

# Maundy Thursday Sermon – 2025

## Lenten Theme: *The Windows of Lent*

### *“Bread and Wine”*

Text: 1 Corinthians 10:12-16

God grant to each of us the full measure of comfort and strength he intends for us to receive through his amazing gift of Holy Communion. Amen.

Dear Fellow Christians, this Lenten season we have been looking in windows. Our goal has been to learn more about our Savior's Passion by individually examining the different contents or occupants of each "room" in the edifice we know as "Lent." We have seen many things, strange things, disturbing things. With each window we have learned to look more closely, for what we saw at first glance was never the full picture. Nor did we always immediately recognize exactly what it is we were actually seeing. We thought we saw a room full of hypocrites who had been dead for 2000 years, until we saw also ourselves standing among them. We saw a lamp, which we came to recognize as God's representation of prophecies, all of which were fulfilled in Christ. We saw horrible scenes of torture and brutality, only to then recognize that it was also our own sins that caused the violence. We saw scenes of apparent injustice, where we eventually learned to recognize the amazing love in God's justice – punishing his own innocent Son for the sins we ourselves had committed. We saw a room full of liars, at first recognizing only the faces of others, until there again we saw ourselves. Last week we saw the apparent uncertainty demonstrated in the words and actions of Jesus' own disciples, recognizing finally our own shameful uncertainty in the face of God's certain promises. What we saw in every single window was the evidence of sin and weakness in our own lives, which taught us that the debt of sin for which Jesus paid was infinitely greater than we might have imagined.

We look in a seventh window this evening, and again we are not quite sure just what we are seeing. It looks, for all the world, like a plate of bread and a cup of wine.

The text that will instruct us as to just what we are seeing on this Maundy Thursday evening is found in Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, the 10<sup>th</sup> Chapter:

**ESV(1 Corinthians 10:12-16) *Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. <sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you***

***be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. <sup>14</sup> Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. <sup>15</sup> I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. <sup>16</sup> 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?***

This is God's Word. With complete confidence and trust in the truth and power of these words we seek to gain our Lord's promised wisdom, strength and comfort through their study. To this end we pray, ***"Sanctify us by the Truth, O Lord. Your Word is truth!"*** Amen.

One of the most important lesson any Christian can learn is never to rely on what our human eyes and human reason tell us. Paul warned the Christians in Corinth: ***Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. <sup>13</sup> And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. <sup>14</sup> The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.***<sup>ESV</sup>(1 Corinthians 2:12-14)

***"The spirit of the world"*** is all that our sinful flesh knows. That part of us is just not capable of comprehending spiritual truth. It's like trying to teach quantum physics to a banana. It's just not going to happen.

Don't misunderstand. We're not just talking about avowed unbelievers here. We're including that part of every single one of us that we refer to as the *old Adam* or the *sinful flesh*. The only reason Christians are able to understand (or ***"discern"***) what we read in our Bibles is because God the Holy Spirit has created a *new man* within us. That means that every time we find ourselves confused by what we read in God's Word it's because that old Adam in us won't shut up. Despite the fact that our sinful flesh possesses all the spiritual insight of boiled cabbage, it has zero self-awareness. That means that trusting our old Adam for spiritual guidance is like asking a Chatty Cathy doll for directions to the mall. She will always say something, but never anything right, or the least bit helpful.

So also when we look in this particular window this evening our old Adam insists that there's nothing to see but bread and wine. And there's no uncertainty there. That part of us is absolutely sure. It would gladly bet your life on it.

So we must look with different eyes, with the understanding that the Holy Spirit has given us. As always, we let God himself tell us what it is that we see. He does so in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In Matthew 26:26 Jesus himself explained it to us: ***Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."*** <sup>27</sup> ***And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you,"*** <sup>28</sup> ***for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*** He does so also in our text for this evening: ***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?***

With the eyes then of our reason and human comprehension we see bread and wine. With eyes opened and instructed by God the Holy Spirit we see also Christ's very body and blood. Why do so many deny what God's Word so clearly tells us here? It is surely no coincidence that early on in this same Epistle Paul first prepared all who would read his letter for the amazing truths that would follow. Hear again how he prepared all of us for what would follow: ***Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.*** <sup>13</sup> ***And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.*** <sup>14</sup> ***The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.*** <sup>ESV</sup> (1 Corinthians 2:12-14)

Of course those who have not been enlightened by ***"the Spirit who is from God"*** would see only bread and wine. They are incapable of discerning anything other than what their human eyes and reason tell them. It is only the sheep of God's pasture that hear the Good Shepherd's voice.

What is it then that we have been taught to see? Bread and wine, yes, but also the very body and blood of our Savior. In Jesus' own words: ***"This is my body... this is my blood."*** Part of the perfection that Jesus offered on the cross as his sacrifice for sin was his perfect communication of divine truth. That means he never spoke words that he had to walk back, never worded things poorly that later required additional words of explanation or fine tuning. That means that when he said, ***"This is my body... this is my blood"*** not only did he not misspeak, or speak with any sort of unclarity, he said exactly what he meant and meant exactly what he said. He did not say that the bread *represent* his body and the wine *represents*

his blood. He did not say that the bread *has turned into* his body and the wine *has turned into* his blood. He said ***"is."*** And we believe him. Because we are no longer directed by ***"the spirit of the world"*** but by ***"the Spirit who is from God."***

In our window therefore this evening we have been taught to see not just bread and wine, which are surely also there, but also the very body and blood of Jesus our Savior, which we received in a heavenly, miraculous way every time we eat and drink. If we cannot trust our Savior to have communicated spiritual truth in connection with his Supper, we can trust nothing at all that he said.

Although Jesus' own words when he instituted the Lord's Supper (***"This is my body... this is my blood"***) were and are certainly enough for us, he communicated this same amazing truth in our text for this evening from another angle, a different perspective: ***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?*** Paul is not begging the question here; that is, he is not assuming to be true that which has not been verified. Jesus himself had already established the fact the we receive also body and blood when we eat and drink. Paul is applying that established truth. He is teaching us what that means.

There's a good reason "the Lord's Supper" is also referred to as "Holy Communion." Both are accurate, but each draws our attention to separate truths. "The Lord's Supper" reminds us that it is Jesus himself who instituted this sacrament. "Holy Communion" alludes to the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament and is drawn directly from the Holy Spirit's words in this evening's text. To "commune" means *to join together in an intimate way*. It is a *holy* communion because we are not joined together in an intimate way with bread and wine but with the very body and blood of Jesus Christ. Again from our text: ***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?***

The word translated in our text as "participation" can also be translated as "communion" or "fellowship." It refers to a joining together. Joining together what with what? Those who eat and drink with the very body and blood of Christ. Our text is irrefutable proof that Jesus did not misspeak when he said, ***"is my body... is my blood"*** rather than "symbolizes" or "represents." How awesome to have God's own assurance here that in Holy Communion we are not joined together with bread and wine when we eat and drink but joined to our very Savior himself – his true body and blood.

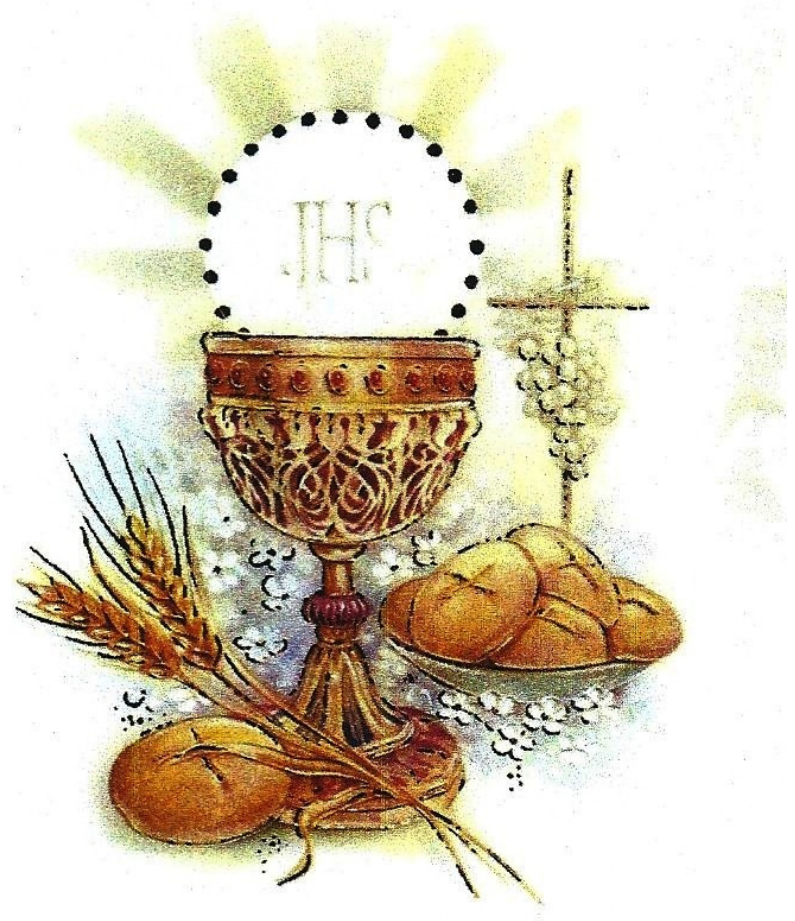
Yet still one great question must be answered: Why is this joining together with the body and blood of our Savior so important? What is the great benefit to our eternal souls? We find our answer in Luke 22: ***“Do this in remembrance of me.”*** When in Holy Communion we are joined to the very body and blood of Jesus, we are *individually* reminded and assured that it was *with this very same body and blood* that our Savior has already paid the penalty for every single one of our sins. We are reminded that our forgiveness is neither incomplete nor sporadic nor occasional. Through faith in Jesus Christ and the payment he made on the cross, once, for all, we exist now in his presence as holy, sinless, washed clean in the blood of the Lamb.

Yet if this forgiveness is an accomplished fact and our personal possession, full and complete, every moment of every day that faith resides in our hearts, why do we need this special communion, this joining together with Jesus himself? Because we are weak, frail human beings. We are sheep prone to wander. We still have that unspiritual old Adam in us that would drag us back into unbelief and work-righteousness – as also we were warned in our text: ***Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.***

If this were not a real and present danger, the Holy Spirit would not have issued this warning. Our Savior loves us too much – gave too much of himself – to have us throw it all away. So he continues to give of himself in Holy Communion – his very body and blood – to remind, to strengthen, and to preserve us. Look and see with spiritual understanding, and value this sacrament as the priceless gift it truly is. Amen.

## Sermon Text:

<sup>ESV</sup>(1 Corinthians 10:12-16) Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. <sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. <sup>14</sup> Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. <sup>15</sup> I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. <sup>16</sup> 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?



Maundy Thursday

2025

St Paul Lutheran Church  
Bismarck, North Dakota

# ST PAUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

2510 E Divide Ave Bismarck, ND 58501

Office: (701) 223-4885 Cell: (701) 425-5483

[www.bismarcklutheran.org](http://www.bismarcklutheran.org)

Mick Johnson – President Angela Pfennig - Organist

Michael Roehl – Pastor

## Maundy Thursday Service - 2025

**The Opening Hymn** – 502 (1-4) “Lord Jesus Christ, You Have Prepared”

### Invocation

**Pastor:** *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

**Congregation:** (Spoken) **Amen.**

**Confession and Absolution** SoC - 515 (1, 3-5)

**P:** *Acknowledging that we stand in the presence of our Holy God we humble ourselves, and in true repentance we confess our sins:*

**All:** *With broken heart and contrite sigh, a trembling sinner,  
Lord, I cry. Your pard'ning grace is rich and free  
-- O God, be merciful to me!*

*Far off I stand with tearful eyes and dare not lift them to the skies.  
But You Lord all my anguish see  
-- O God, be merciful to me!*

*No gifts, no deeds that I have done can for a single sin atone.  
To Calvary alone I flee  
-- O God, be merciful to me!*

**P:** Jesus Christ has been punished for your sins. God the Father has placed upon His Son the iniquity of us all. By His authority, and according to His command, I announce to you the divine decree of our God that all of your sins are forgiven, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**All:** *And when, redeemed from sin and hell, with all the ransomed souls I dwell, My joyful song shall ever be,  
-- God has been merciful to me!*

**The Reading of the Passion History**

**The Confession of Faith**

(Explanation of the 2nd Article from Luther's Small Catechism, Sydow Edition)

**I believe that Jesus Christ, true God,  
begotten of the Father from eternity,  
and also true man,  
born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.**

He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person,  
purchased and won me from all sin, from death, and from the  
power of the devil,  
not with gold or silver,  
but with His holy, precious blood  
and His innocent suffering and death.

He did this that I should be His very own,  
live under Him in His kingdom,  
and serve Him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and joy;  
just as He is risen from death,  
lives and reigns in eternity.  
This is most certainly true.

**The Pre-Sermon Hymn** 496 (1-4)

*“The Death of Jesus Christ, Our Lord”*

**The Sermon** (Lenten Theme: “The Windows of Lent”)

**The Post-Sermon Hymn** – 496 (6-8)

*“The Death of Jesus Christ, Our Lord”*

**The Prayer of the Day**

**The Lord's Prayer**

**The Christian Questions**

**The Distribution**

**The Benediction**

**P:** *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
And the love of God the Father,  
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

**C:** (Sung by all) **Amen, Amen, Amen.**

**The Closing Hymn** – 189

*“Almighty Father, Bless the Word”*

**Silent Prayer**

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**Announcements** [All are invited to remain for fellowship and light refreshments.]