

## RECEIVED FROM THE LORD

Our sermon for this night is grounded in the events of Holy Week in the year we date AD 33. Hear again the theme text for this evening:

*For as often as all of you may continue to eat the Bread, and the Cup all of you drink, the death of the Lord you all continue to proclaim until when(ever) He may come.<sup>1</sup>*

**Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**

The Lord's service to us sinners this evening marks the midpoint in His services from Palm Sunday morning to Resurrection evening. It is a central Feast Day in the Church Year, one in which we are particularly reminded of the truths we confess in the creeds and Te Deum. Of those we are particularly reminded tonight that we are participants in the practice of the Apostolic Faith by the inspired words of St. Paul as he says:

*For I received from the Lord that which also I handed over to all of you...!<sup>2</sup>*

The apostolic tradition indicated in those words began for us this evening as we received God's gift of forgiveness in Corporate Confession and Absolution. Those who came forward knelt and received the individual absolution and personal touch of our Lord through His chosen method of administering His grace. To do so, you, had to come forward and pass the invisible line that the baptismal font draws between Nave and Chancel rails. That has become our tradition here so that those who

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<sup>1</sup> I Corinthians 11:26.

<sup>2</sup> I Corinthians 11:23.

are baptized remember that Holy Absolution draws us back to the forgiveness we received and continue to receive from the Lord's washing and regenerating us with the water and the Word. The unbaptized also may pass that font and learn that confession and absolution forgives the unbaptized. That is given to lead them into the Faith as it is given and nurtured by God through His Word. We pray then, that will, in time – a long time for some – lead them to demand God's baptism.

Those are the first and second of three teaching points we are given tonight. In Baptism and Holy Absolution, with the third, the Sacrament of the Altar, we are called to remember God's gifts to undeserving sinners. Through them, we receive God's treasure which He desires to bestow on all people – the forgiveness of all of our sins. These we have learned to receive with grateful hearts because God cared enough to hand them down, without doctrinal error, through all the generations which have followed in the Faith of Christ, that which He willed to impart to those whom He gathered at His Table on the night we call Maundy-Thursday .

This day may have been named for His commandment, or for the baskets of food the ancient church distributed to the poor over the days before the Resurrection Feast. That practice of Maunds was a human tradition that has fallen away into history. Yet, the tradition of the apostles, that given in the Word of God, has endured. That is just what St. Paul was indicating would happen with the teaching he gave concerning that which we have come to call the Lord's Supper with these words:

*For I received from the Lord that which also I handed over to all of you...!*<sup>3</sup>

The gifts by which God mediates His grace and forgiveness for sinners have come to us from the apostles – including one who was not at the Table that night. In fact, Paul, as he was going by Saul in the days we call the first Holy Week, could have been numbered as being among those who were opposed to Jesus and his disciples on that last real Feast of Unleavened Bread and Passover.

It is this Paul who writes to the Church that he “received” the teaching from the Lord. The Rabbis of old called this reception, *quibbel*, as we might translate that word, “received tradition” concerning things of the Faith. That word is used for handing on the truths revealed by God. That is why St. Paul, in his opening line, is translated as, “handing over,” or, “delivering” the Lord’s teaching to the Church. His words and action would be called *masar* by the Hebrews. That means that he was telling the Church he was passing on a tradition. (There is a lot of wordplay going on in the section of the reading from Corinthians for tonight, we do not have time to cover it all. But, it is interesting). Paul gives the Source for the tradition he received and the tradition he passed on – the Lord Jesus. Paul indicates in Galatians he was taught by Jesus, so one may consider that the Lord’s chosen Means of Grace would be among the traditions Jesus handed on to him. If St. Paul had not received it from Jesus, he would certainly have received it from the other Apostles, as when he visited Jerusalem in a

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<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:23.

“doctrine check” visit early in his ministry.

We have spent a bit of time on the Apostolic Faith, and its passing on the traditions established by Jesus. That is because other confessions of the Faith put more emphasis on their own interpretations of that which is to follow than they do the inspired Word of God handed on by the Apostles. Each of us may be exposed, or is being presented with, teachings of churches other than those who hold to the Apostolic Faith given by Jesus to the ones He hand-picked to be His messengers of the Good News. With respect to that which will follow concerning the words of our Lord, and St. Paul’s handing them on without error, others place either human reason or human tradition as the prime interpreters of his words.

We, as we are Church, place Scripture as the prime interpreter of Scripture. This we have learned to do from the New Testament texts handed on to us by the Apostles, and through the Evangelists. This they learned to do through Jesus. He, in His human nature, learned the correct method of biblical interpretation from the Psalms, the Prophets, and the Writings. According to His Divine Nature, Jesus, as Second Person of the Holy Trinity, as the Word of God, revealed that Scripture interprets Scripture as the prime principle to all of His chosen messengers – human and angelic. So, now, hear in a literal translation, the Words of Jesus’ “mandatum” from His Maundy-Thursdays sermon as He taught them to St. Paul, beginning with his confession of the truth of the tradition:

*For I received from the Lord that which also I handed over to all of you...!<sup>4</sup>  
The Lord Jesus, in the night in which He was handed over took bread and giving thanks He broke (it) and said, "This remains My Body, the One (given) for you all; this all of you continue to do into the remembrance of Me."*

*Likewise, also the Cup after eating the meal, saying, "This Cup the New Covenant remains in My Blood; this all of you continue to do as often as all of you drink (it), into My remembrance."<sup>5</sup>*

Most of us have heard those words of Christ's Institution and the instruction which Paul was moved by the Holy Spirit to wrap them in for many years. Christians in many sects and denominations (we are not part of a denomination – as if the rights confession of the Faith could be some small division of some greater whole. We are simply "Church" in this place). As Church, we believe, teach, and confess that the Sacrament of the Altar must have: the Word of God – both preaching/teaching (as did Jesus on the night in which He was betrayed); the Words of Jesus for the Supper as they have been faithfully handed on; bread of some kind; genuine wine of some color; a man to administer the gifts from the Lord's Table; people baptized in the Name of the Triune God. Jesus' words indicate that the bread and wine set aside for holy use by His Word among His people is given for eating and drinking.

As to the people who are eating and drinking of Jesus' Holy Meal, St. Paul declares there are two kinds, unworthy and worthy eaters. Let us hear first a bit about those who are unworthy consumers of the Lord's Feast. We do so that we can conclude with the descriptions of those who are deemed worthy by God in Christ, to

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<sup>4</sup> *I Corinthians* 11:23.

<sup>5</sup> *I Corinthians* 11:24-25.

eat and drink for the forgiveness of their sins. St. Paul declares of them, and not, I pray, of you:

*Wherefore, whoever may continue to eat the Bread or continue to drink the Cup of the Lord unworthily will be guilty of violating the Body and the Blood of the Lord.*<sup>6</sup>

*Yet (let a) man reckon himself after testing, then thus from the bread he eats and from the cup he drinks; for the one eating and drinking judgment to himself will eat and drink, not continually discerning the Body.*<sup>7</sup>

So, the Apostle calls for a communicant to examine himself or herself before partaking. According to the context of this teaching, the first test is to ask yourself if you believe the Word of God, that the communion is both/and concerning the earthly elements and Jesus – bread/Body, wine/Blood. Any other confession is outside the Apostolic Faith. This is what it means in the narrow sense of the text to discern the Body of the Lord.

The wider sense of the Body of the Lord is considered to be the community in which one receives the Sacrament. This is understood from the wider context of the Letter to the Corinthians, as Scripture interprets Scripture. Anyone who comes to the Lord's Table to eat and drink His Body and Blood without understanding that they are intimately involved with all the others communing at that particular Table, are failing to discern the wider Body of Christ.

From the greater context of Scripture connected to the Lord's Supper, other

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<sup>6</sup> *1 Corinthians 11:27.*

<sup>7</sup> *1 Corinthians 11:28-29.*

unworthy communicants can be determined. The first should be obvious. Anyone who is not a Christian should not commune. Then next is a bit more difficult for us to grasp in our fallen culture. That is, Christians cannot participate in non-Christian worship and then commune at the Table of the Lord without true repentance. In addition, those in a particular congregation who are causing divisions in the congregation would be unworthy communicants. The Lord's Supper is to be a common union in the Apostolic tradition, not an individual false – union of people divided in the Faith. And, that, leads to communing with those of other confessions of the Faith – there is no such union where there is no agreement in the use and meaning of the Supper.

If you have held to that, return to your baptism, confess your sins and receive Christ's absolution, and move on to the examination the person of the Faith uses. That is, I believe that this meal is for the forgiveness of my sins. From that then, cling to the words of Jesus:

*"This remains My Body, the One (given) for you all; this all of you continue to do into the remembrance of Me."*

*"This Cup the New Covenant remains in My Blood; this all of you continue to do as often as all of you drink (it), into My remembrance."<sup>8</sup>*

You hear His words so often. Nowhere in them is there a call for you to ascend to heaven in your thoughts as if you can bring Him down. Rather, Jesus comes

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<sup>8</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:24b and 25b.

to you, with His Body – crucified into death, raised to life, and ascended into heaven. He gives Himself for you in, with, and under Bread and Wine. There is no call in this text or its parallels for you to have to remember His Passion when you come forward with open hands and mouths. There is a call for you to eat and drink it often.

Jesus's words call you into a memorial – His memorial for you, not your memorial of Him. Jesus declares that this is something He intends for you to continue to do. He, through the Apostolic Faith even tells you why:

*For as often as all of you may continue to eat the Bread and the Cup all of you drink, the death of the Lord you all continue to proclaim until when(ever) He may come.<sup>9</sup>*

Your very eating and drinking is a community witness that Jesus has died to bring the forgiveness of sins to all, and most especially to those who believe. It is the proclamation of the death of Jesus that takes place in the communal eating and drinking: a communing in the Body of Jesus by the Body of Jesus for forgiveness and strengthening to life everlasting. This you confess as you are those who rightly commune at the Lord's Table. So, let us get on with declaring the Lord's death until He comes by lifting up the Cup of Salvation and calling upon the Name of the Lord....

**The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus**

Maundy-Thursday (LSB One-Year Series)  
Psalm 116:12-19; Exodus 12:1-14; I Corinthians 11:23-32; John 13:1-15  
April 17, 2014

*Pastor Michael A. Morehouse*

**Soli deo Gloria**

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<sup>9</sup> I Corinthians 11:26.

## TRANSLATION, SECOND DRAFT:

*For I received from the Lord that which also I handed over to all of you...!<sup>10</sup>*

*The Lord Jesus, in the night in which He was handed over took bread and giving thanks He broke (it) and said, "This remains My Body, the One (given) for you all; this all of you continue to do into the remembrance of Me."*

*Likewise, also the Cup after eating the meal, saying, "This Cup the New Covenant remains in My Blood; this all of you continue to do as often as all of you drink (it), into My remembrance."<sup>11</sup>*

*For as often as all of you may continue to eat the Bread and the Cup all of you drink, the death of the Lord you all continue to proclaim until when(ever) He may come.<sup>12</sup>*

*Wherefore, whoever may continue to eat the Bread or continue to drink the Cup of the Lord unworthily, will be guilty of violating the Body and the Blood of the Lord.<sup>13</sup>*

*Yet (let a) man reckon himself after testing, and thus from the bread he eats and from the cup he drinks;<sup>14</sup>*

*For the one eating and drinking judgment to himself will eat and drink, not continually discerning the Body.<sup>15</sup>*

*On account of this, among all of you (there are) may weak and sick ones, and (those) continually falling asleep.<sup>16</sup>*

*But if we judge between ourselves, then we may not be judged.<sup>17</sup>*

*But when we are being judged by [the] Lord, we are being continually trained (so) that not with the cosmos we may have been judged against.<sup>18</sup>*

*What shall I render to YHWH,*

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<sup>10</sup> I Corinthians 11:23.

<sup>11</sup> I Corinthians 11:24-25.

<sup>12</sup> I Corinthians 11:26.

<sup>13</sup> I Corinthians 11:27.

<sup>14</sup> I Corinthians 11:28.

<sup>15</sup> I Corinthians 11:29.

<sup>16</sup> I Corinthians 11:30.

<sup>17</sup> I Corinthians 11:31.

<sup>18</sup> I Corinthians 11:32.

*for all His benefits to me?  
The cup of salvation I will lift up,  
And on Name of YHWH I will call.  
My vows to YHWH I will pay,  
in presence of all His people.*