

Mark 14:22-25

April 18, 2019

“Until I Drink It Anew in the Kingdom of God” Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Maundy Thursday

Vicar Otterman

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, Our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

[Introduction]

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

The painting we call *The Last Supper* took three years for Leonardo da Vinci to complete. To this day, it is the most popular piece of Christian art in the world, with its image being found on carpets, carvings, canvas, and practically any other medium you can imagine.

With lifelike facial expressions that surpassed the other paintings of its day, the 15 x 29 foot mural became an instant masterpiece of design and characterization.

But did you know that almost immediately after it was completed in 1498, it started to fall apart? Da Vinci, always the inventor, tried using new materials for his painting. Instead of using the usual wet plaster, he experimented by using dry plaster.

And unfortunately, what worked artistically was not so successful in terms of durability. Almost immediately it began to flake off the wall, and people have been attempting to restore the original ever since. *The Last Supper* isn't so lasting.

[Blessings of the Past]

Tonight is Maundy Thursday. It's a special night of Holy Week in which we transport ourselves back to the upper room, the original scene of *the Last Supper*.

As Jesus and the disciples shared that Passover meal, they would have started off with reviewing the history of God's grace, especially remembering how God used lamb's blood painted on doorframes to keep his people safe as the angel of death passed over Egypt.

They would have then recalled how God led the people of Israel out of the land of slavery with a pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night.

Finally, the celebrants would have listened with eyes wide open as the teacher

relayed the story of the Red Sea being parted, allowing God's people to pass through to safety, only to have those walled waters come crashing down on the pursuing enemies.

As the disciples ate this meal and listened intently, they felt a connection to their past. They felt a connection to God, as his people. They felt a connection to one another, as this family history belonged to each one of them.

It was a very special night, the most special night of the year.

[Blessings of the Present]

But just when the disciples thought it couldn't get any better, Jesus did something that made the occasion even more special.

While they were eating, Jesus took the unleavened bread, which was part of the original Passover meal, and he told them, "*This is my body.*" Then he took the cup, offered it to them, and said, "*This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.*"

Jesus' words made it very clear that this New Testament Supper with his disciples was something new and special. It's easy to imagine that the disciples wouldn't have wanted that moment to end. They wanted the Last Supper to last.

But Jesus didn't want it to last. He knew it couldn't last. His ultimate goal was not to dine with his disciples at the Last Supper, but his goal is to dine with all of us at a lasting supper.

So he grabs our attention, once again using the phrase: "*I tell you the truth.*"

"*I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine.*" In other words, Jesus knew that he would have to leave. If his body and his blood were going to be given and poured for us, he needed to do just that. The last supper couldn't last.

But he continues, saying: "*I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God.*" If there was a word for the disciples to lean on in that upper room, it was that preposition: "until." With that one small word, Jesus gave his disciples and us today a reason for hope. Jesus gave a promise that he would feast with us again one day.

So much of that night was wrapped up in the past, as they celebrated God's grace

and deliverance of his Old Testament people from Egypt. So much of that night was wrapped up in the present, as Jesus emphatically declared, “This *is* my body and this *is* my blood which *is being poured out* for you.”

Jesus’ suffering was already at hand. But neither the emphasis on God’s past deliverance nor his present offering of himself as the Passover Lamb would have meant a thing if there wasn’t a future. And the future was there in that little word, “until.”

[Blessings of the Future]

It’s that word, “until,” that we lean on tonight as well. Through the Lord’s Supper, Jesus invites us to look back. As we come to this table tonight, Jesus wants us to eat and drink in remembrance of him, recalling and proclaiming his death.

Before we come to this table, Jesus wants us to look inward as we examine ourselves. With the stethoscope of God’s law on our hearts, our diagnosis is that we are guilty of sinning against God and that we deserve his punishment.

As we come to this table tonight, Jesus wants us to look around and appreciate the blessing of unity we have with those who are at our side receiving his body and his blood. Take a moment and look around at each other. Go ahead.

Appreciate the fact that “*we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf*” (1 Co 10:17).

But above all else, as we come to this table and as we leave this table, our Savior invites us to look forward. Look forward until that day when *he drinks it anew with us in the kingdom of God*.

By emphasizing the future supper, we don’t downplay the tremendous blessing we receive tonight. Jesus, as testified by his own words and promise, is miraculously present in this meal. He is here, attaching himself in, with, and under these earthly elements through his Word. As we receive his body and his blood, he’s offering to us the forgiveness of sins that only comes through the gospel.

Enjoy this meal tonight. Hear the words spoken so many years ago, spoken again to you personally by your Savior, “Take and eat, this is my body, given for you. Take and drink, this is my blood, shed for you.” Savor this meal tonight and every time you come to the Lord’s Supper. But do so knowing that our Savior’s goal is not simply to dine with us like he did with his disciples at the Last Supper.

No, he gave his body and blood so that we could have reservations for the greatest meal of all time – not the last supper, but the lasting supper. It will be an eternal feast where he eats and drinks with us face-to-face in the kingdom of God.

What that heavenly banquet exactly looks like, feels like, or tastes like, I don't know. But it will be new and wonderful, like something we've never experienced before.

No longer will we have to look inward and examine ourselves for sin because we'll be confirmed in holiness, wearing white robes of righteousness that were tailored by the blood of Jesus.

No longer will we have to look around and be saddened that we can't share this feast with everybody, because in the kingdom of God there will be perfect unity.

And no longer will we need to look ahead, because what is the future for us now will then be our present reality, a reality that is breathtaking, filled with overwhelming joy that will never end. It will be a lasting supper. Amen.

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) Amen.
