

Come to supper Mark 14:12-26 Holy Thursday March 29, 2018

This is my Body. And later This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." Mark 12:25

Today Jesus tells his disciples to come to supper.

Dear friends in Christ, we are far removed from first century Palestine. It can be hard for us to understand the customs of temple sacrifice, of farming with oxen and by hand, of fishing with nets of Sabbath observances, of sheep and shepherds. While study can be good for the soul by helping us see God's hand in these matters, we can feel a little out of place as we read about them, a little far from home. And we might feel that way today, with the strangers upper room and sacrificing a lamb and Passover feasts and covenants.

So let's leave that behind for a moment and see something simple, something we do know. Jesus bids his disciples come to supper.

I grew up in a small town in Wisconsin called Edgerton, about the size of Clarinda. And each day my sisters and parents and I would get up, get ourselves some cereal and juice and go out to work or shop or go to school, or during the summer, to play or swim at the pool. We each went our own way. Until 5 in the afternoon, when a sound was heard, a whistle. And wherever you were, whatever you were doing, when you heard that 5 O'clock whistle, you knew it was time to go home, to make a meal, to set the table to pour the milk, to come for supper. Though we had all been our separate ways, we came together for supper. We gathered as a family. In fact, in some sense, those who ate were the family. So it is with Jesus and his disciples, as they come together for supper, as they come together as family. They break bread together and they drink together. And this is special, and means exactly what it means to us, that they are one. One family, one people, one body, one blood. And Jesus gives them this gift, because they need it. They are about to go their separate ways. He goes to his arrest, to his trials, to his beatings, to his death. They will be scattered, alone. One will deny. One will betray. So on this night, he gives the gift of the supper. He points out their oneness in the bread. This is my body. And he gives it to them, so they share that one body. He points out the unity in the cup, this is my blood. And he gives them to share in that one blood. And nothing, not their desertion, nothing, not their denials, can take that unity, that family. Christ himself calls them to the supper. They are one with him. And what God has joined together, let no man tear asunder.

WE too are invited to that supper. Though we too have gone our own way, though we come from various places, he calls us to come to supper. WE to share that one loaf, his body. We too share that one cup, his blood. WE to gather, the family of God, through that body and blood shared for us for the forgiveness of our sins.

And just as we eat with those we are joined with, as we gather at holidays and baptism, weddings and funerals to say we are family, as we eat together such that even the earthly food testifies we are one, how much more the very body and blood of our Lord declares all his people one family and this holy meal.

The disciples were joined with Christ in his body. They were made one blood with him. And death itself does not separate them from him. They remain his people, and he bids them trust his words and trust his death and trust his sign. He comes for them again on the third day. We too will not be separated even by death, for we have tasted of this heavenly food at the table of God. He will gather us to the greater feast and the end of time and for all time. He will gather all who believe, all his children in body and blood home to eat with the father as the family of God. We taste it here and now, that we may enjoy it eternally hereafter.

So come to supper. Take bread and wine. Receive the body and blood. Be joined with Christ, with the church of all times and ages, here and now and in glory, as the family of God. Come to supper amen