

Grace and peace to you from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ
Amen.

The sermon text tonight is written in **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**

Let us pray ...

Heavenly Father, grant to us Your wisdom and insight here this evening as we meditate on Your word and on Your Holy meal. May You find the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts acceptable in Your sight. Amen

Title - *Do This In Remembrance Of Me*

As we begin to celebrate Easter this year our churches will be empty, and the altars will be bare. Even so faithful pastors will find ways to continue worship and preach to the people of God.

Because we aren't able to gather this year we wait and yearn for another opportunity to partake of the Lord's Supper. But in our waiting and yearning, I would like to take this opportunity remind you that, this holy Sacrament has been instituted for the special comfort of those who are troubled because of their sin.

Tonight, we heard from St. Paul as he writes to the members of the church in Corinth. His reason for writing to the Corinthians was to remind the people there of the importance of the Lord's Supper. He reminds them of what he was taught and who had taught it to him and what this teaching means for him and for them. And because we too have been handed St. Paul's letter, he continues to remind us why the Lord's Supper is so important.

You see, the Lord's Supper is a meal like no other. It is a meal that is instituted by the Lord Himself, and it is no coincidence that He did this on the night of the Passover meal. He chose this night for a specific purpose.

The Passover meal is a celebrated tradition that dates back to the days of Moses and the Israelite exodus out of the land of Egypt. It was then and still is now a meal in which the Jewish people actively remember God's deliverance of His chosen people.

As we heard in the first reading tonight, this meal was instituted by God, as an annual festival and serves to remembrance what He had done; *this is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance* (Ex 12:14).

For the Israelite people and the subsequent generations, the observance of this festival ensured that they remembered the enslavement of their forefathers by an evil and repressive regime, and also by whom they were delivered from the bondage of this slavery.

Through the observance of the festival there was an actualization of redemptive history for the following generations; in the Jewish understanding of remembrance their observance of the Passover festival meant that they too took part in this same redemptive history as their forefathers had.

Through this festival they are remembrancing the mercy and grace that God had bestowed upon their forefathers; that it was He who had brought them out from the evil that was afflicting them. And through the offering of the sacrifice in this remembrance the Israelites of all time are joined together into that one moment of time, so that they all can re-live the event that saw their forefathers delivered from slavery.

This event that is recorded in the book of Exodus was enacted through the blood of a sacrifice, *the animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats*. By wiping the blood of the sacrifice on the doorframe of their houses they had the promise that they would be spared from God's wrath.

Like the Israelites in the Exodus story, we too are caught in bondage. We are slaves just like they were, and we don't even recognize how caught up we are. We are slaves to sin; we live in bondage to our human free will, and by nature our free will is impure, and inclined to do all manner of evil. We hate, we lie and cheat, we have lustful thoughts, we murder, we are self-seeking, we don't love our neighbours and so the list goes on and on.

As we live through the Covid pandemic this is becoming more and more evident. Our true human sinful nature is coming to the fore, as we panic buy, as we buy up extra freezers to horde groceries for ourselves rather than sharing them with others. It is seen in how many people are willingly placing themselves at risk of contracting the disease by not distancing and ignoring the health of others, and in our lack of empathy for the sick stuck on cruise ships. We see it in the fact that we can afford to isolate ourselves in our homes, but we hear nothing of those who cannot afford to isolate, the poor or homeless especially in other countries overseas.

Easter time is a difficult time for the Christian; it is the time in our church year during which we come face to face with the harsh reality of what it means to be human. It is the time when we are confronted by the end result of our free will. Someone had to pay the price for our wrongdoing, and this someone turned out to be Christ Jesus. He had to be the one who die on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins.

Many people out there in society and a lot of Christians for that matter have forgotten why it is that Christ had to suffer and die on the cross. They are willing to accept and celebrate the season of Christ's birth, and they may even pay tribute to the risen Christ, but they struggle to come to grips with what Christ endured for us. They fail to comprehend the significance of His death on the cross.

For this reason the Lent and Easter seasons are an important time of the year, Lent is the time during which we are encouraged to reflect on how we have lived our lives, especially in light of the up and coming events of Easter. We are encouraged to recognize our sins, to repent of them and turn back to God our heavenly Father.

We do this by trusting in the Good News; *by believing in the one [God] has sent* (John 6:29), by believing that Jesus Christ died on the cross to save us from the sin of our free wills. By believing that on the cross Christ offered up the ultimate sacrifice; that He willingly gave up His life so that we would not have too. He tells us that it is *my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life* (John 6:40).

During the celebration of the Passover meal that was held as a remembrance of what the Lord had done, Jesus instituted a new covenant. *Jesus took bread, 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." 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"*.

Tonight we will remembrance the sacrifice that Christ offered up for us. Christ is the Lamb of God; He was the sacrifice given to atone for the sin of the world. *Behold*, said John the Baptist *the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world* (John 1:29).

On the cross Christ gave up His life-giving blood for us, so that we might have eternal life in the kingdom of heaven. Christ was without blemish and perfect in every way. He is like the Passover Lamb, but He is also infinitely more. He is the Son, and He is also the sacrifice of the new covenant that God has made with His chosen people.

What Jesus instituted on that night when He was betrayed has a continuing and everlasting significance for us. Through His words of institution, He is inviting us to remembrance what He has done for us. He is inviting us to remember that is it through His death on the cross, and by His resurrection that we are saved.

In the gospel according to John, *Jesus said to [the Jews], "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him (John 6:53–56).*

We are all strengthened and preserved in body and spirit unto eternal life through the gift of Christ's body and blood, which is present in the bread and the wine of this Holy meal. It's for this reason that Holy Communion is so important for our faith, Jesus Christ when He instituted this meal said, *"This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me ... this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."*

Given for you ... in remembrance of me

Receiving this gift serves to strengthen our faith; it is a reminder of what Christ has done for us, it is a celebration of His victory over death, it is a confession of faith in Him and what He has promised us, and it is a look in to the future heavenly banquet to come.

When we celebrate this Holy meal we are joined together with the Christians of all times and in all places. We are the community of believers who are remembering the sacrifice that Christ offered up for us. The Lord's Supper is a 'means of grace' and connects us to Christ's death on the cross and the forgiveness of sin. Christ was the sacrifice given to atone for the sin of the world; that means all of our sins, your sins ... and mine. He gave Himself willingly for our salvation, so that we can come to the Father and live life eternal.

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Amen