

"Were You There When Jesus Gave the Holy Supper?"
—Luke 22:19-20

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, "Were You There When Jesus Gave the Holy Supper?", is Luke 22:19-20 → *He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

"Come and eat!" Most of us probably can't count the number of times we heard these words growing up. When the meal was finally prepared after much labor and time the words "Come and eat!" should produce an immediate response of everyone gathering around the table. Not always. I can remember my mother having to repeat it because we kids were so engrossed in our own thing at the moment and didn't want to be bothered. Getting more frustrated as her hard work sat on the table getting cold, she would have to resort to pretty stern words to move us toward that table. Imagine her reaction when one of us said something like, "Meatloaf? Again!?" I wonder how many people could reminisce about their family meals growing up and saw them as anything but a

“holy” supper.

Sharing a meal for many families becomes a challenge to say the least. Striving to get young children to eat all their food with various threats and bribes; striving to find a time when you can share a meal as a “family” together in the midst of their busy schedules; even trying to get the family to gather around the table for a meal instead of the TV—all these pose a challenge to a desire for fellowship, conversation and bonding around a meal shared together. These expectations are heightened when it is a meal shared in connection with a national holiday (e.g. Thanksgiving Day) or a “holy day” such as Christmas or Easter.

While eating a meal together as a family on these special days is not commanded by Yahweh in Scripture, there is a meal He did command His people to eat every year at a certain time—the Passover meal. Thus, in obedience to God’s written Word, Jesus told His disciples, *Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.* (cf. Luke 22:8) Their presence in sharing that meal was in obedience to the covenant the LORD had made with His people hundreds of years before.

Delivering His people from slavery to Egypt would involve a hefty price—killing ***all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast.*** In doing so Yahweh would *execute judgments . . . on all the gods of Egypt.* (cf. Exodus 12:14) If His people wanted to save the firstborn within

their houses they would have to act by faith, following Yahweh's specific instructions to kill a perfect lamb, rub its blood on the doorposts and the lintel of their houses and eat it cooked a specific way with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The LORD said in Exodus 12:13-14 → *The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt. This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.* At the time the LORD instituted the eating of the Passover meal it was a *covenant* of His redeeming grace as evidenced by His delivering them from death and slavery to Egypt. This Passover meal was an actual connection to God's grace.

These specific Passover meal instructions looked forward to God's ultimate deliverance of all people from eternal death in hell through faith in Jesus, *the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world.* (cf. John 1:29) 1 Peter 1:18-19 describes its fulfillment: *You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.* This is why Jesus told His disciples that He *earnestly desired to eat **this** Passover with them* before suffering and would *not eat it again until it was fulfilled in the*

kingdom of God. That fulfillment happened over the next three days with His death and resurrection!

In the midst of eating the Passover meal with His twelve disciples Jesus instituted a *new covenant in His blood*, making it a holy Supper. According to verse 19 of our text we too are commanded to continue partaking of this holy Supper together as we continue to live in His kingdom daily. He says: *Do this in remembrance of Me*. While it is a meal within which we remember Jesus' death on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins, it is also an extension of His promise to be with us *always, to the end of the age* (cf. Matthew 28:20) by continuing to give us His real presence in our lives. In Matthew 26:26-28 Jesus commanded His disciples to take the bread and eat it saying, *this is My body*. And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, *“Drink of it, all of you, for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins*. The *many* for whom it is poured out for . . . the forgiveness of sins is **anyone who believes in Jesus' atoning sacrifice for the forgiveness of their sins!**

When we come in faith on the basis of the promise of Christ's Words to receive His presence and His accompanying forgiveness with His presence, we are there where Jesus gives His holy Supper. He is commanding us Christians to “Come and eat!” Unfortunately there are many who claim to be Christian who see no need to partake of the holy

Supper for some reason. Why would someone disobey their Lord and Savior's command to *Take, eat . . . Drink of it and Do this . . .*? Because they're so engrossed with fulfilling their own pleasures and desires that they don't want to take time away from them to receive the gift which Jesus says *is poured out for them for the forgiveness of sins*? When someone doesn't want *the forgiveness of sins* freely offered to them are they harboring unrepentant sin in their hearts which they don't want to give up? Like mom, does Jesus have to get angry with them to get them to see that what He's prepared is necessary for the sustenance of their soul? It may make one ask, "What part of *take, eat . . . drink of it and do this* do you not understand?"

You were there when Jesus instituted the holy Supper in the sense that it is based upon **His action** of sacrificing His life **so that you can live the forgiven life today**. You simply come **in faith** on the basis of His promise connected to His Person and Work . . . and . . . walk away **in faith** to live on the basis of His promise connected to His Person and Work. Thus, not just going through some motions of "eating and drinking" works forgiveness of sins, "but the words written here: 'Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.' These words, along with the bodily eating and drinking, are the main thing in the Sacrament. Whoever believes these words has exactly what they say: 'forgiveness of sins.'" (Luther, Martin. "Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation," ©2017 Concordia

So, instead of asking, “Were you there when Jesus gave the Holy Supper?” it would be more appropriate to ask, “**Are you there** when Jesus **gives** the Holy Supper?” Jesus experienced much rejection throughout His earthly ministry to deal with your sin once and for all. Why? It was a rejection He underwent so that you would not be rejected by God in your sin and go to hell. Thus, He did not come to reject us. He says in John 3:17 → *God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.* He comes to you with His presence in the holy Supper, inviting you by His grace to turn from your sin in repentance and receive His forgiveness and eternal life by faith. **He desires for you to be there with Him now and forever! Amen.**

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