

SERMON – PASTOR GREG
MAUNDY THURSDAY 14.04.2022

2022 Maundy Thursday. Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Maundy is from a Latin word `mandatum' which means `commandment'. This is the night on which Jesus was betrayed. This is the night on which Jesus celebrated the Passover. This is the night on which he was arrested and began that terrible journey towards the Cross. This was the night when God's plan of salvation for the world was coming to fulfilment.

Jesus gave five great commands to the Church before he ascended to the right hand of His Father in heaven:

1. Preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God.
2. Love one another as I have loved you.
3. If you forgive anyone their sins, God also forgives them.
4. Go and make disciples of all nations by baptising them and teaching them.
5. This is my body, this is my blood, do this in remembrance of me.

Holy Communion, the Supper of our Lord, the Eucharist, the Fellowship Meal, the Blessed Holy Sacrament. One of the mysteries that every Christian Church celebrates. Why?

Firstly, and most obviously because our Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to.

And as we receive this precious gift our communion with Christ, with God is strengthened. It is a sharing with God and a sharing with one another. It strengthens our community as it strengthens our faith.

It is this and it is more:

MEALS Things are getting a bit serious when a young man asks a young lady to go out to a fancy restaurant. And even more serious when the young man is invited to meet the parents. And things are really serious when their family and friends are invited to the wedding breakfast! Meals can be very intimate occasions when people share their innermost secrets, desires and love. Meals are essential in any deep and meaningful relationship. As with our relationships with one another and as with our relationship with God.

Imagine you were going to die in a few days. You are not sick or unhealthy but for some strange reason in few days you would be dead. What would you do? Go fishing or golfing? Go to Cairns and live the high life? Or maybe you would have a meal, a very special meal. And who would you invite? Your family and closest friends? What about a family member or friend who has hurt you? Let you down? Or even badly betrayed you? Would you invite such a person to your last meal?

Meals can be very special events. **Genesis 18** tells the LORD appearing to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre through the visitation of three men. As was and is still today the custom of many people, Abraham invited the three visitors for a meal. Hospitality is still very important- we all know what it is like to be invited to someone's home for a meal. It represents so many more things than simply eating together. It is a sharing in a wonderful and intimate way. And so is Holy Communion.

Exodus 24:9 speaks of another meal with God: *Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God and they ate and drank!!!!!!!*

BREAD Exodus 16:4: *The LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you." We need earthly food but we also need spiritual food: Deuteronomy 8:3: The LORD humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna...to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.*

John 6:35: *I AM the BREAD of LIFE. Whoever comes to me will never goes hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you.*

BLOOD One of the key events of the Jewish faith which is still be celebrated today is the **PASSOVER MEAL**. The blood of the lambs painted on the doorposts were a sign to the angel of death to PASSOVER that house. But also remember that as the people of God heard the word of God and trusted and obeyed the word of God they were saved.

Leviticus 4, 5 speaks of the **SIN OFFERING**: *The LORD said to Moses, "When anyone is guilty in any of these ways, he must confess in what way he has sinned and a penalty for the sin he has committed, he must bring to the LORD a female lamb or goat from the flock as a sin offering and the priest shall make atonement for him and for his sin". (the sacrifice is to be burned and some of the blood is to be anointed of the horns of the altar and the rest poured out at the base of the altar).*

Hebrews 9:22: *In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*

COVENANT. One of the main features that we see throughout the Bible is covenants. Covenants are not exactly contracts. A covenant is a relationship, but it is a relationship that has been formalized, has expectations and can have dire consequences if broken. Biblical covenants begin with God's word and PROMISE.

And are sometimes sealed in BLOOD: Exodus 24:6: *Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey." Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.*

But the people of God could not and would not keep the Covenant that God had made with them. Suffering and death came to them but not completely, God as always wants all people to live with Him in peace and harmony and so he promised another covenant:

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:24-27: *I will sprinkle clean water on you...I will cleanse you from all your impurities...I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you...I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees.*

All this and more is what we are celebrating tonight once again- as part of our Easter proclamations. Tonight once again Jesus Christ you King of kings will come to us in a very real way- through His glorified body and blood. Are you ready?

Luther: We are ready to receive the blessed holy sacrament when we believe the words of Jesus: `This is my body given for you. This is my blood shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins.

With the faith that Jesus himself has given us- yes we are ready. Amen