

Maundy Thursday

Hymns: 141, 306, 311, 309

(omit Gloria, responses before & after the Gospel reading, and other ascriptions of praise during Lent.)

The INTROIT

(Gal.6:14; Ps.67:1)

God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Him is salvation, life, and resurrection from the dead. By Him we are redeemed and set at liberty. God be merciful unto us and bless us and cause His face to shine upon us.

The COLLECT

O Lord God, who has left unto us in a wonderful Sacrament a memorial of Thy Passion, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may so use this Sacrament of Thy body and blood that the fruits of Thy redemption may continually be manifest in us; Thou, who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

Exodus 12:1-14 (NKJV)

Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, “This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire; its head with its legs and its entrails. You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord’s Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.’”

The GRADUAL

P: He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered:

C: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.

P: He hath given meat unto them that fear Him:

C: He will ever be mindful of His covenant.

P: My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed:

C: he that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me and I in him.

The EPISTLE

1 Corinthians 11:23-32 (NKJV)

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

The HOLY GOSPEL

St. John 13:1-15 (NKJV)

Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."

Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!"

Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."

So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

End of Service - suggestions / Stripping of Altar

(The absence of a Benediction reminds us that our worship continues with the Good Friday observance.)

The Altar is stripped of vessels and paraments in preparation for the solemn service of Good Friday. The reading is from Psalm 51.

SILENT PRAYER
(Depart in Silence)

Exodus 12:1-14 — “Now the Blood Shall Be a Sign for You”

INTRODUCTION

- I. ON THE TENTH DAY UNTIL THE FOURTEENTH DAY
- II. SO YOU SHALL EAT IT IN HASTE. IT IS THE LORD’S PASSOVER.
- III. NOW THE BLOOD SHALL BE A SIGN FOR YOU ON THE HOUSES WHERE YOU ARE.

CONCLUSION

Maundy Thursday

Hymns: 141, 306, 311, 309

Exodus 12:1-14 — “Now the Blood Shall Be a Sign for You”

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

Today is Maundy Thursday. The appointed reading of the Old Testament is Exodus 12:1-14, the account of the LORD’s Passover.

Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, “This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire; its head with its legs and its entrails. You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord’s Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.”

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

INTRODUCTION

Maundy Thursday. Do you know what this name means? It is a Middle English word from the Old French word *mande*, from the Latin word *mandatum*, from which we have *mandate*. It comes from this day’s Gospel reading and especially the following verse, verse 34:

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

In our reading for this day Jesus washes the feet of His disciples and tells them that as He has done, so they should do to one another. But He tells Peter that since they have already been baptized and have continued in the faith of their baptism, they are already clean, except for their feet. In other words, they are clean except for their daily trespasses, from which they need to be absolved. This is why the institution of the Cup of the New Testament in His blood is absolutely necessary. While our baptism washes us and gives us the regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost, we nevertheless have the fleshly nature adhering to us so that we trespass into ways that we should not go. We need to be renewed in the blood of Jesus through the Sacrament of the Altar, in which we receive again and again the forgiveness purchased with His blood along with the assurance that we remain in God's Holy Communion as members of His body by the means of His grace.

Therefore, as Jesus washed the disciples' feet, so also we are to confront one another with our need to have our feet washed. This is the love that we are to show one another, just as Jesus has shown to us. In love we will continually remind one another of our mutual need to come to Jesus and receive the assurance of our place as communicants of His body and to receive the forgiveness of His blood. In this way we truly love one another as He has loved us, and we abide together in the unity of the true faith.

As we shall see from our text of the Old Testament, this is what the entire Old Testament was about.

I. ON THE TENTH DAY UNTIL THE FOURTEENTH DAY

Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, "This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.'"

On the tenth day. Ten is the number of completion and perfection. It is the number of fullness. From now on the people of Israel would number their days with the month of the LORD's Passover as their first month. This is the new beginning. This is the freedom to which the LORD is calling His people and all who will be made to be His people in connection with the LORD's Passover.

It is rather curious to remember that this land of Egypt, this land of bondage, was originally the land of salvation. Previously, this land of bondage was the land of Joseph's bondage. But through dreams given to the Pharaoh, the LORD set Joseph free and elevated Joseph to a position through which salvation would be worked for all the known world and especially for the household of faith. Through this Jacob and all the Patriarchs were saved from starvation.

But as is the way of the worldly, the Church was persecuted. As the Egyptians changed governments, they forgot the mercies that the LORD worked through Joseph and became fearful

of the growth that the Church experienced. So they began to persecute the household of the LORD. They enslaved the people of Israel so as to try to control them and restrict them from taking over the world.

So the people of salvation became a persecuted people who suffered in their bondage. But in the fullness of time, at the fulfillment of the 430 years, the LORD delivered His people so that they would be free to worship Him rightly again and to continue unto the day of salvation that the LORD promised to work through them.

So, on the tenth day, the head of each house was to take for himself, meaning for his household, a lamb. This lamb was to be kept until the fourteenth day. Each head of each household was to examine himself to see that all who were under his care would receive a full portion of the lamb. Each head of each household was to make certain both that no one was left out and that the meal would not be excessive.

Now much debate has occurred over the number of the days. Why the tenth and the fourteenth. Many reasons have been argued, but when the fulfillment of the Passover is taken into account, it all becomes clear. Jesus is the fulfillment of the LORD's Passover. He is the Passover Lamb by which the Old Testament is fulfilled. At the time of this fulfillment, the tenth day was Palm Sunday. On this day all of the people were congregated to take or receive the Passover Lamb who was delivered to them on the colt of a donkey. The fourteenth day was Thursday, and the Old Testament had its last supper and its last slaughter of sheep and goats. Jesus and His disciples ate of this final Old Testament Supper together and with all of the saints gathered in Jerusalem. But after the supper was over, Jesus instituted the Supper of the New Testament. He gave His own flesh to eat and His own blood to drink. Then He went to the cross to complete the Sacrifice of our redemption. The Old Testament sacrifices concluded on the fourteenth day. The New Testament sacrifice of the Lamb of God was made on the fifteenth day.

Why is this important? The first two weeks, or the first two sevens concluded with the Passover Sacrifice, which initiated the third week in which the unleavened bread of sinlessness was eaten. This served as the type that foreshadowed the Supper of the Holy Communion. Palm Sunday was the tenth day. The Old Testament ended with the last lamb on the fourteenth day. On the fifteenth day Jesus was sacrificed for the sin of the world, crucified and buried, to rise again on the third day, the beginning of a new week, the eighth day following Palm Sunday. Now the feast of unleavened bread would continue forever. Now the body of Christ would be the gathering for all the world to feast and abide in the holiness of His Communion.

II. SO YOU SHALL EAT IT IN HASTE. IT IS THE LORD'S PASSOVER.

Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire; its head with its legs and its entrails. You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover.

This feast was not like any other feast. It was to be prepared according to strict specifications and eaten in a peculiar manner. Actually, many households today would relate especially to the command that it should be eaten in haste!

But this was a very special eating in haste. For the word for haste means to be in a state of counting oneself as fleeing for one's life. This is an attitude of looking to be saved from a horrible destruction. The participants of this meal were to be afraid for their lives and to eat in the faith that they would be saved by the LORD's Passover.

They were to be gathered together in a house where the doorway had been marked with the blood of the Passover sacrifice. They were to eat the body of the lamb with a twofold purpose. First the eating of the body united them in the proclaiming of the LORD's salvation. Secondly, eating the body would strengthen them for the journey of faith that would follow immediately. But none of the body was to be left behind. Enough was to be prepared for all of the people, young and old, to eat and to be strengthened. But none of the body was to be left behind. The body was intended only for this time of eating and only for those gathered into the name of the LORD. This was the feast of the LORD's Passover, by which He would free them from their bondage in the world and keep them safe in His gathering.

III. NOW THE BLOOD SHALL BE A SIGN FOR YOU ON THE HOUSES WHERE YOU ARE.

For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.

“Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are.” Those who had been accounted for by the heads of the households would be eating within the little congregations of believers gathered into the name of the LORD. They would be gathered into congregations in houses marked with the blood of the lamb. The LORD declared that the blood on the doorways would be a sign for those in the congregations.

Then He explains the sign. **“And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.”**

This blood was not symbolic. The people were saved by the blood in the mouths of the houses. Yes, the mouth or entrance to each house was coated on the inside with the blood of the lamb, and by this blood salvation was guaranteed. The punishment of death passed over those houses where the blood of the lamb was in the mouth of the house. Those who believed God's promise, obeyed God's command to gather under the protection of the sign of the blood. Those who were not of the household of faith remained outside, not trusting in the meal of salvation, and those households fell under the judgment, receiving the wages of sin with great sorrow.

Now the greater Testament has been given for those of the household of faith. Now those who hear and believe God's promise receive much more than the blood of sheep and goats in the

mouths of their houses. Now God pours out the blood of the Lamb of God given with the Cup of the New Testament, poured out for the mouths of all the houses of God gathered within of the household of faith. Those who believe God's promise obey His command and partake of the lifeblood of the New Testament, and the judgment passes over them so that they receive forgiveness and life and are counted as not of the world. Those who do not believe God's Testament are not of the house of Israel, but of the house of bondage, the house of Egypt, where death is the inheritance rather than salvation and life. By their unbelief, such persons cut themselves off from the household of faith, whom God marks with His sign of salvation.

For Jesus plainly declares that the cup that He gave is the Cup of the New Testament in His blood, and that this is to be received for the forgiveness of sins. All who believe this eagerly gather into the name of Jesus to have His salvation communicated to them. Those who believe examine themselves to see that no one in their household is neglected. Those who believe eagerly gather with the rest of God's family to eat the body in unity and to drink unto the salvation of their souls.

CONCLUSION

Truly this is the LORD's Supper. Who else could work such miracles through such seeming simple and common means? Surely this is beyond anything that we can approach according to our own reason and strength. Yet in the faith produced by hearing His Word connected to our baptism and through the regular preaching of the Church, we do hear the LORD's gracious promise and come to partake of the blessings of His Holy Communion. Truly this is the LORD's doing and not ours. Truly this is a comfort that only He can make real. This is the love with which our Lord Jesus has loved us. This is the love that He commands that we share in together. Oh what blessed commandments our Lord Jesus commands for us! What a truly gracious God we have! 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.