

HYMNS: 51 295 71 286 291 84

INTROIT Psalm 116:12-19

What shall I repay to the LORD for all the good that He has done to me?
I shall lift up the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the LORD.

I shall fulfil my vows to the LORD, right in the presence of all His people.
The death of His faithful people is precious in the sight of the LORD.

O LORD, I am indeed Your servant. I am Your servant, the son of Your
maidservant. You have undone the chains on my feet.

I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to You, and I shall call on the
name of the LORD.

I shall fulfil my vows to the LORD, right in the presence of all His people,
in the courts of the house of the LORD, in the middle of you, O
Jerusalem. Praise the LORD!

COLLECT: O Lord, in this wondrous Sacrament You have left us a
remembrance of Your passion. Grant that we may so receive the sacred
mystery of Your body and blood that the fruits of Your redemption may
continually be manifest in us; for You live and reign with the Father and
the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS:

Exodus 24:3-11 The blood of the Covenant.

Hebrews 9:11-22 Complete redemption through the blood of Jesus.

Matthew 26:17-30 The institution of the Lord's Supper

Welcome to all worshipping with us today!

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Please notify pastor of anyone who is unwell or in need of a visit.

Exodus 24:3-11

³ When Moses came and recounted to all the people all the Words of the LORD and all the Ordinances, all the people answered with one voice: “We shall do all the things that the LORD has spoken.”

⁴ Then Moses wrote down all the Words of the LORD. He got up early in the morning, built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵ Then he sent the young Israelite men, and they offered whole burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the LORD. ⁶ Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls and poured the other half out on the altar. ⁷ Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it aloud for the people to hear. They said, “We shall do all that the LORD has spoken, that we may be obedient.”

⁸ Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, “Look! The blood of the Covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these Words.”

⁹ Then Moses went up, together with Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the seventy elders of Israel, ¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel. Under His feet there was something like a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself. ¹¹ However, God did not stretch out His hand against the eminent men of Israel. They saw God and ate and drank.

Hebrews 9:11-22

¹¹ However, Christ has come as a High Priest of the good things that have been done, through the greater and more perfect Tabernacle, which has not been made by human hands, that is, not a part of this creation. ¹² Moreover, not through the blood of goats and calves but through His own blood He entered once for all into the Most Holy Place, when He obtained eternal redemption. ¹³ For, if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer that are sprinkled on people who have been defiled make them holy, so that their bodies are clean, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, has offered Himself without blemish to God, make our consciences clean from dead works, that we may serve the living God? ¹⁵ This is also why He is the Mediator of the new Covenant, that, after death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions under the first Covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. ¹⁶ For, where there is a testament, it is necessary that the death of the one who has made the testament must be established. ¹⁷ For a testament is in force after people have died, since it is never valid while the one who has made the testament is still alive. ¹⁸ That is why even

the first Covenant has not been inaugurated without blood. ¹⁹ For, after Moses had told all the people every Commandment in accordance with the Law, he took the blood of calves and goats, together with water, scarlet wool and hyssop and sprinkled both the scroll itself and all the people. ²⁰ He said, “This is the blood of the Covenant, which God has commanded for you.” ²¹ Then in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the Tabernacle and all the objects used in worship. ²² According to the Law almost everything is made clean by blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Matthew 26:17-30

¹⁷ On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?”

¹⁸ He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says, “My appointed time is near. I shall celebrate the Passover at your house with My disciples”!’”

¹⁹ The disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. ²⁰ When evening had come, He was reclining at the table with the Twelve.

²¹ While they were eating, He said, “Truly, I tell you that one of you will betray Me.”

²² They were very sad, and each one of them began to ask Him, “I am not the one, am I, Lord?”

²³ Jesus answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the bowl with Me is the one who will betray Me. ²⁴ The Son of Man is going as the Scriptures have said about Him, but how terrible for that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for that man if he had not been born.”

²⁵ Then Judas, who was betraying Him, asked, “I am not the one, am I, Rabbi?” Jesus told him, “You have said that.”

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread and gave thanks. He broke it, gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat! This is My body.”

²⁷ He took a cup, gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you! ²⁸ For this is My blood of the Covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ For I tell you, I shall certainly not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it with you anew in My Father’s kingdom.”

³⁰ After they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

THE BATTLE IS PERSONAL
Sermon for Maundy Thursday, 2023
Luke 22:47-48

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon tonight is Luke 22:47-48: **While He was still speaking, they saw a crowd, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was coming in front of them. He came close to Jesus to kiss Him.** ⁴⁸ **However, Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”**

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

For any of you who have a computer, have you ever received an official-looking email congratulating you on winning a prize? Often these emails have an attachment that, once opened, will download and install malicious code on your computer that silently runs in the background, just waiting for you to click on your bank account or your file with all your passwords and other personal information.

That kind of program is called a Trojan horse. It gets its name from the Trojan War between the Greeks and Trojans. The Greeks built a giant wooden horse, set it outside Troy’s walls, and left. When the Trojans saw it, they pulled it into their city. As it turned out, soldiers were hiding inside that horse who opened the city gates at night so the returning Greek army could get in and defeat Troy.

Our text tonight is a tragic case of one of the special 12 men who had walked beside Jesus on all those rocky paths in Israel, had heard His sermons, had watched all those miracles, had prayed with Him, and had even carried out some mission work for Him. But this one man became the betrayer. The enemy Satan had inserted a Trojan horse in his heart, gained control and turned him against Jesus.

As we examine this case, it becomes evident *how important* it is that Jesus is our Warrior who fought for us and, to this very day, helps us in our battles with the devil, who wants to use our sinful flesh against Jesus and our faith in Jesus. We realise that the battle is personal.

While we can lock our doors to keep out thieves and robbers, more often than not, we find that our worst war is almost always like that of Judas, who was battling a demon from within.

Jesus and the disciples had had their last meal together before going out to the Garden of Gethsemane at the foot of the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus withdrew from them to a little distance and prayed. When He finished, returning to His disciples, He had found them asleep. Jesus woke them, and **“while He was still speaking, they saw a crowd, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was coming in front of them. He came close to Jesus to kiss Him.”**⁴⁸ **However, Jesus asked him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”**

In his Gospel, Matthew tells us that Judas went up to Jesus and singled Him out for the soldiers by dramatically kissing Him. This was a traditional kiss on both sides of the face. However, the Greek word Matthew uses says, *“Judas covered Him with kisses.”* Judas must have been highly agitated. Although he was trying to act as if everything were still as it had previously been, he overdid it. Maybe he had hoped that this exaggerated display of affection would make it look like he was overjoyed to see Jesus. Perhaps it was also designed as a diversionary tactic to buy a little time for the guards to approach Jesus and arrest Him. The treachery of Judas knew no bounds. He used an expression of friendship to betray his most faithful Friend.

Perhaps to some, it looked as if Judas was greeting his great friend Jesus. But the soldiers, Judas, and Jesus all knew what it meant: He was using the display of close friendship to betray and hand over our Saviour to His enemies. Jesus even gives him two more chances, calling him by name just as He had done perhaps hundreds of times before: “Judas.” Matthew mentions that Jesus finally said, *“Friend, do what you have come for!”* (Matthew 26:50). What had turned Judas from a friend into someone who could betray Jesus? What Trojan horse had entered his heart to make him a traitor within the ranks of the 12 men closest to Jesus for the past three years?

As most of you know, Judas was the treasurer for the disciples. However, he had been helping himself to some of that money.¹ Satan entered Judas and pushed him to go to the chief priests to get paid for betraying Jesus - 30 silver coins on the spot.² Just a few hours earlier, Jesus had mentioned that one of the

¹ John 12:6

² Luke 22:3; Matthew 26:15

disciples would betray Him³ and had said it was a fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecy in Psalm 41:9, “*Even My close friend, whom I trust, who has been eating My bread, has lifted up his heel against Me.*” The warning did not touch Judas. During the Last Supper, we learn these terrible words again: “*After Judas had taken the piece of bread, Satan entered him. So, Jesus told him, “Do quickly what you are doing!”*” (John 13:27).

What a sad life. It’s evident that Judas was experiencing a considerable struggle inside him, especially at the end. Satan had gained control of the sinful nature within Judas and driven him to commit the worst sin that has ever been committed by someone who called himself a disciple of Jesus. *Can you think of a sadder legacy than that of Judas?*

When Jesus told the disciples at the Last Supper that one of them would betray Him, did they all turn their heads to look at Judas, just as we do when we see a movie about the Last Supper? No. They didn’t know who would betray Jesus. What did they do? I find it amazing that “*the disciples began to look at one another, at a loss to know whom Jesus meant*” (John 13:22). Why did they suspect one another? They knew their own weakness. Each had a sinful flesh that Satan could attack and use to drive them away from Jesus. Which of them could possibly do this?

Yes, the disciples knew themselves. The battle against Satan is personal for Judas and all the disciples of Jesus - us too. We know the struggle within us.

Jesus had warned them all that they would desert Him. He had given a special warning to Peter, who had firmly declared that he would never disown Him. The same night, after the disciples had received the Lord’s Supper from our Saviour, they all deserted Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. Peter swung his sword, but then he also fled. Yet Peter followed the soldiers into the courtyard of the high priest. He kept denying he was a disciple of Jesus, even to the point of swearing it. He, too, was a betrayer. The Trojan horse of fear in his heart was Satan’s way of turning even Peter against Jesus.

Think of your own life. What kind of Trojan horse will Satan use in *your* heart? Like the Apostle Paul, do you say, “*For according to the inward human being I delight in God’s Law,²³ but in the members of my body I see another law, which is waging war against the Law of my mind and making me a prisoner to the law of sin that is in the members of my body.²⁴ What a wretched person I am! Who will rescue me from this body, which is bringing death?*” (Romans 7:22-24).

³ John 13:10-11

Did you catch Paul's reference to the spiritual war inside us? We want to trust Jesus with all our hearts, but our faith is under attack. Our sinful flesh is weak. As Jesus told His disciples, "*The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak*" (Matthew 26:41).

And so is yours. Sometimes there is guilt from the past. You get flashbacks and feel dirty and unworthy of Jesus. Could it be something going on right now? Maybe you have improper thoughts or are holding a grudge. Are you living right now in disappointment? Perhaps depressing thoughts have been working against your faith. Maybe you have lost your cheerful spirit in serving and giving. Have you been getting spiritually lazy? On some Sundays now, do you choose to skip church for whatever reason? It doesn't seem to bother you as much that your personal Bible study has been slipping. And your prayer life? How often do you pray? Do you see the Trojan horse within?

But here's the good news: our Hero loves us every day of our lives!

We have a Warrior who can help us fight these battles and sneak attacks! We agree with St. Paul: "*Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!*" (Romans 7:25).

There is a stronger hand on our hearts, closing the gate against Satan's war within our hearts. Jesus is the defence against our sinful flesh and Satan's battle for our hearts. Our betrayed Jesus never betrayed us! He went through all that physical abuse alone. And then, also alone, went before God's judgment bar, piled high with our sins, to experience the complete misery of hell in our place, with the prize in His sight of earning complete forgiveness for every sin we've ever committed.

When Jesus voluntarily gave up His life on the cross, God cleared sinners of every charge against you, me, and the entire world. The only thing that God sees in us is the holy, perfect life of Jesus! He has made that freely available to all who turn to Him in faith.

Jesus is the starting point in our personal battle against the Trojan horse Satan keeps trying to use against us and our faith in Jesus. We need Jesus in our active fight against sin. Thank Jesus, who has given us some incredible war weapons to help us grow stronger in faith, become more like Him, brighten our vision of our final heaven home, give us a bolder life, and enlarge the daily joy we already have in Him! Here are some of those weapons we have for our personal struggle against Satan and the sin within:

The first is His powerful Word with all those promises. That Word is a two-edged sword⁴ as it exposes all the stuff we try to keep hidden and, at the same time, it cuts away all the guilt as it brings Jesus into sharp focus... our dear Jesus, the heart of the Bible! God's Word strengthens our faith and even alerts us to the Trojan horses of Satan! As Paul notes in Ephesians 6, It's our armour and offensive weapon.⁵

Second, tonight, we shall receive that special meal, the Lord's Supper, where our Warrior provides each of us personally with His true body and blood. It's as close as we can get to Him on this side of heaven. It's as if we were in that upper room when Jesus looked at each of the disciples as He passed around the bread and the wine, assuring them in that Last Supper that He was touching them with His real presence. Do you see yourself there - at the end of the table? Whenever you feel like you are slipping in your struggle with Satan, this meal points you back to Jesus. In this meal, He gives you the forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation he has battled to win for us. Our battle against Satan is personal, but so is this Supper: the Warrior's flesh and blood with the bread and wine strengthens us.

Third, right here tonight, the Holy Spirit is working within you with the Gospel to strengthen you in your battle with Satan and sin. We are all receiving the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. Together with the believers around you, we are all to be encouragers of one another. We encourage one another to stay close to Jesus and His Word so that our faith will grow and become stronger, nourished by the rich grace of God through Word and Sacrament. Here we greet one another in Christ, show our concern and care for one another in conversation, and pray for one another's needs as we express our Christ-centred love in actual words and real actions. At this moment, this is the best place we could possibly be!

So, dear friends, all that took place on the night when He was betrayed was all part of the plan for Jesus to save us. On this solemn night when Christ instituted His Supper, and we remember Christ's betrayal, "*take up the full armour of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day and, after you have done everything, to stand!*" (Ephesians 6:13). God has provided protection for us, and it comes in the form of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who suffered all for us. May we remember this in this most solemn hour. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds

⁴ Hebrews 4:12

⁵ Ephesians 6:10-18

in Christ Jesus. Amen.

PRAYER FOR MAUNDY THURSDAY

Almighty God, heavenly Father, we thank and praise You for Your goodness and loving kindness in sending to this needy world Jesus Christ, the bread from heaven. We praise You that you have enabled us to know You through Him.

Open our eyes that we may see ourselves as we really are in the mirror of Your holy Word, and grant us a sincere repentance. Nothing is hidden from You. You know our secret sins. Therefore we cast ourselves down before You, trust in Your mercy, and cling only to this, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from every sin. Forgive us our many transgressions. Grant that by faith we may grasp what Christ has done for us, and rejoice in the perfect peace of His pardon. Do not take Your Holy Spirit from us, but continue to make us glad that You have saved us. Satisfy our souls with the bread of life, and grant that through faith in Him we may never hunger again. Do not cast us from Your presence because of our faithlessness, but through Christ keep us for Your eternal kingdom. Help us to overcome pride and self-will, which disregard Jesus' example of humble service. Give us a ready mind and a pure heart to follow in His steps.

Bless Your Church, O Father. May all Your people be nourished by the true manna, which has come down from heaven, and given them the vision and strength to do Your will. Help Your Church to appreciate and use Your Word, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, through which Your Spirit brings salvation to all people.

May Your blessing rest on all who feel the burden of a guilty conscience, the pain of sickness, the ache of sorrow, the sadness of separation, and the sting of death. Give to all who seek Your gracious help the assurance of Your love and comforting presence, and, at the end, entrance into Your eternal glory.

As now we proclaim our Lord's passion and death in the communion between bread and Jesus' body and wine and Jesus' blood at His Table, unite us with Him and with each other in faith and fellowship. For there we are one body in Him. Assure us again of Your presence and Your mercy. Increase our joy and hope of heaven. Let Your Word and the Lord's Supper continually strengthen us during our pilgrimage on earth, until we finally share in the marriage supper of the Lamb for ever. We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ, whose saving death is our peace and hope until He comes. Amen.

Article: Because We Love Them

We have the Lord's Supper in our churches. We deserve no credit for it but only thank and praise the Lord. We must not be proud but humble. The true body and blood of Christ are distributed to all who commune in a true Lutheran church. It is important for us to know to whom we are distributing it.

1 Corinthians 11:27-32 tells of the danger in receiving the Lord's Supper in an unworthy way, without believing that Christ's body and blood are there distributed with the Word for the strengthening of faith in the forgiveness of sins earned once and for all by Christ on the cross. Only those who believe what the Words of Institution say receive the spiritual blessing of the Lord's Supper. Those words involve the whole Biblical faith. The good news of forgiveness and salvation earned for us by Christ relates to all Biblical teaching (Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:15-16). The results of misusing the Lord's Supper include sickness and death - not to mention the guilt incurred by receiving it without the true faith (in place of the forgiveness received by the true faith). It is not loving to give a person something so dangerous without first having asked whether he will receive the benefit or the harm.

Some object: "We would not invite someone to our home and then refuse to feed him." The answer is: "But you would refuse to give him something that would hurt him." Communing someone not instructed in the faith would be like giving adult food to a baby. Communing someone who did not believe correctly about it would be like serving a guest something poisonous. It is for the weak in faith as well as the strong. But it is not for those without the proper faith.

Law and Gospel must be distinguished. The Lord's Supper is pure Gospel. Communion is an absolution. We cannot absolve those who do not confess their sins and confess the faith. That would be telling them that there is nothing wrong with the way they are living and believing. It would be encouraging them along the wrong path. That is hardly loving!

The pastor has responsibility. No responsible physician dispenses medicine without making the diagnosis. A pastor should not commune anyone without having learned that he confesses his sins and confesses faith in Christ, believing what Jesus says about His Supper. Only with that faith would he receive it for blessing and not for harm, for forgiveness and not for judgment.

We cannot look into another person's heart. We cannot judge what we cannot see. If a pastor had to be sure that a person had true faith, he could never commune anyone. He could never be sure that someone was not lying when he confessed. A pastor should see that the person confesses the one true faith and

does not deny that confession by living without concern for God's Word and will. When a parishioner's life openly contradicts that confession, he comes under church discipline.

What about a person who claimed to hold the true faith but retained membership in a church that denied the Word of God? What if a Roman Catholic or a Baptist confessed the Biblical faith but would not give up membership in his Roman Catholic or Baptist church? He would be openly sinning against God's Word and would have to be denied Communion (John 8:31-32; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 1:10; etc.).

Why do we not commune others in our church? Because we love them and do not want to contribute to their being harmed by the misuse of the Gospel and the Lord's Supper. Why do we not commune with others in their churches? Because we love them and do not want to confirm them in their false beliefs. They may be Christians, but they are living dangerously.

Satan has made it very hard for us to speak this way in the modern world without seeming very unfriendly, very unloving, and very proud. We should try to make it clear that God has moved us to accept His Word in humility and not to trust our own thinking. We should try to make it clear that we love others and that our Communion practice is a matter of serious concern for them. We should point them to the clear Word of God. Only God can convince people of His Word.

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICES

Good Friday, 7 April

READINGS: Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 19:17-30

HYMNS: 58 part 1 63 75 (69 66) 58 part 2

8.30am OAK LR

9.00am TMBA LR

9.00am GRN LR

9.30am AUB LR

9.00am MARBURG HC