

**Christ's Blood Redeemed Us**  
**Sermon on 1 Peter 1:14-21**  
**March 24, 2005**  
**Saint Mark's, Watertown, WI**  
**Pastor Karl Walther**

The Scriptures assure us: *The blood of Jesus, God's Son, purifies us from all sin.*  
Amen.

God's Word for our special consideration this Maundy Thursday evening is First Peter, chapter one, verses fourteen through twenty-one. It's printed in your service folder, and I wonder if you wouldn't read it out loud with me:

**As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.**

**For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.**

This is the Word of the Lord.

### **Introduction: Maundy Thursday Has Christians Focusing On Lord's Supper**

Dear fellow Christians—who treasure Holy Communion:

It is, of course, Maundy Thursday evening. It's on Maundy Thursday, especially, that you and I line up shoulder to shoulder—not only here with one another, but also with countless Christians across the world and across the ages. People have – in every place, for nineteen hundred and seventy-five years – received the body and blood of the Lord.

You and I have learned to treasure Lord's Supper. We treasure it because in it Christ says to you and to me: "Here's the very body and blood that died for you on the cross. Here's the very body and blood that rose from the grave, to assure you of your resurrection from the dead. I myself am here. I am yours, and you are mine, and it will be that way forever."

### **Theme: Christ's Blood Redeemed Us**

God's Word to us this evening gives us another reason to treasure Holy Communion. It's that: CHRIST'S BLOOD REDEEMED US ... FROM AN EMPTY, IGNORANT LIFE ... FOR A HOLY, REVERENT LIFE.

### **Part One: We Lived An Empty, Ignorant Life**

The words before us tonight are words from God through one of the men who was in attendance at the very first celebration of Lord's Supper: the Apostle Peter. He wrote these words some thirty-five years after the fact—from the city of Rome to several Gentile churches in the country of Turkey.

Now, most of the people to whom Peter was writing had spent most of their lives as pagans. ...Look at what Peter says early in the first paragraph of God's Word to us tonight. They *lived in ignorance*—ignorant of their sinful need, ignorant of their Savior from sinfulness, and ignorant of any better, more satisfying way to live. ...Look at what Peter says early in the second paragraph. These Christians in Asia Minor had an *empty way of life handed down to them from their forefathers*—empty of the promise of eternal life, and empty of any real reason to live this life.

Can you and I relate to that? Many of us really can't. I can't relate to this, exactly. As far back as I can ever remember, I've been a Christian—because my parents got me adopted into God's family, with sins washed away, when I was very, very young: thank God! And it's the same for very many of you.

But think of it for a moment. What if that weren't true? What an empty, ignorant life it would be: if you and I thought, "When I die, I die; my body decays, and the rest of me completely passes out of existence"! What use is life then?! What an empty, ignorant life it would be: if you and I thought, "Well, I may as well get all the money and all the possessions I can get—because that's all there is to life. I may as well live as dirty and drunk as I can—because that's all there is to life. I may as well use others and treat them as meanly as I can—because this life is all there is." What a crummy little, empty little life that would be!

And by nature, that's the life we lived. And by nature it earned eternal hell for us.

### **Theme: Christ's Blood Redeemed Us**

But wow! does it make you appreciate what we read in the second paragraph of God's Word to us tonight! It says: *You were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers.* And what does that mean? Well, to "redeem" always means to pay a price to set you free from bondage. And these words tell you that God paid the price to set you free from your bondage to sin and emptiness and ignorance.

So, let me read that second paragraph—and as I do so, consider how it fills your every celebration of Holy Communion with eternal meaning! *You know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers.* It's no mere pile of paper money or coins up here, no matter how high, that Jesus is offering to you tonight.

*But you were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ.* Tonight – and every time you receive Lord's Supper – you are receiving the blood and the body of none other than Jesus Christ. You are receiving the body and blood of God. The blood that coursed through Jesus veins when he was born holy for you—it's yours! The blood that brought oxygen for him to preach the gospel to multitudes, and teach his love to individuals, and heal the sick and the dead—it's yours, right here in Lord's Supper! The blood that flowed from his hands and his feet and his side, rather than your hands and your feet and your side, since he died for you—that blood is yours in Lord's Supper! The very body and blood that rose from the grave Easter morning and lives forever and you will live through it—it's yours, right here, in Holy Communion!

Christ Jesus was *a lamb without blemish or defect.* And now: to God, you have no blemish or defect—because Christ Jesus has entered your soul, also in Lord's Supper.

*He was chosen before the creation of the world.* God loved you to such a degree that eternally ago he planned for you to dwell with him forever. And you can be sure of it—because the very body and blood Christ wears in eternity he shares with you here in Holy Communion. *But Christ was revealed in these last times for your sake.* And he's revealed right here in Lord's Supper: you see him and taste him and experience him.

*Through Christ you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.* And so, eternal life is yours!

## **Part Two: We Live A Holy, Reverent Life**

So, Peter has reminded his readers that they used to live an empty, ignorant life. But Christ redeemed them by his blood. That means he paid the price to set them free from their emptiness and ignorance. However, Jesus didn't merely set people free FROM something. He set them free FOR something.

And that's obvious from the first paragraph of God's Word to us. It says: *As obedient children*—do you see? Peter's readers are now children of God: and like kids with loving parents, they want to please their Dad and follow his example.

*As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."* Peter's listeners had been adopted into the "Holy" family. So, they would want to display the holy characteristics of their holy heavenly Father.

And: *Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here – sojourners here, citizens of a different and heavenly country – live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.*

And it's the same way for us. We live our lives here among a great big, sinful human family. But Holy Communion has us dining with a different family—a holy heavenly family. We live our lives here in a great big, sinful human nation. But Holy Communion has us dining with a different set of citizens—a holy heavenly nation. And our behavior here is going to reflect that.

So, the great big, sinful human family within which we live is going to say to us, "Earn big money. Spend big money. You owe yourself – and us! – the best clothes, the best house, the best food, the best car, the best vacation." But Holy Communion has Jesus saying to us, "No, you belong to me; you're a part of a different family." And so, you and I say to the human family, "No, I'm a member of God's heavenly family. Whatever money he gives me, I will use to serve him, one way or another."

And this great big, sinful human family is going to say to us, "Come on. Have some fun. Get drunk. Shack up. You only go around once." But Lord's Supper has Jesus saying to us, "No, I paid your debt and bought you back from those sins. You don't ever want to live in them any longer." And so, you and I say, "No, thanks," to sin, or better yet, "No, not over my dead sinful body."

And the great big, sinful human nation within which we live is going to say to us, "If anyone gets in your way, or if you can reach higher heights by climbing on their backs, trample them." But Holy Communion has Jesus saying to us, "No, you're mine. You belong to a different nation." And so, you and I say to the human nation around us, "No, I'm a member of God's heavenly nation. And I insist on treating others rightly!"

## **Conclusion: Maundy Thursday Has Lutherans Treasuring Lord's Supper**

That's the way Christ's Blood Redeemed Us ... From an Empty, Ignorant Life ... For a Holy, Reverent Life. And aren't you glad Jesus did that for you? Now not only are your sins forgiven, now not only are you in a holy communion with Christ, but now you've got the worthy goal of using your life, using your possessions, and treating others in a way that brings honor to Jesus.

And this Holy Supper is the heavenly food you need to energize you to do that every day of your lives! Amen.

The Scriptures assure us: *In Jesus Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.* Amen.