

Maundy Thursday, April 2, 2015
Mark 14:22-25

I tell you the truth... Until I drink it anew in the Kingdom of God

It took three years to complete. To this day, it is the most popular piece of Christian art in the world, with its image being found on carpets, carvings, canvas, and practically any other medium imaginable. It's the painting we call *The Last Supper*. Did you know that basically from the time it was completed in 1498, it started to fall apart? Leonardo da Vinci, tried use a different method to paint this mural instead of doing it in *Fresco*. *Fresco* was a technique of painting a mural on freshly laid, or wet, plaster. Water is used as the vehicle for the pigment to merge with the plaster, and with the setting of the plaster, the painting becomes an integral part of the wall. Instead he painted it on dry plaster. What worked artistically did not work so well in regards to durability. Almost immediately it began to flake off the wall, and people have been attempting to restore the original ever since. *The Last Supper* isn't so lasting.

Today is "Maundy Thursday." It's a special night of Holy Week in which we transport ourselves back to the upper room, the original scene of *the Last Supper*. This was a night that Jesus had eagerly looked forward to as he was going to have the opportunity to celebrate the Passover with his disciples. It would have started off with reviewing the history of God's grace, particularly remembering how God used lamb's blood painted on doorframes to keep his people safe as the angel of death passed over Egypt. They would have then recalled how God led the people of Israel out of the land of slavery with a pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. Finally, the celebrants would have listened with eyes wide open as the teacher of the group relayed the story of the Red Sea being parted, allowing God's people to pass through to safety, only to have those walled waters come crashing down on the pursuing enemies. As the disciples ate this meal and listened intently, they felt a connection to their past. They felt a connection to God, as they were his people. They felt a connection to one another, as this family history belonged to each one of them. It certainly was a special night, the most special night of the year.

Just when the disciples thought it couldn't get any better or more significant, Jesus went on to make the occasion more special. While they were eating, Jesus took the unleavened bread, which was part of the original Passover menu, and they heard him say, "*This is my body.*" Then he took the cup, offered it to them, and said, "*This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.*" Jesus' words made it very clear that this New Testament Supper with his disciples was something very special. No doubt, they didn't want it to end. They wanted the Last Supper to last.

But Jesus, as eager as he was to celebrate this meal with them, didn't want it to last. He knew it couldn't last. His ultimate goal was not to dine with his disciples at the Last Supper, but his goal is to dine with all of us at a lasting supper. So once again, he grabs our attention: "*I tell you the truth.*" "*I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine.*" In other words, I need to leave. If my body and my blood are going to be given and poured for you, I need to do just that. I can't enjoy this meal with you any longer, "*until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God.*"

If there was a word for the disciples to lean on in that upper room, it was that preposition: "**until.**" It is a word of promise. It is a word of hope. So much of this night was wrapped up in the past, as they celebrated God rescuing his people from Egypt. There would be much comfort in the present for Jesus' disciples when he would declare: "**This is my body and this is my blood which is being poured out for you.**" Jesus' suffering was already at hand. But neither much of the past or present would mean much if there wasn't a future. That little word, "**until,**" says that there is a future.

It's that word, "**until,**" that brings us hope tonight. We are about to celebrate an awesome supper. Through the Lord's Supper, Jesus invites us to look back – look back to the cross. As we partake in the Lord's Supper, he wants us to think about the presence. We look into our hearts, and we see the darkness of sin. As we receive Jesus' body and blood, we see our sins forgiven. We look around, and see fellow believers in Christ. As one in Christ, we celebrate a special Supper together.

But we also celebrate this Supper looking forward. Looking forward **UNTIL** that day when **he drinks it anew with us in the kingdom of God.** Enjoy this meal tonight. Hear the words spoken so many years ago, spoken again to you personally by your Savior, "**Take and eat, this is my body, given for you. Take and drink, this is my blood, shed for you.**" Savor this

meal tonight and every time you come to the Lord's Supper. But do so knowing that our Savior's goal is not simply to dine with us like he did with his disciples at the Last Supper. No, he gave his body and blood so that we could have reservations with him at a lasting supper—a lasting supper where he eats and drinks with us anew in the kingdom of God.

What that heavenly banquet exactly looks like, feels like, or tastes like, I don't know. But it will be new. New like something we've never experienced before. No longer will we have to look in and examine ourselves for sin because we'll be holy, wearing white robes of righteousness that were tailored by the blood of Jesus. We will dine with Jesus himself. That meal we celebrate with Jesus, will truly be a lasting supper. Amen.