

Maundy Thursday (2018)

Mark 14:12–26 And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, “Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?” And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us.” And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

And when it was evening, he came with the twelve. And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.” They began to be sorrowful and to say to him one after another, “Is it I?” He said to them, “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me. For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.”

And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. **And he said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”**

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

In the Name of Jesus.

To what can we liken Moses, with all due respect? Think of buying a house, a car, closing a deal. He’s the middle man, who runs between one group and the other, until both sides are confessed. A middle man may also, like Moses, WRITE DOWN the contract, so that both sides

can check later, to see if each has kept up the deal. And a good realtor or salesman always has a pen ready. Today, they use lots of blue pens, to differentiate original papers from copies. Moses' pen was blood red.

Jesus' too! But Moses went up and down that mountain, back and forth between heaven and earth, God and men; he even had to make the covenant at Sinai twice! For while the first one was being written down upstairs in the office, the people's party was having second thoughts.

Jesus went up a much harder mount; though, perhaps, not as lofty. No man can see God and live; but Moses lived. Jesus did not. Moses came down with a two-sided contract between a greater and a lesser; and if the lesser broke it—which he COULD!—then death was the penalty.

Jesus said, in triumph, this is MY Blood of the Covenant! And now, my dear ones, there...is...no...middle...man! Just The MAN—Who assures us that there is no one else upstairs, no other God who might be itching to fuss with the contract. This covenant, HIS Blood—has no part, on our side, that we can break!

Actually, this is the sum of Christian faith, worship, godliness, good deeds, life! The CROSS, our Lord called

it!

For if there is ONE THING harder for people like you, me, Peter, Judas, the other runaway disciples—one thing harder to do than to PLEDGE ourselves to God and follow through—

Incomparably harder is to let our entire standing under heaven be the follow-through of the King of the Jews who poured out His Blood for us many! So much so, that in the very MIDST of our idolatries and adulteries and faithless living, our Baptism into Christ SO confirms our place in the kingdom of heaven, that we must LOOK DOWN to see God!

A traditional reading for this Thursday of the New Commandments, the New Mandate, Mandatum—which got mangled into the ‘Maundy’ of Maundy Thursday—tells of the twelve judges of all Israel, and of all men, the apostles, looking down on the Only God there is; and That God has no part with them, or with us, unless He washes our feet, unless HE is utterly our servant.

It’s the only way the deal is going to work now—if you read anything about Jesus’ star students in the Gospel according to Saint Mark! Ready to strike, when their Master came to heal; jockeying to be number one in the

church, when the position of Chief Slave was already taken; full of boasts and oaths of support and love when their bellies were full and the wine was flowing—sobered UP! it was all calling down curses and swearing oaths that their Master was the LAST ONE they wanted as King!

Do you see the way that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, knows us sinners through and through? What's the point—He would ask us—of catching a man in sin, parading that sin, holding onto that sin? What's the point of being surprised at what others can do? And whom do we think we're fooling, when we're surprised that WE can fail at Moses AND Christ! The Old Covenant and the New Testament? The Law or the Gospel?

Cheer up, dear Christians, as we enter the three day commemoration of our King's enthronement! Rejoice so much in His poured out blood, that you never again:

Hide your unbelief;

Deny your sins;

Despair over your performance;

Make a whole lot out of the natural behavior of others.

The oath Jesus swore, not to drink that wine again, was a type of Old Testament vow: He'd make everything Old New, utterly New! The soberest Work ever attempted, ever finished.

Which of His men died with Him?

Which of His men buried Him?

Which of His men trusted that He'd rise again?

Which of His disciples WERE His disciples, because they had anything going on with God inaccessible to any other man?

We must be saved, alive, children of God, already passed from death to life. For the Blood of Jesus was poured out for many! Not for few!

What joy to be assured that we're not alone! Feet of clay, stumbling and bumbling our way through this dark world, through our Christian life. There are MANY of us! That's what the Blood of Jesus is for, for us to drink in the Name of Jesus! Amen!