**Midweek Lenten Theme: Blood of the New Testament.**

**March 29th 2024 Midweek Lenten VII**

**Text: Matthew 26:26-29** 0714

**Theme: Blood of the New Testament: Given and Shed for You.**

May the blood given and shed for you ever be to you an overwhelming flood of forgiveness, righteousness, and salvation. Amen. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ: We have come now to the culmination of all that we have considered during this Lenten Season, learning of the Blood of the New Testament, the testament which demands nothing of sinful and corrupt man. It was thus necessary, for if salvation depended on sinful men, our salvation would have never occurred, for we have failed, we have done nothing but sell our souls into corruption, sin, and death. The first testament, or covenant, was one which only Adam and Eve knew for a short time, and was dependent on man to keep his side of the covenant, that is to obey perfectly in thought, desire, word, and deed. Yet, when man committed the first sin in the Garden, immediately all of mankind fell into sin and death, from which we cannot set ourselves free. For this reason the first covenant was void. We broke our end, and thus it became necessary, if some were to be saved, that a New Way be made, a New Covenant, a New Testament, which was a covenant not between God and man, but between the Father and the Son, who stood in behalf of man. This was done, not violating the immutable justice of God, but rather serving the sentence due. Man had sinned and so man must pay, and so the Son of God taking on human flesh, paid what man owed; and the price? Blood. The blood of the innocent Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Now that payment is the very thing that we have been studying for six weeks and will conclude today, seeing the Lord put a bow upon this topic and presenting to us, both in our hearing and by the eating of our mouths, the precious giving of that blood for the remission of sins.

These truths are presented to us in a variety of different ways, and have subtly found voice throughout the Lenten season, and are found in great number in the hymns we have sung, and they are worth pointing out. We have sung: “Glory be to Jesus, who in bitter pains poured for me the life blood, from His sacred veins.” (TLH #158:1) “There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel’s veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.” (157:1) “Jesus, the Lord, the mighty God, an all sufficient ransom paid. O matchless price! His precious blood for vile, rebellious traitors shed.” (141:3) “He that drinks shall live forever; ‘Tis a soul renewing flood. God is faithful; God will never break His covenant of blood, signed when our Redeemer died, sealed when He was glorified.” (149:4) This is just a small sampling of the hymns we have sung which mark to us the price of redemption that was paid in full by the shedding of our Savior’s blood. It is glorious, and deserves our greatest attention, for we cannot live without it, and would surely find ourselves in eternal damnation without it. What better subject then should occupy us from Ash Wednesday through today, Good Friday, than the Blood of the New Testament, seeing as how by His blood we have abundant life. Tonight, our focus shifts slightly once again, no longer looking at the blood shed for us during His passion and death, but rather the blood given and shed for us in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. It is this very thing which we will shortly receive at the hand of our gracious God, and which assures us of the remission of every sin we have committed. Let us then see these things from our text for this evening which is found in the twenty sixth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew beginning at verse twenty six.

**Quote text here.**

Let us pray, O Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, we pray unto Thee giving Thee eternal thanks and praise for Thy willing sacrifice to pay the debt we owed, a debt that could only have been paid by Thy infinite and precious blood. Grant that we do not carelessly or negligently partake of Thy Supper, which Thou hast so graciously bestowed upon us for the assurance of our hearts. Rather, grant thereby the very assurance of the forgiveness of our sins, the strengthening of our faith, and the hope of life eternal. Help us, O Lord, for though we believe, our flesh clings to us, and thereby we sin against heaven and in Thy sight. Put down the old man with all sins and evil lusts, and daily cause a new man to arise created in righteousness and holiness by Thy blood. Grant, O Savior, a renewed heart, a heart which sorrows over sin and sincerely believes in Thy work of redemption. Oh, let us not despair in sin nor become secure sinners, but ever keep us humble. Grant, Lord, that we may see Thee coming again in glory to grant us our final redemption, and the glory of heaven, where with all the saints we shall praise and bless Thy glorious name forevermore. Amen.

Guided then by the Spirit of God let us learn of the blood of the New Testament, given and shed for you:

1. **For the remission of sins.** We read verses twenty six through twenty nine of our text: **read verses here.** Having seen, over the last six weeks, the shedding of the precious blood of Christ by sweating, striking, scourging, crowning, crucifying, and piercing; we now turn our attention from the actual shedding of that blood to the giving it to Christians in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, which Sacrament Jesus had instituted the night He was betrayed. It is noteworthy that He did this even before He had actually shed His blood, showing that this means of grace, and His blood, are eternally done, and given here in time for the comfort of Christians who must bear a cross. Martin Luther quite clearly shows to us the benefit derived from receiving the Sacrament, saying: “That (the benefit) is shown us by these words, ‘given and shed for you for the remission of sins’; namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.” And in explanation we hear: “These words tell us that in the Sacrament Christ offers and assures every communicant forgiveness of all his sins, and as a seal and pledge of this offer He gives him under the bread and wine the very body and blood with which He earned this forgiveness for him.” We have here a very clear and concise explanation of the benefits found in the Sacrament. Imagine for a moment, which will not be hard to do since each of us are terrible sinners, that one has sinned grievously in the sight of God, and worries that he cannot or will not be forgiven, but in receiving the Lord’s Supper, he is reminded of the full and plenary offering made by Christ upon the cross specifically for him. Now think that the same applies to you. The Law terrifies by its threats and condemnation, but the sweet Gospel, found within the Sacrament, gives drink to a thirsty soul, a soul which is terrified of eternal judgment, but receives instead forgiveness and eternal life. It is a refreshing oasis which a Christian is invited and led to, to receive the quenching blood of the New Testament given for him.

Now we want to note well, and emphasize, the words ‘FOR YOU’. Christ’s body given and blood shed was for the remission of your sins, and that is how we should see it. We have said before that we should consider ourselves the chief of sinners, and now we say that we should consider that Christ paid the debt for the chief of sinners, and the price was His blood. Now we should consider further that when the forgiveness of sins is received through the sacrament, or at least the assurance of the forgiveness of sins, it follows that spiritual life is maintained, and that eternal life is ours. This is the benefit of the Sacrament that Christ instituted and it is primarily to receive forgiveness, and this forgiveness strengthens our faith, which faith produces fruit. The blood of the New Testament then is nothing more than the Gospel, and the Lord’s Supper is the Gospel in visible form. We may look at the cross on this dark and dreadful day and feel remorse, concern, pity; but I tell you that this day is one not of dread and sorrow, but hope and joy in the Gospel, for on this day our forgiveness was purchased, and the night prior, that purchased forgiveness was given abundantly in the institution of the Lord’s Supper. Thus is the blood of the New Testament given and shed for you for the remission of sins, and that is why our text says:

1. **This do in remembrance of Jesus.** We read verses twenty six through twenty nine of our text: **read verses here.** Many think that Jesus is here directing His Church to remember Him as a long lost friend, or a relative who has passed away, or as song great ancient figure, but in truth, He is not talking of any of these things, rather He is directing us to receive the Lord’s Supper in remembrance of the sacrifice which earned the forgiveness of our sins, our spiritual and eternal life. We are to remember His work for our redemption. Thus, when we receive His body given and His blood shed we are to be reminded of these things. Now many Christian denominations do not observe these words properly. They ignore them or twist them, and come away with false and detrimental doctrines. First the reformed denominations believe the Lord’s Supper holds no power and is but a sign or symbol, with the bread representing Jesus’ body, and the wine representing Jesus’ blood. Yet the little word ‘do’ in the title to this portion of the sermon shows this to be false, as does the fact that Jesus declares that it is for the remission of sins. Secondly the Roman Catholic church teaches of communion in one kind, the wine being reserved, at least in former times, for the clergy only. Yet another little word disproves this as well, the word ‘this’. Jesus wanted the entire act that He had instituted to be performed throughout the New Testament era, for it is the blood of the New Testament. There are many other false doctrine associated with this Sacrament which we will not get into for now, but each one is easily shown to be false by the words of our text.

The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper then is of infinite value to all Christians, for the grace of God in Christ Jesus is our very life. We are told in Isaiah: *“A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench.” (Is. 42:3)* As weak as we are, and as small a faith as we have, we are not turned away thereby from the throne of grace, because of the cross. The cross of Christ, the blood shed thereon, grants us perfect redemption despite our weakness, despite our flesh. Tonight we have a gracious act of God given to us in the form of Word and Sacrament. :Let us then come forward not negligently or carelessly, but in faith come and receive the benefit of the blood of the New Testament. It is a delight to receive it often as Jesus has instructed. Let us not sorrow or weep for Jesus, but in high and lofty notes praise and thank Him for the work He has performed and shed abundantly upon us. Let us give Him glory. And though tomorrow is the black Sabbath, the day that Christ remained in the grave, we will wake up the following morning and rejoice with exceeding great joy. Think on these days as we hear: *“weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.”* Thank God for the joy of our forgiveness! Thank Him for His work on Good Friday! Thank Him for our glorious salvation! Amen.