

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

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The Gospel of Matthew

The Body and Blood of Christ

July 12, 2020

Sermon Text: Matthew 26:26-29

Scripture Reading: Exodus 12

Matthew 26:26-29 ESV Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” (27) And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, (28) for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (29) I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.”

We come this morning to the consideration of one of the most mysterious aspects of the church – though there are many other things in our faith that are mysteries – Christ in us, the unseen God, the body of Christ itself. But this subject of the Lord's table, communion, the body and blood of Christ represented by bread and wine which the believer eats and drinks – certainly is a mystery. If you have studied church history you know that even Calvin and Luther could not come to full agreement on its nature and certainly that there has been widespread false teaching concerning it on the part of Rome.

We wonder, for instance, why Matthew records its beginning here, at what we call the Last Supper? Let's see if we can answer that question and understand more clearly what the Lord's Table is all about.

The Passover Backdrop

We have already read the OT institution of Passover in Exodus 12. You have

this lamb without blemish killed and eaten, the blood spread on the doorposts:

Exodus 12:7-8 ESV “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. (8) They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted on the fire; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it.

All of this was leading up to the visitation of the angel of death who would strike down the firstborn in every house that was not covered in the blood.

Immediately following that Passover, Pharaoh relented and drove Israel out of Egypt. In other words, *the exodus from slavery took place*. It was all effected, you could say, by the blood of those lambs.

Now, what we have here in Matthew 26 is the true reality to which all that OT symbolism pointed. THE Lamb was about to be killed. His blood was to be shed. And THE real, true exodus was about to take place for all those whose faith was in the Lamb. To those, you might say, who were covered by the blood of the Lamb.

And this is why we have the Lord’s Table established as an ordinance of the church at this point in the narrative. Look at what Jesus said once more in this light:

Matthew 26:26-28 ESV Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” (27) And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, (28) for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

See it? He is assigning the full and true meaning in the New Covenant to that Old Covenant Passover meal. It is now His body and His blood that His people eat and drink – by faith, and the cup and the bread are outward symbols of those spiritual truths. All who are in Christ have become one with Him by faith. His body and His blood become ours and we are set free in a new *exodus*.

We have seen this truth before clear back at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry when John the Baptist said:

John 1:29 ESV The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

The Lamb of God, you see.

Acts 8:32 ESV Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth.

1 Peter 1:18-19 ESV knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, (19) but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

1 Corinthians 5:7 ESV Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

Revelation 5:6-14 ESV And between the throne and the four

living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. (7) And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. (8) And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. (9) And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, (10) and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.” (11) Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, (12) saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power

and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” (13) And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” (14) And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Christ is our Passover, you see. That is what the Lord’s Table is all about. This is our Lamb whose blood has effected our exodus from slavery to Satan and sin and death. So we eat it and drink it to *look back* and remember Christ crucified for us...but also to *look forward* to our ultimate exodus from this fallen world into our inheritance, the real Promised Land of the new heavens and earth.

Check this out and you can see it:

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 ESV For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, (24) and when he had given thanks, he broke

it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. **Do this in remembrance of me.**”

(25) In 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.**”

(26) For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death **until he comes.**

A past and a future aspect to it you see. Remember, and look for His return. He won’t be the angel of death for us, but for all those who have refused to be covered by His blood through faith – that is what the coming judgment will be. A great and final Passover.

The New Covenant in New Blood

Now, let’s look into this:

Matthew 26:28 ESV for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Whenever God establishes a covenant, there is blood.

Hebrews 9:18-23 ESV Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. (19) For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, (20) saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.” (21) And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. (22) Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (23) Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

Once again you have these OT symbols which are pictures of the true reality in

Christ. The OT symbols taught us that *without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins*. The New Covenant is better than the Old because in it we really do have forgiveness of sins. It has been effected by a better sacrifice that really does cleanse us and set us free from condemnation, putting us right with God.

But there is more:

The Mysterious Fellowship

This is a central Scripture passage on the Lord’s Table even though the subject is mentioned only by way of illustration. Look at it:

1 Corinthians 10:14-22
ESV Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. (15) I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. (16) **The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?**

(17) Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

(18) Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices **participants in the altar?**

(19) What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? (20) No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. **I do not want you to be participants with demons.**

(21) You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. (22) Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

This passage is worthy of much thought and careful consideration in understanding the full meaning of the Lord's Table. I have underlined here the "communion" words. The "koinonia" words. To commune. To share in. To fellowship in. To participate in. Consider:

- In the OT, when people ate the sacrifices, the benefits of that sacrifice were applied to them.

- Conversely, when anyone participates in idol worship and eats things sacrificed to idols, they are actively participating, fellowshiping in, sharing in, *demons*. There is a kind of mystical union with wickedness.
- Therefore, when we in true faith come to the Lord's table, we *participate in, we share in, the blood and body of Christ*.
- In addition, we share in the church, the body of Christ, we share this common life with one another and we have this union with one another.

It is therefore in some mystical sense that this bread and blood are the body and blood of Christ. Not the elements themselves, but Christ Himself who is represented by these symbols. Christ is present in these things in some manner.

And this is why we must come to the table in a right and worthy manner:

1 Corinthians 11:27-30
ESV Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. (28) Let a person examine himself, then, and

so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. (29) For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. (30) That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.

Christ is in us if we are born again. He has set us free and redeemed us by His blood. Our great exodus has begun and it is going to be finalized in fullness when He comes again for us. If you are covered by the blood of the Lamb, the day is coming when you are out of here once and for all. All of these things are what we are reminded of when we eat the bread and drink the cup and why we should always look forward to participating in the Passover meal of the New Covenant.