

Maundy Thursday
April 9, 2020

Announcements and Welcome

Hymn: "Taste and See" by John Michael Talbot

The Invocation: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Call to Worship: I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad. Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together! I sought the LORD, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them. Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! Oh, fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack! The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken. Affliction will slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. The LORD redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

The Confession: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Let us then confess our sins to God our Father. Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

The Absolution: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His sake, God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ, He gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Collect of the Day

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. O Lord, in the wondrous sacrament you have left us a remembrance of your passion. Grant that we may so receive the sacred mystery of your body and blood that the fruits of your redemption may continually be manifest in us; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

The Old Testament Reading is written in the book of Amos, chapter 8, verses 7 to 14.

The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob: “Surely I will never forget any of their deeds. Shall not the land tremble on this account, and everyone mourn who dwells in it, and all of it rise like the Nile, and be tossed about and sink again, like the Nile of Egypt? And on that day,” declares the Lord GOD, “I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight. I will turn your feasts into mourning and all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on every waist and baldness on every head; I will make it like the mourning for an only son and the end of it like a bitter day. Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord GOD, “when I will send a famine on the land—not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the LORD, but they shall not find it. In that day the lovely virgins and the young men shall faint for thirst. Those who swear by the Guilt of Samaria, and say, ‘As your god lives, O Dan,’ and, ‘As the Way of Beersheba lives,’ they shall fall, and never rise again.”

The Holy Gospel is according to St. Luke, chapter 22, verses 1 to 34.

Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. ² And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people. ³ Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. ⁴ He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. ⁵ And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. ⁶ So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd. ⁷ Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸ So Jesus^[a] sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.” ⁹ They said to him, “Where will you have us prepare it?” ¹⁰ He said to them, “Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters ¹¹ and tell the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ ¹² And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there.” ¹³ And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover. ¹⁴ And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵ And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you I will not eat it^[b] until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” ¹⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. ¹⁸ For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” ¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”^[c] ²¹ But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. ²² For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!” ²³ And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this. ²⁴ A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. ²⁵ And he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. ²⁶ But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. ²⁷ For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves. ²⁸ You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, ²⁹ and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, ³⁰ that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve

tribes of Israel. ³¹ Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, ^[d] that he might sift you like wheat, ³² but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” ³³ Peter^[e] said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death.” ³⁴ Jesus^[f] said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.”

Apostles' Creed: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

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Hymn

The Sermon: Taste

“You’ve got to taste this!” Our mothers said this as they thrust lima beans into our face, or some other unpleasant veggies. “You’ve got to taste this!” Wives say this to husbands as they test their latest concoction of tuna casserole or a new Pinterest recipe. But all this pales in comparison to the taste test conducted by a gourmet cook as she thrust dog food upon unsuspecting guests.

It all happened at an elegant reception near Denver. The dog food was served on delicate little crackers with a wedge of imported cheese, bacon chips, an olive, and a sliver of pimento on top. You’ve got it: it was hors d’oeuvres a la dog food. The hostess had just graduated from a gourmet cooking course and decided it was time to put her skills to the ultimate test. After doctoring up those miserable morsels and putting them on a couple of silver trays, with a sly grin she watched them all disappear. One man just couldn’t get enough. When they broke the news to him, he probably barked and bit her on the leg! In all likelihood, he was famished for real food.

Amos also knows about people hungering for real food and finding none. In Amos 8:11 the prophet announces that no longer will the people experience famine and drought brought about by destruction of the natural world, rather, they will undergo an even harsher judgment. Hunger and thirst will arise because of a famine in the hearing of God’s words. Without access to divine words, Israel will be lost.

In their deepest moment of need people will finally turn to the LORD (unlike the stubbornness described in Amos 4), but at that point God will offer no word. How frightening! The divine silence will be deafening and destroying. Israel rejected God’s words. Now the punishment will fit the crime.

In Scripture, God’s anger is sometimes demonstrated by His silence. Micah 3:4 says as much: **“Then they will cry out to the LORD and He will not answer them; and He will hide His face from them.”** In Judges 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, and 21:25 we hear that **“Israel had no king.”** And in Judges 17:6 and 21:25 we learn that **“everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”** The result was that **“the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there were not many visions”** (1 Samuel 3:1). God’s refusal to speak also occurs in 1 Samuel 14:27: **“So Saul**

inquired of God, ‘Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you give them into Israel’s hand?’ But God did not answer him that day.”

In like manner, Israelites who would not listen to the LORD’S word through Amos or through disasters will be completely cut off from divine communication. The conversation was over; words don’t work. Actions will now deliver God’s just judgment.

Jesus gives this same warning to the church in Ephesus in Revelation, **“If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.”** In this case the “lampstand” indicates Christ’s presence. Divine absence means silence and death.

Luther uses the term *Platzregen* to describe a local downpour of the Gospel that then moves on. The Reformer writes:

Let us remember our former misery, and the darkness in which we dwelt. Germany, I am sure, has never before heard so much of God’s word as it is hearing today; certainly we read nothing of it in history. If we let it just slip by without thanks and honor, I fear we shall suffer a still more dreadful darkness and plague. O my beloved Germans, buy while the market is at your door; gather in the harvest while there is sunshine and fair weather; make use of God’s grace and word while it is there! For you should know that God’s word and grace is like a passing shower of rain which does not return where it has once been. It has been with the Jews, but when it’s gone it’s gone, and now they have nothing. Paul brought it to the Greeks; but again when it’s gone it’s gone, and now they have the Turk. Rome and the Latins also had it; but when it’s gone it’s gone, and now they have the pope. And you Germans need not think that you will have it forever, for ingratitude and contempt will not make it stay. Therefore, seize it and hold it fast, whoever can.

Why do you and I experience a famine of God’s Word? Why are there times when He is silent and so distant?

Oh, we try to stick to a diet of thanksgiving, kindness, and humility. All too often, though, our diet goes something like this. Perhaps you can relate. For breakfast, you eat a good and appropriate amount, and then hold steady until lunch. There, someone shares a delicious treat, fresh cookies, and you have one. Then another, and another. You shake it off, saying you will eat better for dinner. But at dinner, those carbs looks good, so good. A soda would compliment this meal well, and ice cream always makes a good dessert. At that this point, well, there is always tomorrow for healthy eating!

Oh, we try, don’t we? We try to stay on a spiritual diet of God’s Word that brings vigor and victory, strength and power. But then we slip, one cookie, one crumb of coveting, one piece of pornography, one slice of slander, one sip of sarcasm, and then the rest of the package of cookies. We just can’t get enough. And this is killing us.

The enemy thrusts junk food before us on silver trays and with a sly grin watches it all disappear. Filled to the brim with his miserable morsels our desire to regularly study, memorize, learn, defend, trust, believe, love, and live out God’s Word becomes a chore, a bore, a snore until we say “no more!” And the result is a famine in the hearing of God’s Word.

This is why, though, God decided to serve up one more Word. As a man His appetite is defined in Hebrews 2:9, **“So that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.”** Talk about a taste test. This was it for all time! Jesus tasted the demonic delight called death, the soldiers’ spit, their cheap wine, sweat running down His cheeks along with His own blood. But there was more. Jesus drank the cup of the Father’s wrath. He drank every last drop. And it killed Him.

Yet Jesus not only tasted death. He swallowed him up, chewed him up, and spit him out! In 1 Corinthians 15:54 Paul announces, “**Death has been swallowed up in victory!**”

And this means that our famine and hunger has ended. The feast is here! It was Luther who pounded the table at Marburg with the Latin words, “*hoc est corpus meum*.” In English it means, “This is My body.” The forgiveness and love, mercy and salvation accomplished at Calvary is now present in the bread and wine by the power of the Word. The Bible does not teach real absence, but real presence. We have a God Who is with us. One Who walks with us in suffering and sadness, joy and gladness. Christ’s true body and blood are here to completely forgive all your sins and wipe them out forever. There is a seat and spot prepared for you, and one at the Heavenly Banquet with Him that will not end!

What’s more, though, is that the forgiveness, love, mercy and salvation accomplished at Calvary is also given in our baptism when that water and word touched our heads, burying and raising us with Christ. We are united with Him! It marked us forever as His! His work is given and applied to you! And those same gifts are given through His Word, spoken or read, that passes through our ears and mind, and touches our hearts. The famine has truly ended. The feast is truly here! God speaks! Amen.

Hymn: "Now the Feast and Celebration"

Prayer of the Church

Pastor...Lord, in Your mercy,

Congregation: Hear our prayer.

The Lord’s Prayer: Let us pray the prayer Jesus has taught us to pray: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn "Softly and Tenderly"

The Stripping of the Altar

The removal of all items of worship from the Altar this evening ties tonight’s worship service to the stark nature of tomorrow’s worship service and our remembrance of Christ’s death on the cross.

Once the Altar has been stripped, you are encouraged to have a few moments of silent prayer.