



Free Evangelical  
Lutheran Synod  
in South Africa

## Sermon- Maundy Thursday (Proper B) 2018

*The Giving of the New Testament to many!*



St. John's Lutheran Parish  
Shelly Beach

- **The Word of God for this Sermon is written in Mark 14, 12-26:**
- <sup>ESV</sup> **12** And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?"
- **13** And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him,
- **14** and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'
- **15** And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us."
- **16** And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.
- **17** And when it was evening, he came with the twelve.
- **18** And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me."
- **19** They began to be sorrowful and to say to him one after another, "Is it I?"
- **20** He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me.
- **21** For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."
- **22** And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body."
- **23** And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it.
- **24** And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.
- **25** Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."
- **26** 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 our minds and our hearts with Your powerful word so that we will receive what You give in faith. Amen.*
- **Dear beloved of God!**
- The Giving of the New Testament is what tonight is about! Christ initiated the

New Covenant with His disciples. To shed some light on what it means and is, let us go back to the time of Exodus.

• The Israelites had been slaves of Pharaoh. Now, Pharaoh was considered to be some type of incarnation of a sun-god, by the Egyptians. So, the Israelites were not only political slaves, but mainly religious slaves. They had to work for Pharaoh, from the morning to the evening. Pagan gods are slave-drivers. Pagan gods make their people work for them so that their ranking amongst the other gods would improve, to put it simply. In an ancient document one can read how the gods decided to make man to work for them. So, the whole idea of man having a god, according to paganism, is to be enslaved by that god. So, the whole hierarchy worked in this way, that the closer you were to a god, the less you worked.

• This is why worship meant to work for him, to serve him. That is what the Israelites were forced to do in Egypt. They served another god by having to work for him.

• Now, we see what a great thing the Exodus was for the Israelites. They were released from bondage serving a foreign god. God rescued them from pagan slavery! God called Israel His son. Let my son go, He told Pharaoh through Moses. Let my son go, He said, to serve me and in another place to hold a feast for me.

• So, does this now mean, they just went from one slavery to another? No, not at all. They often thought so, but the opposite was the truth. We see that already in the Passover meal that God told them to do, that no food was going God's way. They themselves were to eat the unblemished lamb and the unleavened bread ready to leave that night. And they needed to paint the blood of the lamb on their door-posts so that the destroyer would pass over them that night.

• And so it was. And when they travelled through the wilderness, what happened [Ex 13,21-22] *“And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of*

*fire by night did not depart from before the people.*

- Very significant: The LORD is present with them as people of the Lord in a visible pillar of cloud to lead them, to guide them and also to give them light. And this pillar never left them!
- So, was this God enslaving His people? Was He abusing them? Not at all. He commanded them to keep the passover meal to bless them through it. It was a means of grace for what the letter to the Hebrews calls the period of the Old Testament. And God was present with His people to protect them as a nation, on their way to the promised land!
- Did the people see it that way? Unfortunately most of the time not! God did it anyway, because on the night when His only begotten Son was betrayed He installed the final Testament, the New Testament in the Blood of Jesus Christ. Within the old Passover meal and the feast of Unleavened Bread, Jesus inaugurated the New Testament. He was giving His own blood, that is His sacred life, and poured it out for many!
- And this means, in this meal that was installed on that night we will participate tonight as we do what Jesus commanded us to do. We latch onto it so to speak, as we say what He said and do as He commanded. And the reason for commanding us to do this, is for your and my benefit, in fact it is for the benefit of all people around us!
- It is true that in Baptism all our sins were washed away and we were completely sanctified by receiving the Holy Spirit. But, unfortunately after Baptism we still sin. And let us not underestimate what sin does to us. We see it in the reaction of all the disciples to the statement of Jesus that one of them will would betray Him. We know and the Lord knew it was going to be Judas, but what happened when He told them? They all said, is it I, is it I, is it I! It was guilt speaking. None of them had a clean conscience! They all had a guilty conscience.
- And that is what sin does. We pile up guilt in ourselves. Now, Jesus has paid for all sins, all our sins too, but how is this guilt effectively removed from our soul. It

is not as easy as you think to forgive yourself. What we need is an authority outside of ourselves, we need a commanded ritual done to us, given to us which will cleanse us and sanctify us. That we find in the confession and absolution which washes us clean, which forgives us all our sins. In the Lord's Supper we receive the Most Holy Body of Christ which unites us with the whole Body of Christ and we receive the Most Holy Blood of Christ which sanctifies us and fully restores the New Testament with us.

- We are sanctified by Jesus' blood to be a blessing for others. Sanctification drives us out towards others. We participate in the holiness of God to share His holiness with others around us. Our conscience is cleansed and even sanctified, so that we begin to love others, by forgiving them their trespasses against ourselves and sharing with them the Glory of God, namely the Word of the Cross.
- And in all of this, we may count on the real presence of our Lord, guiding, enlightening and protecting us, as we walk through the wilderness to finally enter the promised land with our resurrected bodies. **Amen.**
- *"Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever." **Amen.***