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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 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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.