

The Everlasting Feast

Luke 14:15-24

The Second Sunday after Trinity, June 30, 2019

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

The Sacrament of the Altar fulfills Passover and anticipates the Kingdom of Glory.

Your Lord instituted the Sacrament of the Altar on the evening of Passover. He and His disciples were celebrating Passover when He instituted the Sacrament of the Altar.

God instituted Passover through Moses on the night when He brought Israel out of Egypt. Israel had been in Egypt for about 400 years. The Egyptians led by their Pharaoh had enslaved Israel and forced them to do hard labor making store cities and working in the fields. The Egyptians were cruel and eventually began killing Israel's babies. After Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord saved them from their enslavement to Egypt. He first sent Moses to speak to Pharaoh and request the release of Israel. When Pharaoh did not listen to the Lord's request, the Lord then instructed Moses to perform a series of plagues on Israel. At the Word of the Lord all manner of destructive plagues came upon Egypt. After each plague God sent Moses to request from Pharaoh the release of Israel. Each time Pharaoh refused to let Israel go until finally God killed every firstborn male in Israel. Knowing that this would force Pharaoh to let Israel go, God commanded on the night when he put the firstborn of Egypt to death that Israel should celebrate the Passover.

The instructions that God gave Israel through Moses were simple. They were to keep a male lamb in their homes for four days. On the fourth day, the day of Passover, Israel was to slaughter all of the lambs at twilight. Israel was to drain the blood into basins. Israel was to take the branch of a hyssop plant and use it to apply the lamb's blood to the doorposts and lintel of their homes. Then Israel was to roast the lamb over the fire and eat it that night in their homes. They were to eat it together with bitter herbs. They were to be dressed for travel when they ate it because they would be leaving the next morning. God forbade them from breaking the lamb's bones. God forbade them from leaving any of the meat over. They were to burn it. God commanded them to eat the lamb together with unleavened bread.

The instructions were simple and straightforward. God commanded them to celebrate the Passover in every subsequent year thereby memorializing the fact that God had saved them from slavery in Egypt. God even gave instructions on what to tell your son if he asked you, "What is the meaning of this service?" The answer was to be,

“It was on this night that the Lord passed over our houses in Egypt, but put the firstborn of Egypt to death.”

In the years after God commanded it Israel developed a liturgy for observing the Passover meal. It is called the seder. It was this order of service that the Lord and His disciples were observing on the night He instituted the Sacrament of the Altar.

Like the lamb of the Passover, Jesus is roasted, only Jesus is roasted in the fire of God’s wrath as the substitute that takes away your sin. Like the Passover lamb Jesus shed His blood when He was crucified. Like the Passover lamb none of Jesus’ bones were broken. Like the Passover lamb the blood of Jesus is applied to those from whom He is saving them from death. With the original Passover lambs it was applied by hyssop to the door. With Jesus it is applied by drinking. Like the Passover lamb Jesus is eaten by those who are saved from death. The lamb of the Passover was roasted and eaten with none of it left over. Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Altar so that each and every one of you could eat Him without any of Him left over. When you eat the host in the Sacrament of the Altar you are not consuming a portion of His body. You are consuming His entire body. None is left over. In some miraculous fashion Jesus enables each of you to do this and He enables each of you to do this often.

Thus the crucifixion of Jesus and the Sacrament of the Altar which are two aspects of one reality fulfill the Passover.

But that is not all that the Sacrament of the Altar does.

Everlasting life is many things. It is the Garden of Eden restored. It is the final resurrection of the dead. It is standing in the presence of the Lord and His Father and beholding them face to face. It is being among the assembled tens of thousands of angels for celebration. It is all of those things and it is also a meal. It is a meal in the home of your Father in heaven.

How many times does your Lord talk about everlasting life in terms of eating? He calls it a banquet. He calls it a supper. He calls it a wedding feast. And He calls it these things repeatedly.

From all of this one thing is for sure, heaven is going to involve eating. It is going to involve a lot of eating. And since you can’t die, you either won’t get fat or you won’t have to worry about getting fat.

When our Lord commanded that the little girl whom He raised from the dead be given something to eat, not only was He proving to those present that she was not a ghost, but He was also beginning the eating with her in life everlasting. When our Lord rose from the dead and appeared to His disciples and asked for something to eat, not only was He proving to them that He was not a ghost, He was also commencing the

everlasting feast in the Kingdom of God! That is why the disciples on the road to Emmaus recognized Him after He rose from the dead only when He sat down to eat with them and broke bread with them. The everlasting feast has come upon us.

The everlasting feast will be eaten for all of life everlasting. It will never end. The everlasting feast will be eaten in the presence of God Himself. Those who make it to the everlasting feast are those who have had their sins forgiven on earth so that they are ready to enter the wedding feast when the Lord, our bridegroom, comes again in glory to take us to Himself in the great banquet hall of God.

This means that in addition to fulfilling the Passover, the Sacrament of the Altar also brings the everlasting feast of everlasting life into the present. It is more than simply an anticipation of the feast to come, just as the Sacrament of the Altar is more than a fulfillment of the Passover Feast. The Passover Feast and the Sacrament of the Altar are the same feast. It is simply that in the Sacrament of the Altar the final Passover lamb has come and offered His life and in the Passover of the Old Testament He has not yet come. Thus the Sacrament of the Altar and the everlasting Feast in glory are the same feast. They are both eaten in the presence of the Lord God. The only difference is that the Sacrament of the Altar by the forgiveness of your sins prepares you for entrance to the final everlasting feast and the final everlasting feast is simply the final everlasting feast, where the presence of God is made manifest visibly to our eyes.

There are people who do not have time for the Sacrament of the Altar.

Now make no mistake I am not talking about those people who never had the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of the Altar. I am not talking about baptized children who never had the instruction necessary for admittance to the Sacrament of the Altar. I am not talking about those people who did not have a called minister necessary to celebrate the Sacrament of the Altar. I am not talking about those people who were isolated for one reason or another and were unable to come to the Sacrament of the Altar or those who intended to come, but died before they were able to do so. Your pastor is not a legalist.

I am talking about people who had the opportunity to attend the Sacrament of the Altar and had received the invitation to attend the Sacrament of the Altar, but simply had better things to do.

Some folks think that work is more important than attendance at the Sacrament of the Altar. And work certainly is important. It is necessary for your vocations to engage in trade and to labor. It is necessary for you to consider a field and buy it or rent it. It is necessary for you to have those things for the support of your family. But to use it as an excuse to avoid attending the Sacrament of the Altar indicates a person who has

no faith. It is a person who is worshipping their vocation rather than the God who instituted the Sacrament of the Altar.

Some folks think that the necessities of work are more important than attending the Sacrament of the Altar. And certainly the necessities of work are more important. Some vocations require you to own a car for your work or to have a computer or laptop or to own certain specialized equipment necessary in the fulfillment of your vocation so that you and your family may receive support. But to use the purchase of those necessities and their maintenance as an excuse not to attend the Sacrament of the Altar indicates a person who does not have faith in the God who instituted the Sacrament of the Altar.

Some folks think that family is an excuse to avoid attending the Sacrament of the Altar. Some folks think that if they marry an unbeliever they need to become an unbeliever too out of deference to their spouse. Or they think that if their spouse is an unbeliever that it is simply too much work to continue in the faith and so they quit attending the Sacrament of the Altar. Some folks think that if they are in conflict with a family member that it is easier to quit attending the Sacrament of the Altar, particularly if the family member goes to the same Divine Service, rather than to reconcile as the Lord Christ commands and attend the Sacrament of the Altar in peace.

Or whatever the excuse is. Some people think they are not good enough to go to the Sacrament of the Altar and so they don't go. Some people think that there are too many hypocrites at church and so they don't go. Some people are embarrassed of their sins and so they don't go. Some people are mad at other people's sins and so they don't go. Some people are out of sorts with the preacher and so they don't go. Or whatever the excuse is.

The Sacrament of the Altar is Jesus. It is His body and blood which He offered into death to take away your sin and then raise from the dead. If you do not have time for the Sacrament of the Altar then you do not have time for Jesus.

Some of you have this comfortable but untrue notion that you can have the Sacrament of the Altar without Jesus. Unless you fall into some exceptional circumstance like the ones I talked about earlier, then you cannot have Jesus without the Sacrament of the Altar. It is His body and blood. The Sacrament of the Altar is Jesus. Jesus is the Sacrament of the Altar. Why do you think we bow before the altar? Do you honestly think we are worshipping a table?

The Sacrament of the Altar is for the forgiveness of sins. Therefore it is not about being good enough to take it. You do not earn your way to the Sacrament of the Altar. Anyone who does not have time for the Sacrament of the Altar does not have time for

the forgiveness of sins. That is not to say that you cannot obtain the forgiveness of sins some other way. You can be baptized. You can hear the absolution. I am not talking about people who cannot make it to the Sacrament of the Altar. I am talking about those who do not have time for it. And while everyone here has taken the time for it today. You know those who do not. And you need to be equipped with the truth of God in order to address them to say nothing of your own sacramental piety.

And since the Sacrament of the Altar is the everlasting Feast in the Kingdom of Glory, avoidance of one is avoidance of the other. And admittance to one is admittance to the other.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.