

## Repent: Turn To Jesus!

*And Receive A Special Assurance of Your Forgiveness*

## A Sermon on 1 Cor. 11:23-28

Year A - Maundy Thursday  
13 - April - 2017

JJ<sup>1</sup>

When you receive a gift from someone, it assures you of their love for you. Often times it's the surprise gift that says "I love you" the most. Then there are those gifts left to you by your dead loved one. Those can often have the most impact, albeit not always good. But lets consider the good tonight. Forget the large sums of money or property. Consider the things you received that your loved one knew you would appreciate and treasure. Maybe it's a painting on your wall. Maybe it's an antique tool. Maybe it's the pin or necklace you're wearing. It's the things others might have left go to the estate sale, but to you are precious because it reminds you of ways in which you connected and shared your love with that person.

In much the same way that's what Jesus did the night he was betrayed. In that Upper Room, Jesus gave us a gift—his Last Will & Testament, of sorts. He gave us a gift we all could treasure, not just because it would remind us of him, but would actually keep him with us in our hearts and lives! Tonight, friends, we continue to **Repent, and Turn To Jesus**. Especially tonight, we're encouraged to repent of our sin and turn to Jesus so that we may **Receive a Special Assurance of Our Forgiveness**.

Jesus and his disciples had gathered together in Jerusalem one last time to celebrate the most important festival of the Old Testament Church—Passover. The whole celebration of the Passover was to remember the LORD for his mighty deliverance from the land of slavery, Egypt. The Passover also pointed them ahead to the coming Messiah who would deliver them from Satan and hell. This whole festival was a festival to give thanks to God and praise him.

It was after this meal that Jesus gave his disciples a new and better meal to eat. A meal that didn't look ahead to sins forgiven, but actually gave it! A meal that gives an intimate union with God himself and those who believe.

Paul tells us, "The Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, 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.' In the same way, after the meal, he also took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new testament in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' "

Sadly, Paul needed to write these words because in Corinth, he found a scene very different from what the Lord had given in

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<sup>1</sup> JJ is the acronym for *Jesus Juve*, which is Latin for "Jesus Help". It is a short prayer used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the beginning of their work.

the Upper Room. At best, they were terribly abusing the Lord's Supper, and at worst, they didn't even have it anymore! (1 Cor. 11:20) *Instead of a feast of salvation, they had turned it into a celebration of self-indulgence.* Their celebration was characterized by drunkenness, selfishness and elitism. It would be as if we had a potluck before worship tonight with our wine glasses constantly being topped off to the point that we'd be drunk and then come up here for worship and celebrate the Lord's Supper.

As shameful as that sounds, that wasn't the only problem. People would selfishly push others out of the way. But perhaps worst of all was all the division. *Some of the rich wanted nothing to do with the poor.* Others had their favorite pastor, as if the public ministry is a competition! People touted their dedication to Christ as better than others. *Instead of celebrating Holy Communion, they were celebrating an unholy disunion. Instead of a wonderful unity rooted in God's Word, they were squaring off into petty factions. They were displaying their lovelessness and self-indulgence before the the Lord's altar! And they were proud of it! The Lord's Supper had become the Corinthians' Supper—and they were not blessed because of it.*

Friends, what scene do we find here in our midst? Is it more like the Upper

Room, or the Corinthians' catastrophe? At least publicly we're not Corinth, but is it the Upper Room? Do you personally treat the Lord's Supper as the gift of grace that it is? Or do you treat it in more of a Corinthian fashion, treating the Lord's Supper as something you can do with as you please, think of as you please, come to as you please?

Look at the warnings Paul gives when he instructs the Corinthians to celebrate rightly. "...whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the Lord's body and blood."



Paul tells us that there are two ways in particular that we can unworthily receive the Lord's Supper. The first revolves around a confession of what we are. The second revolves around a confession of what it, the Lord's Supper,

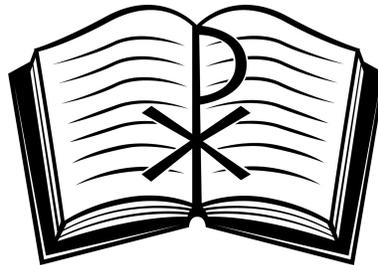
is.

To come in a worthy manner doesn't mean to come sinless. In fact, it really means just the opposite! No, not to come secure in sin and unrepentant, but to come knowing and confessing what you are and what you have done. It means coming as the opposite of the Pharisee—thinking there is no need for repentance because you don't sin and/or have done enough good to cover up your sin. It also

means coming as the opposite of the rich young man, who was secure in his sin of idolatry, loving his money more than God. To come in this way is not to receive the blessings Jesus longs to give you. To come without recognizing your need or secure in sin is to sin against the very price of your salvation! It also shows how insignificant you think your sin is and how cheap God's love is to you.

To come in a worthy manner also means knowing and confessing what this meal is and what is given. It is the Lord's Supper where he gives us his real body and blood together with bread and wine in a miraculous way. But reason says, " 'Is' can't really mean 'is.' That doesn't make sense for a whole host of reasons. Jesus really means 'represents.' " The problem with that thinking is that in every language on earth, "is" always means "is." In the verse just after our text, Paul tells us to receive the Lord's Supper not believing in the real presence of Jesus' body and blood brings judgment on ourselves instead of blessing! (1 Cor. 11:29)

In this meal, Jesus intends to give amazing blessings. *Such blessings need to be treated reverently and responsibly. It's that way with anything in life. Blessings carry responsibilities. So it is with the awesome blessing of the Lord's Supper: It needs to be received reverently and used responsibly—in a word, faithfully.*



This holy meal is for those who come knowing and confessing what they are. It is for those who repent and turn to Jesus. That's why Paul says, "let a person examine himself and after doing so, let him eat of the bread and drink from the cup." This holy meal is for those who come knowing and confessing what this meal is. What Jesus says it is—"This is my body, which is for you...This cup is the new testament in my blood."

Friends, if your sin weighs heavy on your heart, this meal is for you! If you're seeking strength to deny your sinful nature and the devil's temptations, this meal is for you! If you're seeking closer fellowship with your Savior and fellow believers, this meal is for you!

In this meal Jesus gives the forgiveness of sins and strengthens us in our faith as we come to him as repentant sinners. And Jesus gives us his grace and mercy in this beautiful way because he knows us so well. In his Gospel, Jesus says, "You are forgiven!" But Jesus knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows us, not just because he's God, but also because he's been there and done that. As Jesus lived here on earth, he experienced the same desire and comfort of seeing and touching what was promised. Jesus knows how we treasure his gospel promises, but he also knows that we long to see and touch what is promised us in his spoken and written Word. And so he

gives us this Supper. What more could he have given us than to give us himself!?

Sometimes we lament and wish that our loved ones now in heaven were still with us here. We tell ourselves that life would be better and easier, and from a human point of view, that may be true. In the same way, we sometimes lament, complain and wish that Jesus would just be with us here right now, and it would all be easier. Well, he is! Every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper, Jesus is here with us in a most intimate loving way! He gives us himself for the forgiveness of our sins!

Friends, tonight we remember and celebrate the beautiful gift Jesus has given to us in his holy Supper by giving us himself! Tonight, let us repentantly **turn to Jesus for the special assurance of his forgiveness.** *This assurance is always yours through Jesus. This assurance is yours only through Jesus. Amen.*

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<sup>2</sup> SDG is an acronym for *Soli Deo Gloria*, which is Latin for "To God Alone Be The Glory". This is a statement of humility used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the end of their work to let themselves and others know that it isn't about getting glory for themselves, but about giving all glory to God.

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