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Good Friday  
29 March 2013  
Grace-Trinity Lutheran Churches, Wichita  
Jn 18-19

*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit*

Holy Week is marked first and foremost by blood.

On Maundy Thursday, the night when our Lord was betrayed, He took the cup;  
and, when He had given thanks, He gave it to the disciples saying,  
*“Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood,  
which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.  
This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”*

This Last Supper was a Passover celebration, or at least that’s how it started.  
It was a feast by which they participated in the ancient feast of old—  
where blood covered their door posts so that that it wouldn’t cover their oldest child’s  
bed sheets.

They remembered their deliverance, their salvation, while the Egyptians’ blood was shed—  
Pharaoh’s son, and all the oldest sons of Egypt.

Friday was also the day the Lambs were to be slaughtered for the Passover.  
All of Israel, at the same time, would offer up their Lamb on behalf of their family.  
They would eat this lamb together, remembering the salvation delivered by God.

And then there’s Jesus.

Blood was everywhere.  
The scene in the movie the Passion is vivid.  
After the slaughtering—  
after the lashes, the mop head of leather straps embedded with bits of bone and metal,  
the patches of skin ripped clean off His back, the wounds, and the agony—  
after it was over, and Jesus was carried off to the corner where He’d receive His crown of thorns,  
then all that was left was the blood.

In the movie, it’s Pilate’s wife who gives the pile of white rags to Mary and the other Mary.  
They get on their knees and they wipe up the spilled blood.  
But it’s too much.  
Too much blood for the white rags.  
Too much blood to clean up—  
it gets on their robes, on their faces, on their hands and arms.  
It falls in the cracks of the ground; it drenches the rags.  
There’s too much blood.  
That’s Good Friday.

Now, to understand the power of this blood, we must go back to Egypt, where it was prefigured.  
*“Sacrifice a lamb without blemish,”* Moses commanded,  
*“and sprinkle its blood on your doors.”*

If we were to ask Moses what he meant—

how the blood of an irrational beast could possibly save men endowed with reason—  
he'd answer that the saving power lies not in the blood itself,  
but in the fact that it is a sign of the Lord's blood.

In those days, when the destroying angel saw the blood on the doors he did not dare to enter.  
How much less will the devil dare to approach now,  
when he sees, not that sign of blood on the doors,  
but the true blood on the lips of believers, the doors of the temple of Christ!

And if you want more proof of the power of this blood, remember where it came from.  
Remember the cross, how it ran down, flowing from the Master's side.

The gospel tells us that when Christ was already dead, but still hung on the cross,  
a soldier came and pierced his side with a spear;  
and immediately there poured out both water and blood.

Now the water was a symbol of Holy Baptism, and the blood, of the Holy Eucharist.

The soldier pierced the Lord's side;  
he broke the wall of the sacred temple;  
and the treasure has poured out on us!

That's how it was with the lamb also:  
the families sacrificed the innocent beast and rejoiced in their deliverance.

So we are saved by the blood of true Lamb—  
by the water and the blood that flow from His pierced side.

Dear Christians, don't pass over this mystery too quickly.

The water and the blood from Christ's side symbolized the sacraments of the Church.  
From the side of Christ the Church is born:  
having been cleansed by the font and fed by the altar,  
it's Christ who now says of us:  
*"At last! Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh!"*

As God took a rib from Adam's side and made a woman, Eve, and the two became one flesh—  
so the Church, by the water and the blood, comes from the side of Christ—  
the New Adam, the true Man, God for us!

And just as God took the rib when Adam was in a deep sleep,  
so also, in the same way, Christ gave us the blood and the water after his own death.

The water washes away the stain of sin and gives us new birth from above;  
the blood delivers the life—God's life for us.

And just as the blood filled the courtyard where Jesus was beaten,  
just as the blood was drained from all the Passover lambs,  
just as the blood marked the door posts and splattered the altar,  
so also does this blood of Christ cover us again today.

There's so much it can't all be mopped up.  
It fills the chalice and then there's more.

But the blood we receive is greater than all the blood of goats and bulls and Passover lambs—  
for the blood we receive isn't a type or symbol or sign—  
but it's the very same blood that drenched the rags and stained the clothing and  
poured from His side, and fills our Chalice.

Good Friday is all about blood.

Not just any blood, but Jesus' blood for you.

So come, "*drink of it all of you—  
for this cup IS the new testament in His blood,  
which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.*"  
*In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit*