

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Thursday, April 17th, 2025
Rev. Gerry Gallant**

**Prepared for The Table
Maundy Thursday
1 Corinthians 11:23-29**

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

On this day

Christ the Lamb of God

gave himself into the hands of those who would slay him.

On this day

Christ gathered with his disciples in the upper room.

On this day

**Christ took a towel and washed the disciples' feet,
giving us an example that we should do to others
as he has done to us.**

On this day

**Christ our God gave us this holy feast,
that we who eat this bread
and drink this cup
may here proclaim his holy sacrifice
and be partakers of his resurrection,
and at the last day may reign with him in heaven.**

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Holy God, source of all love,
on the night of his betrayal
Jesus gave his disciples a new commandment,
to love one another as he loved them.
Write this commandment in our hearts;
give us the will to serve others
as he was the servant of all,
who gave his life and died for us,
yet is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Call to Confession

The proof of God's amazing love is this:
while we were sinners
Christ died for us.
Because we have faith in him,
we dare to approach God with confidence.
In faith and penitence
let us confess our sin before God and one another.

Prayer of Confession

**Eternal God,
whose covenant with us is never broken,
we confess that we fail to fulfill your will.
Though you have bound yourself to us,
we will not bind ourselves to you.
In Jesus Christ you serve us freely,
but we refuse your love
and withhold ourselves from others.
We do not love you fully
or love one another as you command.
In your mercy, forgive and cleanse us.
Lead us once again to your table
and unite us to Christ,
who is the bread of life
and the vine from which we grow in grace.
The people may sing or say:
Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**

Assurance of Pardon

The mercy of the Lord
is from everlasting to everlasting.
I declare to you, in the name of Jesus Christ,
you are forgiven.
May the God of mercy,
who forgives you all your sins,
strengthen you in all goodness,
and by the power of the Holy Spirit
keep you in eternal life.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name
 Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven
 Give us this day our daily bread
 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one
 For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
 Forever and ever, Amen.

Hymn #233: "Were You Here"

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
 Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
 Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
 Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
 Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
 Were you there when the sun refused to shine?
 Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
 Were you there when the sun refused to shine?

Responsive Reading

Psalms 116:12-19

¹² What shall I render to the Lord
 for all his benefits to me?

¹³ **I will lift up the cup of salvation
 and call on the name of the Lord,**

¹⁴ I will pay my vows to the Lord
 in the presence of all his people.

¹⁵ **Precious in the sight of the Lord
 is the death of his saints.**

¹⁶ O Lord, I am your servant;
 I am your servant, the son of your maidservant.
 You have loosed my bonds.

¹⁷ **I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving
 and call on the name of the Lord.**

¹⁸ I will pay my vows to the Lord
 In the presence of all his people,
¹⁹ **in the courts of the house of the Lord,
 In your midst, O Jerusalem.
 Praise the Lord!**

Anthem (Music Ministry): “King With a Crown of Thorns”

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

1 Corinthians 11:23-29

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. ²⁷ Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself

Sermon

Maundy Thursday is all about Communion. It is the only service in the liturgical year that exclusively focuses on the Last Supper that Jesus Christ shared with his disciples on the night of his arrest.

Some churches celebrate Communion daily, or weekly, others monthly, still others quarterly, and there are some churches which only celebrate Communion once a year or once every couple of years!

This pivotal event in the life of Jesus Christ has been relegated away as if it were a minor part of our faith. Even the liturgy for the Sacrament of Communion has been whittled away in the modern church, constantly being shortened, made more friendly, more inviting.

There was a time when only church members in good standing, meaning they were up on confession and paying tithe, were invited to take part in the Lord’s Supper. If you visit some of the more orthodox churches this still is true, non-members, adherents and attendees are asked to leave the sanctuary and wait in the hall while Communion is shared among members.

There was once a time when preparing our hearts and minds to receive the Lord's Supper meant some serious self-reflection, and it is unfortunate because for many people the meaning of the Eucharist, the act of Holy Communion, has been lost due to our change in reverence of this Holy Sacrament.

Before you think I am being too harsh, I would like to remind you that the book of Ecclesiastes teaches us.

Ecclesiastes 1:9

**⁹ What has been is what will be,
and what has been done is what will be done,
and there is nothing new under the sun.**

Every problem that the church faces in the world today is a problem that the church has faced in the past 2000 years. There really is nothing new under the sun. This is why Paul wrote the words we are studying to the church of Corinth 2000 years ago, because they had lost sight of the meaning and importance of celebrating Communion.

To them it had become a ritualistic act, something they just did when they worshipped, and the depth and meaning of sharing in the bread and wine was lost upon them. So, Paul sets out to remind them of what Communion means and how they are meant to prepare themselves to receive this Holy Sacrament.

He started by reminding them of the evening that the first Communion was held.

1 Corinthians 11:23-25

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Jesus Christ spoke the words that instituted the act of Communion. He said, 'this is my body' and 'this cup is the new covenant in my blood.'

Do you believe this? That is the first question you need to ask yourself at Communion. Do you believe the words that Jesus Christ spoke on that evening?

Do you believe that Jesus gave his body up in death for you?

If you do, then you will take preparation for the Lord's Supper seriously. If you do then you know that the bread and wine symbolize the sacrifice that Jesus made for the forgiveness of our sins, and in partaking in the Lord's Supper you will find peace and feel the desire to serve the Lord in this world by obeying his Word and living a Christlike life.

Every time we proclaim the words of institution that Jesus spoke, we say, 'for you' and 'for the forgiveness of sins.' We hear these things, but do we really take the time to consider their meaning, or are we just going through the motions, taking part in the ritual.

Communion is meant to remind us that we are to believe in something much more personal than the general forgiveness of sins. We are meant to remember that it was our sins that hammered the nails into the hands and feet of our Savior as he hung upon the cross. It was our sins that his blood paid the debt of.

We are meant to remember that his body was given over to death for us. His blood shed for our sins. When we know this, we then begin to understand that the body and blood we receive in Communion are meant to bring us back to the foot of the cross, where Jesus hung so that we could be forgiven of those sins. This is what Paul meant in verse 26

1 Corinthians 11:26

²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

When you come to take part in Communion you are standing at the foot of the cross, looking upon your Savior, his body broken by torture, his hands and feet pierced by nails, his blood shed for our sins as he dies upon the cross. His sinless and innocent life shed in exchange for our sinful and rebellious life.

Jesus told us, 'do this in remembrance of me.' Do we when we take part in Communion?

Perhaps we need to remember why Jesus was sharing that meal with his disciples. It was the Seder meal, one of the highlights of Passover. A meal meant to remember the time when the Jewish nation had lived in bondage under the Pharaoh in Egypt. Moses had gone to Pharaoh and told him to let his people go, and Pharaoh had refused. God sent plagues over the nation of Egypt, one being a plague of death, which passed over the homes of the Jews who had smeared the blood of a lamb on the door frames of their homes. God then commanded his people to remember what he had done by eating a special meal similar to the one that they had eaten at that first Passover, and in doing so they would proclaim to each generation of God's salvation.

Here at this Passover meal, the Lamb of God is about to shed his blood on the cross so that death will Passover his people because the debt of their sins is paid in full. And as he breaks the bread and blesses the cup, he tells the disciples to gather together and share this meal, remembering what he is about to do, and proclaim it to others, to their children and to the world.

When we come to Communion, do we have this in our hearts and minds? That our God made the ultimate sacrifice for us. That he died so that we could have our relationship with God restored.

Paul then warns.

1 Corinthians 11:27-29

²⁷ Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

If you don't know and understand the reality of the Sacrament of Communion you are putting yourself in spiritual danger.

Earlier in his letter to the Corinthians Paul wrote this:

1 Corinthians 10:14-17

¹⁴ Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. ¹⁵ I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. ¹⁶ The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

Paul is asking a rhetorical question; he is making a point. The only answer is 'yes'. When we break the bread and take part in the cup we are in communion with Christ. How? I wish I could answer that for you. In the Lord's Supper the Holy Spirit is at work, and it brings us into communion with all Christians throughout all time, including those who took part in that very first meal on Maundy Thursday 2000 years ago.

So, Paul warns us to be prepared when we come to Communion. Examine yourself, know what it means to stand at the foot of the cross and look up to the one who sacrificed himself for you. Know that it was your sins that put him there and repent, turn away from sin in your life. Because if you do not, you are standing there still driving nails into His hands and feet, or worse you are not forgiven for your sins even though you stand at the foot of the cross.

Let us pray,

My Most Precious Lord Jesus, this night You gathered with Your Apostles to share with them Your last meal. But this was no ordinary meal. This was the gift of Your most Sacred Body and Blood, soon to be broken and poured out on the Cross for the salvation of the world.

Allow me, dear Lord, to spend this night in prayer and meditation with You. After the meal, You invited Your Apostles to join You for one hour, to stay awake and keep vigil as You prepared for Your arrest. The Apostles fell asleep, leaving You in Your bitter agony alone.

I accept Your gentle invitation of love, dear Lord, to spend this night in vigil with You. May I enter Your Heart as it faced the coming persecution You were to endure for my sins. May I console Your Sacred Heart and know the love and Mercy that flowed forth.

Lord, when I face the crosses of my own life, give me Your divine courage and strength to say "Yes" to the Will of the Father. Your love for me is abundant and is perfect in every way. Help me to know that love, to embrace it and to allow it into my life.

I make my vigil with You this night, dear Lord. I love You, help me to love You with all my heart. Jesus, I trust in You.

In your precious name we pray. **Amen.**

Hymn #224: "An Upper Room"

An upper room did our Lord prepare
For those He loved until the end
And His disciple still gather there
To celebrate their risen friend.

A lasting gift Jesus gave His own
To share His bread His loving cup
Whatever burdens may bow us down
He by His cross shall lift us up.

No end there is we depart in peace
He loves beyond our uttermost
In every room in our Father's house
He will be there as Lord and host.

Holy Communion

Invitation to the Table

Why do we give thanks and praise before this table?

We give thanks for God's work of creation, liberation, and salvation.

It is indeed right, our duty and delight, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, O holy Lord, eternal God. You created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them; you made us in your own image; and in countless ways you show us your mercy. Therefore, with choirs of angels and

the whole company of heaven, we worship and adore your glorious name, joining our voices in their unending praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

All glory and blessing are yours, O holy God, for in your mercy you gave your only Son, Jesus Christ. He took our human nature and suffered death on the cross for our redemption. There he made a perfect sacrifice for the sins for the whole world. We praise you that before he suffered and died, our Savior gave us this holy sacrament and commanded us to continue it until he comes again.

Why do we eat bread at this table?

On the night before he died, Jesus took bread. After giving thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Why do we drink from the cup at this table?

The same night Jesus took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."

What do we remember at this table?

We remember God's gracious love for us, Christ's death and resurrection for us, and the Spirit's tender care for us. Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Dying, you destroyed our death;
rising, you restored our life.
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

Merciful God, pour out your Holy Spirit on these gifts of bread and wine, that in eating and drinking we may be made one with Christ and one another.

Amen.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, now and forever.

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is truly right and our greatest joy
 to give you thanks and praise,
 O Lord our God, creator and ruler of the universe.
 You bring forth bread from the earth,
 and create the fruit of the vine.
 You made us in your image,
 and freed us from the bonds of slavery.
 You claimed us as your people,
 and made covenant to be our God.
 You fed us manna in the wilderness,
 and brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey.
 When we forgot you, and our faith was weak,
 you spoke through prophets,
 calling us to turn again to your ways.
 Therefore we praise you,
 joining our voices with the celestial choirs
 and with all the faithful of every time and place,
 who forever sing to the glory of your name:

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name
in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

You are holy, O God of majesty,
 and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord,
 whom you sent to deliver us
 from the bondage of death and slavery to sin.
 In humility he descends from your heights,
 to kneel in obedience to love's commands.
 He who is boundless takes on the bondage of our sin.

He who is free takes our place in death's prison.
 In the deserts of our wanderings, he sustains us,
 giving us his body as manna for our weariness.
 The cup of suffering which he drank
 has become for us the cup of salvation.
 In his death, he ransomed us from death's dominion;
 in his resurrection, he opened the way to eternal life.

Remembering all your mighty and merciful acts,
 we take this bread and this wine
 from the gifts you have given us,
 and celebrate with joy
 the redemption won for us in Jesus Christ.
 Accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving
 as a living and holy offering of ourselves,
 that our lives may proclaim the One crucified and risen.

**We shall do as our Lord commands.
 We proclaim that our Lord Jesus
 was sent by the Father into the world,
 that he took upon himself our flesh and blood,
 and bore the wrath of God against our sin.
 We confess that he was condemned
 to die that we might be pardoned,
 and suffered death that we might live.
 We proclaim that he is risen to make us right with God
 and that he shall come again in the glory of his new creation.
 This we do now and until he comes again.**

Lead us, O God, by the power of your Spirit
 to live as love commands.
 Bound to Christ,
 set us free for joyful obedience and glad service.
 As Jesus gave his life for ours,
 help us to live our lives for others
 with humility and persistent courage.
 Give us strength to serve you faithfully
 until the promised day of resurrection,
 when, with the redeemed of all the ages,
 we will feast with you at your table in glory.
 Through Christ,
 all glory and honor are yours, almighty Father,
 with the Holy Spirit in the holy church,
 now and forever.

Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

Because there is one bread,
we who are many are one body;
for we all partake of the one bread.

Break the bread

The bread that we break,
is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?

Bless the cup

The cup of blessing that we bless,
is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ?

The gifts of God
for the people of God.

Communion

In giving the bread:
The body of Christ given for you.

In giving the cup:
The blood of Christ shed for you.

Prayer After Communion

God of grace,
your Son Jesus Christ
left us this holy meal of bread and wine
in which we share his body and blood.
May we who have celebrated this sign of his great love
show in our lives the fruits of his redemption;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Invitation to Offering

Offering Prayer

Closing Hymn #231: “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (V 1,2,4)

When I survey the wondrous cross
 on which the Prince of glory died,
 my richest gain I count but loss,
 and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
 save in the death of Christ my God;
 all the vain things that charm me most,
 I sacrifice them to his blood.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
 That were an offering far too small;
 Love so amazing, so divine,
 Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Pastoral Prayer

God of love, truly we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ,
 who offered himself in humble service to his disciples
 even on the night he was betrayed.
 Truly you shine in our hearts
 when we show your love to others
 in Christlike acts of service and fellowship.
 We leave this place eager to reflect the glory of Christ,
 our source of hope and life, our Teacher and Lord,
 who laid down his life so that we might live. **Amen.**

Benediction

The peace of God,
 which passes all understanding,
 keep your hearts and minds
 in the knowledge and love of God,
 and of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord;
 and the blessing of God almighty,
 the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
 remain with you always. **Amen.**