



Free Evangelical Lutheran
Synod in South Africa

Sermon for Maundy Thursday 2017

The Blood of the New Testament!



St. John's Lutheran Parish
Shelly Beach



• [The Word of God for this Sermon is written in Mt 26, 26-30:](#)

• ^{ESV} ²⁶ 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."

• ³⁰ And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

• *Let us pray: Come Holy Spirit, open our ears and give us a new heart which will hear Your Word of the New Testament and believe what it says. Amen.*

• **Dear Members of the New Testament!**

• The first Covenant was inaugurated with blood by Moses sprinkling blood on the Book of the Covenant and on the people. He used the blood of bulls and goats and said, [Heb 9,20] *"this is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you."* The writer of Hebrews carries on and says, [Heb 9,22-23] *"Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. 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."*

• Why all the blood? Many ask these days, is God so bloodthirsty that He needs blood to flow, that life needs to be taken, before He will forgive? How many calves and lambs have not been slaughtered during the time of the First Testament? Why all this blood?

• To be able to better understand what Jesus is doing on the night when He was betrayed, we have to deal with sacrifices.

• The first thing we need to realise is, that it is impossible for the blood of animals to take away sins [Heb 10,3b]. We know that all these sacrifices pointed forward to

Christ's ultimate sacrifice which actually works forgiveness of sins. So, why were they sacrificed if they were only pointing forward to Christ's Sacrifice? Answer [Heb 10,3a]: These sacrifices were reminders of sin!! Why such bloody reminders?

• I am sure you have come across it as well, these remarks that we in our modern times have progressed very much beyond the barbaric times of cavemen and first century antiquity. That is all way in the past. We are not that barbaric any more, some will argue, well at least this holds true for the western culture! We have moved on, they would argue. We don't want to deal with sacrifices, blood and old rituals like that any more. This is a widespread mindset you find in our societies these days. Rituals are of the past for those who haven't been enlightened by science and intellect. This was for the dark old ages!

• Jesus in His Sermon on the mount takes on exactly this idea when He reveals the full meaning of the commandment of God, "You shall not murder!" Let's pay attention to what He says: [Mt 5, 21-22] *"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgement.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgement; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire."* What does Jesus do here? He says you kill people with your angry desires and with your words of insults. People are killed, not only by being physically murdered, but already with your hearts and with your mouths! In God's eyes blood flows, life is taken by us, when we attack our enemies with our evil desires and words! In other words, strictly speaking, whenever we are angry with someone, whenever we insult one of our brothers and sisters, what should have happened to remind us of the severity of what we are doing is, a sacrifice should have been made. Strictly speaking we should have died, because to take someone's life is utterly destructive to God's creation. But, God allowed Adam and Eve, and since then, human beings to take the life of animals instead of their own lives, so that they could carry on living (*This sacrificial substitution of course pointed forward to Christ's ultimate sacrificial death.*)

• Now think for one moment how many sacrifices we would have had to make if it had been the requirement of God to make one for each hateful thought and desire in our hearts! Each one of those thoughts are worthy of eternal death! And this is only for one of the Ten Commandments!

• Our life would have circled around sacrifices. There would have been blood all-over. God wants to reveal this to us, 'people, wherever you go, you are leaving a blood-trail

behind you. You are seriously messing with my good creation in what your old Adam thinks, says and does.' We have all got blood on our hands!

- Lets face it, this rhetoric, that we are not barbaric any-more because we didn't physically kill any-one, is null and void in God's eyes! It is a dangerous illusion! God doesn't see it that way. God looks at our hearts, and reveals the truth of what's going on in our hearts. Our desires of the Self are the evil breeding ground for all our hatred spoken towards others. They destroy the life God has created. They destroy the community God wants to build. This is the deep-seated truth about the poison in our hearts!
- If we have these issues with the Sacrifice of Christ, Luther would say, you have not considered the graveness of your sins.
- Realising this, puts into perspective how merciful God was when He specified that only some serious deeds needed sacrifices in the OT. Some sacrifices, like the daily morning and evening sacrifices even counted for the whole of the nations' sins. So, we see already in the OT God allowed for many sins to be summarised under one sacrifice.
- Then, we also have to remember that in paradise no blood was spilled. Humans and animals were fruit-eaters. In God's perfect design blood was not to be spilled.
- It was through the human rebellion, instigated by the fallen angelic revolution, which caused the first life-blood to be spilled. Adam and Eve were ashamed because they were naked. To cover their shame with a skin a sacrifice of animals was necessary. The world became a hostile place. The account for sacrifices was opened by sin, not by God's doing!
- It is not God who is blood-thirsty! We are spilling the blood, also as Westerners of the 21 century! Therefore, God had to deal with all this spilling of blood effectively, once and for all. Yes, it is exceptionally good news that He has done this through the Blood of His only-begotten Son. And once again, we have to remember, Jesus was handed into the hands of the sinners and that is what *they- we-* did with Him. They crucified Him and they spilled all His Blood which just confirmed what God was trying to get through to us, namely, 'can you see how you mess not only with one another but even with me, Your God!'
- On the other hand, all those wounds and blood flowing, insults and blasphemy flung onto Christ which are our wounds which we have inflicted and received from others, well, there they are on Christ and they were crucified with Him! Jesus is literally the Lamb that takes *away* our sins! They are not with us any-more. They cannot

condemn us any-more! There, do you see, they have been crucified with Him!

- Jesus is the once and for all perfect offering for the whole world. He fulfilled the whole of the ritual legislation in the OT [Mt 5,17]. His sacrificed blood is the blood of the New Testament. His real Death atones for all our sins. We have forgiveness of sins through His Blood.
- That means, we don't need other substitutes any-more. Animal sacrifices are over. And, very important, the other person who sins against us, his or her sins are also included in the wounds of Christ: No need to take revenge on him or her from now on. Jesus has carried all sins away, the sins of the whole world. Therefore, you can forgive them, as you have been forgiven.
- It was not a fake offering, all in the mind, not a symbolical offering, that would never have been enough for us!! Symbolic and figurative rituals would not have been enough to deal with sin properly. That is why the Lord's Supper is not to be taken symbolically only. There is much symbolism which helps us understand and grasp what happens, but in reality it is an ongoing sacrificial banquet which Christ has launched on the night when He was betrayed.
- The Gospel of Matthew gives witness of this in the Words of Jesus, namely [27-28] *"Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.* That night already it is poured out for MANY, not the Twelve only, but for all future disciples of Christ. Disciples are made by baptising them in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and by teaching them all Christ has taught His Twelve Apostles (Mt 28, 19-20). So, we participate in the ongoing sacrificial banquet where Jesus is the host. He makes it a holy meal by giving us of His spiritual, holy food, His living, resurrected body and blood, in with and under the bread and wine for the forgiveness of our sins. He strengthens our faith and gives peace to our conscience as we partake of the Bread from Heaven and the Blood of the New Testament.
- This holy meal sanctifies us as we receive it trusting His Word and thus we are ready for the Last Day, for our own death and for sharing this Good News with others who are still burdened by their own sins and those of their enemies. Thank you dearest Jesus. **Amen.**
- *And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. **Amen.** [Phil 4,7].*