and strength we are polluted. All of our works, no matter how noble, are all polluted.

This is especially true concerning everything that we try to do in the Church. Everything that we try to do for Jesus is polluted and corrupt. Everything that we invent is polluted. Every idea that we introduce is polluted.

This is why St. Paul admonishes us that we should purge the Church of our ideas and our works. This is why the apostle reminds us that Christ is our Passover who was sacrificed over us and that we should turn aside from our works to His works.

This is what St. Paul means when he says that in this way we should keep the feast. We should set aside everything else that we think is of value in the Church and keep the feast. Everything else has the old leaven of malice and wickedness. But in the feast of Christ's Holy Communion only purity is found, for in the Holy Communion we receive His body and blood, in which no impurity exists. This is the only place where Jesus has promised to be. This is where He has commanded that we come to be in communion with Him. He is not in our prayers. He is not in the tomb that we call our worship. He is in the Holy Communion of bread and wine with His body and blood.

It seems rather strange that even though the apostles and early Church kept the feast as the basis for the divine service, we keep seeking to replace it with our own inventions. While the Church of the New Testament sat at the apostles' feet and feasted on the holy doctrine and then rose up to partake of the Holy Communion daily, we tend to imagine that we can do better for ourselves.

St. Paul says that we should instead keep the feast in an unleavened of sincerity and truth. There is only one unleavened, and that is the body of Christ. This is why St. Paul uses *IN* rather than *with*. He does not say to keep the feast *with* unleavened, but to keep the feast *in* unleavened. This is why those who are false brethren are to be identified and avoided. Those who would pollute the unleavened body of Christ by their impenitence, must be purged, both for the sake of not infecting the body with their impenitence and for their own sake, so that they may be made to know that they are in need of the repentance that the Holy Spirit works through the Word and the Sacraments.

The word that St. Paul uses for sincerity is actually '*eilikrineia*, which means sun-judgment. It means the kind of view that is observed when one steps into the full light of the sun. When something is left in the full sun for long enough, it is bleached and purified by the pure light. In the Church this light is God's holy Word by which our sin or leaven is exposed so that we confess our sinfulness and receive the pure Word in the pure Sacrament of our Passover, who is Christ Jesus the Lord.

If, however, when we gather to the feast we gather with those who are known to be impenitent, if we do not let the light of the Word expose the sin, with what are we really in communion? The light and the darkness have nothing to do with one another. Christ, our Passover, is not a mixed lump. He is the unleavened that we are to receive in the Sacrament.

As St. John so beautifully declares,

This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:5-10)

So then, as St. Paul so lovingly urges us, let us keep the feast in an unleavened of sincerity and truth, that is, in the purity of the Holy Communion in Christ.

CONCLUSION

**For the Passover of us, over us was sacrificed Christ!
In this way we should keep the feast, not in old leaven, nor in leaven
of malice and wickedness, but in an unleavened of sincerity and truth.**

This is our identity and life. First the Holy Spirit comes to us through the Word connected with the water so that we are baptized into Christ to be made members of His body of holiness and purity. As members of His holy body we gather continually in order to be brought into the light, confessing our sins so as to hear again God's pronouncement of holy absolution. Hearing this absolution and having the Word poured over again in the liturgy and sermon, we are carried by the Word to the feast where we partake of the one who is our life, having His blood of life poured through us and being reunited together as we partake of His body.

This is the life and holiness of the Church, the communion of saints. Truly this is LORD's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes! This is the feast to which Christ calls us, to receive from Him His holiness and to be kept in His grace, mercy, and peace, all the days of our lives. How marvelous it is to know that He is risen and lives and reigns to all eternity and that for our sake He has given us this feast by which His resurrection life is ours as well. Let us therefore partake with glad hearts of that which the LORD has prepared for us! In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.