

## Maundy Thursday

April 17, 2025



At creation God ordained that the sun must daily rise and shine and give light and warmth to creatures. Just so the Lord Christ also ordained and commanded that in his church his essential body and blood are to be present in the Lord's Supper, not merely in a spiritual but also in a bodily and yet incomprehensible manner.

—Martin Luther—

### PROCLAMATION POINTS

The following are some thoughts and questions to be used for a text study on the weekly lessons, or for jump-starting the imagination of the preacher and hearer in preparing for the proclamation event.

#### Jeremiah 31:31-34

Jeremiah's words speak directly to the exile of God's people in Babylon, and the disaster they had suffered because of their lack of faithfulness. Though God had been responsible for this period of accountability, he promised now that he would forgive and restore them.

- What do the themes of restoration and redemption have in common? How do both assume that some kind of brokenness already exists?

The people had been unable to keep up their side of the old covenant, and had failed to be obedient. But now, things would be different, because God would make a new covenant with his people that depended upon the Lord alone. This covenant will be written on their hearts, etched into their very being.

- In what ways does having God's law, "written on the human heart" refer to faith? In what sense does faith alone allow us to live righteously according to God's Word?
- How does this lesson foreshadow what Jesus would say and do at the Last Supper? How does all of this relate to his death and resurrection for our sake?

#### Psalms 116:12-19

The psalmist asks a poignant question after he cites all that the Lord has done for him. God has heard his voice, delivered him from certain death, and granted him mercy. He asks, "What could I possibly give back to the God who has given all of this to me?"

- How would you answer the psalmist's question? What is an appropriate response to all the Lord has provided for us?

In truth there is nothing that God needs from us. Our worship is not something we do to make God who God is. As Luther said: "God's name is holy in itself, but we ask in this prayer that we may keep it holy."

- How does our "sacrifice of praise" do something within us, as people of faith? Why do we need it?

#### Hebrews 10:15-25

In speaking of the once-and-for-all sacrifice of Christ on the cross, the author of Hebrews drew an analogy between the curtain of the temple that was torn when Jesus died (Matthew 27:51, Mark 15:38) to the "tearing" of Jesus' flesh at the crucifixion. Both actions opened up for believers

access to God, the holy One. The cross is the sign and instrument of our reconciliation with God through Christ.

- In the context of Maundy Thursday and the Last Supper, in what sense is Holy Communion another example of this same sign and promise?

In verse 23, we are told to "hold fast the confession of our hope." This confession is the faith in Christ that we proclaim and in which we live. The word *katechomen* in Greek — meaning "to hold firmly" — carries the sense of being "fastened" or "attached to." This image is reminiscent of something Martin Luther said in the Large Catechism when he wrote, "Whatever it is that you *cling to* and *entrust yourself to* in time of need, is really your God."

- Why is it critical for us to know what it is that we trust and cling to — especially when things are tough? In this sense, how is confessing that Jesus Christ is our Savior ultimately confessing that Jesus Christ is our God?

#### Luke 22:7-20

The story of the Last Supper is the turning point of the Passion Story. It is at this last meal that Jesus informs his followers (notice the Greek word here is "apostles" and not "disciples") that he will not eat of this meal again until the Kingdom is fulfilled.

- When Jesus speaks of his "kingdom," what image or definition tends to come to mind first for you?

Martin Luther, in explaining the phrase "Thy Kingdom come" asked "when does this happen?" He answered: "God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us his Holy Spirit, so that by his grace, we believe his holy Word and live a godly life, now and to eternity."

- How does Luther's explanation of the kingdom help us to understand how Jesus can be with us here and now in the Lord's Supper?

In Scripture, the Last Supper marks the ending of one era — the era of sacrificing a Passover lamb for the sins of the people — and the beginning of a new era. Christians celebrate the Lord's Supper which, of course, has its basis in the Passover meal. Yet, it is quite a different sort of meal.

- Like the Passover, how does Holy Communion help us to remember? What are we remembering?
- Unlike the Passover, how is Holy Communion more than just a meal of remembrance? What does God actually do for us in the Lord's Supper?