Maundy Thursday Exodus 12:21-30
April 1, 2021 714*-315-389-108, v. 3
*CW-S – "The Lamb"

May Christ the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy on us and grant us His peace. Amen.

The Passover – Holy Communion – Two "Lord's Suppers"
I. Both Suppers look back to God's saving acts.
II. Both Suppers provide strength for the present.
III. Both Suppers pointed ahead to future glory.

Dear Christian friends,

The words are FAMILIAR ENOUGH. ***"Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, etc."*** Today we recall that SPECIAL night. But as this day began Jesus' **betrayal** was the LAST THING on the disciples' minds. They had a MORE PRESSING concern. This was ***"the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed."*** So they asked Jesus, ***"Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?"*** The **OT Passover** provides the setting for Jesus INSTITUTING **Holy Communion**.

The Passover. **Holy Communion** – they are TWO "LORD'S SUPPERS" – both instituted by God to HELP AND BLESS His people. 1)BOTH Suppers look back to God's **saving acts**. 2)BOTH Suppers provide strength **for the present** and 3)BOTH Suppers point ahead to **future glory**.

I. Both Suppers look back to God's saving acts.

The **Passover** and **Holy Communion** are yes two LORD'S Suppers. Both were instituted – ESTABLISHED - by God. We are to do EXACTLY AS the **Lord commands** us. The Israelites couldn't substitute **chicken** and **French fries** for the lamb and bitter herbs. We can't replace the bread and wine with **coffee** and **donuts**. These are the LORD'S Suppers – HIS GIFTS to us.

The Passover centered on the **lamb** and ***"bitter herbs."*** The **bitter herbs** recalled the YEARS OF BITTER SLAVERY in Egypt. The lamb recalled those VERY FIRST Passover lambs.

God gave very detailed instructions about the Passover. The lamb was to be ***"a year-old male without defect"*** – no bumps, bruises, broken bones. In the coming years **as the Israelites celebrated** the Passover they were to REMEMBER HOW God had commanded their forefathers, ***"You shall take hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and paint the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood."***

Just stop and picture that! That had to look RIDICULOUS. **Some probably** felt foolish doing that. WHAT GOOD was some lamb's blood smeared on their doorframes suppose to do? But they had BOTH GOD'S COMMAND to do that AND GOD'S PROMISE, ***"When the LORD passes through to strike Egypt and sees the blood on the lintel and doorposts, the LORD will pass over that door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you."*** TRUSTING **God's promise** the Israelites did as God **had commanded** them. As the coming generations of Israelites CELEBRATED the Passover it was not to be a MEANINGLESS RITUAL, just a good meal with family. ***"When your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean?' You will say, 'It is the sacrifice of the Passover to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt. When He struck the Egyptians, He spared our houses.'"***

The Passover looked back to GOD RESCUING the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. The Israelites couldn't save themselves from the MISERY and BRUTALITY of life as slaves in Egypt. In FAITHFULNESS and GRACE God came to their rescue. With a devastating tenth plague God

CRUSHED Pharaoh's pride and forced Pharaoh to ***"let (His) people go." "At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on his throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon, even all the firstborn of the livestock."*** AS GOD HAD PROMISED the lamb's blood painted on the doorframes protected the Israelites inside their homes. **With the Passover** God wanted His people to REMEMBER how He had saved them in Egypt.

So Jesus and His disciples ate the Passover on that ***"night He was betrayed."*** At the end of that **OT Holy Supper** Jesus instituted His NEW **Holy Supper**. He used some of the LEFTOVER unleavened bread and grape wine. ***"Jesus took bread. When He had blessed it, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'Take it. This is My body.' Then He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them. 'This is My blood of the new testament, which is poured out for many.'"***

BOTH the **Passover** and **Holy Communion** are Holy Suppers but there is a BIG DIFFERENCE between them! The lamb reminded the Israelites of the ORIGINAL lambs from the VERY FIRST Passover. But the bread and wine of Holy Communion DON'T JUST remind or **picture for us** Jesus' body and blood ONCE GIVEN on Calvary's cross. Jesus' words are SIMPLE and CLEAR and we take Jesus AT HIS WORD. ***"This IS My body. This IS My blood."*** With the blessed bread and wine Jesus MIRACULOUSLY and REALLY gives us His true body and blood – the very same body **once nailed** to the cross – the very same blood **once shed** on the cross. What a HOLY Supper this is!

"Given – shed – FOR THE FORGIVENESS of sins." Holy Communion is NOT FOR perfect people but for guilty sinners. We DON'T COME to Communion because we've cleaned up our **acts** and straightened out our **lives**. We come because we've MADE SUCH A MESS of our lives. DESPITE our **best intentions** and **even promises** we daily keep falling into all kinds of sins. God should be SO DISGUSTED and **fed up** with each one of us. God should have GIVEN UP on **each one** of us so long ago. INSTEAD Jesus invites us to His Holy Supper.

"For the forgiveness of sins." That's what Jesus' death on the cross is all about – ***"forgiveness of sins."*** God doesn't find our **rebellion** and **defiance** CUTE. God doesn't ignore and He doesn't excuse our sins. But God HAS FORGIVEN **all** our sins because of Jesus. Jesus – God's eternal Son born our brother – took our place under God's law and has taken care of everything to save us. Jesus lived for us the **holy, sinless life** WE OWED God. Then Jesus suffered and died on the cross PUNISHED for the sins of the whole word – yours and **mine** included. Jesus' innocent death on the cross has FULLY PAID for all our sins. Jesus' precious blood shed on the cross ***"cleanses us from all sin."*** God not only tells us that OVER AND OVER **in His Word** Jesus invites us again and again to ***"take eat – drink"*** the very body and blood He gave into death ***"for the forgiveness"*** of all our sins.

"Do this IN REMEMBRANCE of Me," Jesus tells us. The remembering of God's SAVING ACTS was the reason for the **yearly** Passover feast. With that remembering…

II. Both Supper provide strength for the present.

HOW could we ever forget what **Jesus has all done** for us? HOW could the Israelites ever forget how **God had rescued** them from Egypt? Do we really need to ask HOW they/we could forget?

HOW OFTEN and how QUICKLY the Israelites forgot how God had saved them! They FORGOT and they then panicked – they were afraid. OVERWHELMED by their problems they despaired. BARELY OUT of Egypt – blocked by the Red Sea – pursued by Pharaoh's chariots and army they, ***"said to Moses, 'What have you done by bringing us out of Egypt? Wasn't this what we said to you in Egypt, "Leave us alone. Let us serve the Egyptians"? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.'"*** Moses tells them, ***"Do not be afraid. Stand firm, and see the salvation from the Lord, which He will perform for you today. For the Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you. You must wait quietly."***

We're NO DIFFERENT. We have our share of **pains** and problems – **hardships** and headaches – **disappointments** and struggles. That daily battle to live a **God-centered, God-pleasing** life can be a battle we SEEM TO LOSE **more often** than we win. We grow tired – FRUSTRATED – **fearful**. God cheers and strengthens us **through His Word**. Jesus invites us again and again to His Holy Supper.

Jesus uses Holy Communion to REFOCUS us back on Him and so give us the STRENGTH WE NEED to **keep going**. **In a sense** Jesus comes to us and **asks** us, "Do you WANT PROOF I love you – that I have forgiven you – that I always keep all My promises – that I am with you ALL THE WAY? Then here's the proof of JUST THAT – ***'take eat, drink – My body, blood – given, shed FOR YOU. Do this and remember Me"*** – Me, your loving – forgiving faithful LIVING SAVIOR!"

The Passover – **Holy Communion** – BOTH HOLY SUPPERS of not just remembering but also…

III. Pointing ahead to future glory.

The Passover pointed the Israelites AHEAD to the **coming promised Savior**. Paul calls Jesus, ***"Christ, our Passover Lamb."*** Those countless OT Passover lambs were STUNNING PICTURE PROMISES of Jesus – the Lamb perfect in **every way** – the innocent Lamb slain to SAVE the guilty – Jesus' blood PROTECTING us from sins' **guilt** – the devil's **power** – death's **grip**.

Holy Communion points us ahead to Jesus COMING AGAIN in glory on the Last Day. ***"Amen I tell you: I will certainly not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new (with you) in the kingdom of God."*** Paul tells us that ***"As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death UNTIL HE COMES."***

The Israelites left Egypt HEADING for the Promised Land of Canaan. We travel through this life HEADING for our **promised land** of heaven. The journey can be SO HARD and TIRING. But with His Holy Supper Jesus refreshes us and points us to **future glory** – TO His coming again. ***"In My Father's house are many mansions. I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to be with Me, so that you may also be where I am."*** Redeemed and reconciled with God through Jesus' **sacrificial death** on the cross we LOOK FORWARD to **Jesus coming again** and living forever in that ***"new heaven and new earth, where there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, where God will wipe every tear from our eyes, make everything new." "I am coming soon,"*** Jesus promises us. And He invites us YET AGAIN, ***"Take eat, drink – My body, blood – given/shed FOR YOU"*** so we can be ABSOLUTELY SURE of living forever with Him in heaven. Amen.

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