

Wednesday of Invocavit , A ✕ D 2011

Exodus 12:1-14; Luke 22:7-19

In the Name of the Father and of the ✕ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

1 What is the Sacrament of the Altar? What do people say? Some say the Lord's Supper is an unbloody sacrifice, an offering of the Body and Blood of Jesus back to God the Father in order to appease His wrath. Some say the Lord's Supper is merely a memorial meal, a time to remember and reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, who is not present in the meal. Some say the Lord's Supper is a communion with the Divine Nature of Christ, an ascension into heaven to communicate with Christ where He is, which is not in bread and wine. What people say about the Lord's Supper is not as important as what the Lord says about His Supper.

2 In the beginning, or close to the beginning, man ate in rebellion. It seems innocuous, simply to eat something which had been forbidden. But in that eating was a refusal to submit to the authority of God and His Word. Had the Creator withheld something good from His creatures? So they reasoned, and so they ate. But nothing good can come from rebellion. In preferring to be their own gods, Adam and his wife ate their way to death. They may not have keeled over the minute they bit into the fruit, but from the moment they ate, they were dying, decaying, breaking down, tumbling from order to disorder. Almost never has the maxim "you are what you eat" been truer. It eating rebelliously, they became rebels. In eating to be their own gods, they became enemies of God.

3 Since then, God has been particularly concerned with what His people put into their mouths. When the time came to deliver His people from bondage in Egypt, the event to mark the occasion, in fact, the event by which His people would be spared from death, was a meal. A lamb, without blemish, roasted without breaking any bones, over a fire, eaten completely, with no leftovers. Eat the flesh and let the blood adorn the doorposts and lintels of your houses. Smear the blood with a brush made from a hyssop plant, so that the Angel of Death will see the blood and pass over your houses, sparing the lives of all those marked by blood. Then, do this every year in remembrance of this night. Later in the wilderness, when the people would grumble against Moses, wistfully longing for the days when they had food aplenty in slavery in Egypt, the Lord would provide a miraculous meal of manna in the morning and quail in the evening. When He wanted to set boundaries to mark His people, many of the laws and regulations were in regard to what could or could not be eaten: only the clean animals, never the unclean.

4 Later, after the coming of the Messiah, Jesus, the chief complaint of the Pharisees and scribes against Jesus was that He received sinners and ate with them. Whom Jesus welcomed to His table was of particular consternation to the religious elites. How can he eat with such people? And finally, on the night when He as betrayed, handed over into the hands of wicked men, in order to die for the sins of all humanity, during the Passover meal, Jesus instituted a new type of eating.

5 "Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain could give the guilty conscience peace or take away the stain. But Christ the heavenly Lamb, takes all our sins away, a sacrifice of

nobler name, and richer blood than they.” All the sacrifices pointed to this Sacrifice. Every year-old, spotless lamb pointed to this Lamb. All the blood poured upon altars pointed forward to this Blood, shed on the cross, given to the Children of God to drink for the forgiveness of their sins. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He is the first and final, the perfect Passover Lamb. He is the One roasted on the spit of the cross, without a bone in His Body broken. He is the One whose Blood marks those who belong to Him. He is the One whose Blood saves His people from death.

6 As mankind fell into sin and death through eating, so now will man be saved from sin and death in eating and drinking. What is the Sacrament of the Altar? It is the true Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and to drink. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is replaced by the new Tree of Life, the cross. The Blood that flowed from the side of the Crucified Savior runs into the chalice, which He gives you to drink.

7 Never before has the maxim “you are what you eat” been so true. Those who eat the Body of Christ in faith are made part of His holy Body, the Church. Those who drink the precious Blood of Christ in faith receive the full forgiveness that Blood was shed to win. At His altar, Christ fills you with Himself, makes you pure as He is, taking away your sin and delivering to you His perfect righteousness.

In the Name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Jeff Hemmer