

Pastor Kenneth Mars

Christ the King & Immanuel Lutheran Churches – Cody & Powell, WY

Maundy Thursday

March 28, 2024

Text: Exodus 12:1–14

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Tonight begins our great remembrance of the greatest deeds God has done in this world. Or maybe it would be more accurate to say we are continuing this great remembrance which the Church has been commemorating for thousands of years. One of the great exhortations of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is to remember (Deut. 8:18; Ps. 22:27; 77:11-15; Eph. 2:11-12). Remember the Lord your God. For He is not only your creator, but your redeeming Lord who seeks to fill you with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit as He prepares you to receive an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, unfading, and kept in heaven (I Pet. 1:4-5). Remember who you are. The beloved of the Lord, who have been delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of Christ Jesus (Col. 1:13). Don't forget that you who have been freed from your sins are now called to be a holy kingdom, priests to God the Father (Rev. 1:6). Remember these great and glorious things and live according to them with lives of worship, faith, and daily piety.

Maundy Thursday is a most fitting day to continue our remembrance of God's mighty deeds. Exodus 12:14 states, "This day (referring to the Passover) shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast." Every year, God's Old Testament people remembered by eating the Passover that they had once been slaves in Egypt. Such remembrance was done because God had remembered them. Exodus 2:24–25 declares God heard their groaning and saw their misery in Egypt. And He remembered His covenant and worked salvation for them.

After nine plagues, Egypt was devastated and ruined. But Pharaoh refused to let God's people go. God told Moses, "Yet one plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. ... About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl (Ex. 11:1, 4-5). We must never forget that sin and rebellion against God leads to death and misery. Not only for each of us individually, but also for our loved ones, family and children, friends, and people in our communities. Israel suffered over 430 years of unjust slavery. The time had come for them to be free. But Egypt said no in stubborn rebellion resulting in their doom.

Unlike most of the preceding plagues, the death of the first born would also apply to Israel. But the Lord remembered His people and provided a means of escape, an atonement which would protect them. A spotless lamb must be killed at twilight. Its blood must cover the two doorposts and the lintel of their houses. The slain lamb was to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Salvation from the plague of death and destruction was only possible through the Passover Lamb.

Moses instructed God's people to eat the Passover hastily. While eating, they must believe two things. First, though surrounded by death outside their homes, the blood of the Passover Lamb would protect them. Inside, there was life and hope. Second, the Passover was the divinely appointed means to secure their freedom. Eating lamb and unleavened bread gave them new life and sanctification. Death and condemnation must Passover God's people. For they are protected by the blood of the Lamb. The next day, after the 10th plague, Pharaoh ordered Moses and all Israel to leave. They were free. These are the things God's people must remember.

Dear Christian saints, the Lord Jesus gathered with His disciples during the Feast of the Passover. On that awesome night, when Satan sought to destroy Christ and His Church, Jesus established the Lord's Supper as the fulfilment of the Passover feast. From henceforth until the end of time, the body and

blood of the Passover Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, will be eaten and drunk in His Church often as God's means of saving and protecting His people.

When establishing the Lord's Supper, Jesus said twice, "Do this in remembrance of me" (I Cor. 11:24-25). Like the Passover of old, but now fulfilled, the remembrance has two sides. The first side, and by far the most important, is that the "remembrance of me" refers to Jesus remembering us. Do this in My remembrance of you! Christ Jesus comes among us by the Holy Spirit through His Word. By so doing, He remembers us and gives Himself so that we may receive His forgiveness, life, and salvation.

The second side, and also vitally important, is that we remember Him by actually doing in faith what He commands. Eat and drink His body and blood. Remembering God, in the full Biblical sense, is more than mental cognition. "This do in remembrance of me" means gathering together as the body of Christ Jesus to hear His Word, rejoice and give thanks for it, culminating in receiving His true body and blood in, with, and under consecrated bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins. Because of Christ Jesus, our Passover Lamb, death and Satan and evil cannot harm us.

These things we must always remember and give thanks to Christ Jesus. "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endureth forever."

✠ In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. ✠ Amen.

Now the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus unto life everlasting. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Exodus 12:1-14

¹The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ²"This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. ³Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. ⁴And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep

or from the goats, ⁶and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

⁷"Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it. ⁹Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. ¹⁰And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. ¹¹In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover. ¹²For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. ¹³The 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 no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴"This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.

EPISTLE READING

1 Corinthians 11:23–32

²³For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

²⁷Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. ³⁰That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. ³¹But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. ³²But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

GOSPEL READING

John 13:1–15, 34–35

¹Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ²During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, ⁴rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. ⁵Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" ⁷Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." ⁸Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of

you." ¹¹For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

¹²When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. . . .

³⁴A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."