

Maundy Thursday  
St. John 13:1-15  
April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Before the Feast of the Passover

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

Gracious God, Heavenly Father, we give Thee hearty thanks that through Thy Son, Jesus Christ, Thou hast for our good instituted the blessed Sacrament of the Holy Supper, wherein under the consecrated bread and wine He truly gives us His Body to eat and His Blood to drink for the forgiveness of our sins; and we beseech Thee, grant us Thy grace that we may at all times be truly worthy and well prepared to receive this gift, and order our lives aright, until we shall finally obtain eternal salvation; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

On Wednesday during Holy Week when the Feast of the Unleavened Bread drew near, the chief priests and scribes, and Judas conspired to betray the Lord + Jesus. Today, before the Feast of the Passover of our Lord, He gathers in the Upper Room to institute for His Apostles, and all those who would believe their witness and preaching, His Holy Supper of His Body and Blood given in bread and wine for poor, miserable sinners. In this meal He shows His love for His people. He loves us to the end. He loves us enough to suffer the pangs of crucifixion and death on the tree of the holy cross for us, and for all mankind. Through His Body and Blood given in bread and wine, we remember and proclaim His once and for all time sacrifice for us. We remember His sufferings and death, and we remember what His suffering and death did for us.

By this Blessed Sacrament we receive the gifts that He won on account of His Passion. Through His suffering and death, He won for all those who believe on Him forgiveness for their sins, eternal life with Him in Heaven, and salvation from the enemies of sin, death and the power of the devil. He conquered sin and death. He conquered the devil and his power over us. He then gives us the spoils of His victory freely and abundantly in this Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Through His Body and Blood offered in bread and wine, we receive His abundant gifts that He desires to give to those whom He loved and loves to the end. He gives this gift to us who through faith cling to His righteous work of redemption of all mankind.

He even gives us the gift of faith by the work of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost creates and sustains faith in us through the preaching of the Gospel, and through our participation in the Blessed Sacraments. He gives us the faith to receive His precious Body and Blood in bread and wine worthily. He gives us faith, through this holy meal, to love the Lord God, and to love each other fervently. He causes us to be a community of saints, a congregation, a parish of fellow Christians who look to Him in all times of trouble and woe. He gives us faith to believe that He has covered over our sins, and clothed us with His righteousness, so that we need not fear the accusations of Satan and the world on account of our manifold transgressions. He gives us faith through this meal to believe that we have forgiveness

of all of our sins. And we believe that wherever forgiveness of sins is found there are also eternal life and salvation given.

Our Lord has given us these gifts and made us a communion—a fellowship—of believers in Him. In the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John, He even gives us an example of how we are to be toward one another. He gives us an example of mutual love. He being the Teacher and the Lord showed His students and subjects how to be toward each other. We are to treat each other with humility. We are to exhibit humility in ourselves; not think of ourselves as more honorable than other people. For we are all poor, miserable sinners, even as we confessed earlier in the Service. We are all sinners in need of forgiveness—in need of the Lord God's grace. Let us always remember that our brother and sister in Christ is no worse than we are when it comes to sin. We are no greater than any other when it comes to the receiving of forgiveness, either. We ought not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to.

The Lord + Jesus washes the feet of the Apostles as an example of lowly, humble love that one should have for their fellow sinners. Each of us have been redeemed by Christ's suffering and death for our sins. We have not been redeemed because of some worthiness in us. We have not been redeemed because we are somehow greater and more honorable than other people. No, my dear friends, we have all been redeemed on account of our Lord's grace, mercy and love.

The Apostles before this meal—before the Lord washed their feet—were arguing among themselves which of them was to be considered the greatest. This was a common argument among the Apostles. We see it mentioned several times in the Gospels. On this particular night, the Apostles were arguing who was the greater, and who should be the servant, because they were alone in the Upper Room for the Passover meal. It was Jewish custom that a servant would wash the feet of everyone before a meal, because they would lay down to eat. Laying down to eat would not be enjoyable if every one had dirty, smelly feet, and those feet were close to one another's heads. Therefore, it was a servant's job to wash everyone's feet before a meal. On this night, there was no servant to do this task.

So, they argued among themselves which one should act as a servant to the others. Nobody wanted the position. Nobody wanted to humble himself to the position of servant in the midst of the other Apostles. Therefore, our Lord + Jesus teaches His Apostles, and us, how one is to act toward his fellow Christians. He is not supposed consider himself greater than his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, but rather he is to consider himself a servant of all. Let us always remember to not think of ourselves as more highly than we ought.

The Lord + Jesus looked forward to eating this Passover meal with His Apostles. For by it He would institute the meal that shows His love for mankind. He would give the Christian Church a new meal. The Passover meal would no longer exist. He would change the very nature of that meal. The Passover meal was meant as a memorial of the passing over of the destroying angel who killed the firstborn sons of all of Egypt. The Israelites had spread the blood of a lamb, that they had slaughtered, on the doorposts and lintel, and the destroying angel had passed over them, and did not kill their firstborn son. The lamb that was sacrificed was eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs as a feast of remembrance for their salvation.

Our Lord + Jesus would change this Passover meal into something completely different. Which is why so-called Seder meals have no place in the Christian Church, besides the fact that these meals do not resemble at all the Passover meals that our Lord + Jesus would have eaten. Our Lord institutes a new meal, a New Testament of His Body and Blood for the forgiveness of sins. He would now be the sacrificial Lamb which would be sacrificed on the tree of the holy cross. The heavenly Father's Firstborn Son—His Only-Begotten Son—would be killed to atone for the sins of all mankind, and save all those

who cling to His sacrifice in faith. His Body and Blood given in bread and wine would now be the food of immortality for all those who receive it in faith.

But, my dear friends, we are also reminded by the Apostle and Evangelist St. John, of Judas Iscariot. He is there as a warning to us. His betrayal is only known to the Lord. That Judas is present shows that the Lord + Jesus loves even him, and desires his repentance; He desires that Judas would find repentance for his betrayal. Unfortunately, the devil, and not the Lord + Jesus, was the one leading Judas. The greed of Judas led to his completely forsaking the only One Who could have offered him forgiveness for his sins. When Judas learned that the Lord + Jesus was condemned to death, he regretted his betrayal. He went to the priests for forgiveness, but they had none for him. The only One Who could have forgiven him was the Lord + Jesus, but sadly he did not look to the Lord.

Judas Iscariot serves as a warning to us. When we are troubled by sin, we should not look inside of ourselves, nor we should not look to other people (unless it is our pastor, who speaks the words of absolution as if they are from the Lord God Himself). Our Lord + Jesus, the One Who suffered and died for our sins on the tree of the holy cross, and who loved us to the end, is the One to Whom we should seek forgiveness. The pastor has the Lord's word of forgiveness on his lips when he proclaims the absolution; when he proclaims that on account of the works of Christ our sins are forgiven. The Lord + Jesus in His love for us—in His enduring love even though we show no worthiness—offers to us His Body and Blood in bread and wine for the remission of all our sins and transgressions.

Therefore, my dear friends, we can come to this altar as a communion of saint—a true fellowship of believers who share in one another's burdens of sin and shame—and receive together the forgiveness of our sins that our Lord + Jesus won for us by His death on the cross. Let us come to this altar, kneel before our Lord, and receive the gifts He desires to give to us out of His great love for us, for we are all poor sinners, who need His love and grace. Thanks be to the Lord God that He gives us such an abundant gift. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

We thank Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of all men, that Thou hast given Thyself into death for us to make atonement for our sins, and hast also left us an example of mutual service by humbly washing Thy disciples' feet; and we heartily beseech Thee, govern and direct our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit that we may in true faith firmly cling to Thee as our Savior, faithfully serve our neighbor with works of love, and obtain eternal salvation through Thy merit, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*