

Crumbs – Good News for the Diaspora!

SUNDAY.

For a truth against Thy Holy Child Jesus ... were they gathered together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done. – Acts 4:27-28.

Wednesday our Lord passed at Bethany with His disciples, enjoying rest and quiet. The chief priests and scribes and elders of the people, however, were not restful and quiet. They assembled in the palace of the high priest Caiaphas and took counsel together that they might subtly take Jesus and kill Him. But they said: “Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.” And lo, then one of the Twelve, Judas Iscariot, came to them and said: “What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?” And they were glad, and covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him. (Matt. 26:3-5 & 14-16.)

But it was Satan who ruled the elders in their hatred toward Christ, and who had entered into Judas – he was bent on Jesus’ destruction. But Satan and Judas and the Chief Council could only do what God’s hand controlled and what God’s counsel had determined before to be done. Indeed, God ruled amidst the wickedness of man and the enmity of Satan. God wanted to carry out what His gracious counsel determined before to be done, that the Savior should become the Lamb of sacrifice that taketh away the sins of the world. – And so henceforth all things must serve God to the end that you may be saved. Commit all things into God’s keeping.

PRAYER. – Almighty, merciful God, I give thanks to You that You did so turn the evil counsel of the devil and of the elders of the church, as well as of Judas who betrayed You, that Your good and gracious counsel for the salvation of the human race was thereby accomplished. O God, give me Your grace – that in faith in Your dear Son, my Savior Jesus Christ – I may always commit myself into Your fatherly hands which will surely rule all things for my good and my eternal happiness. Amen.

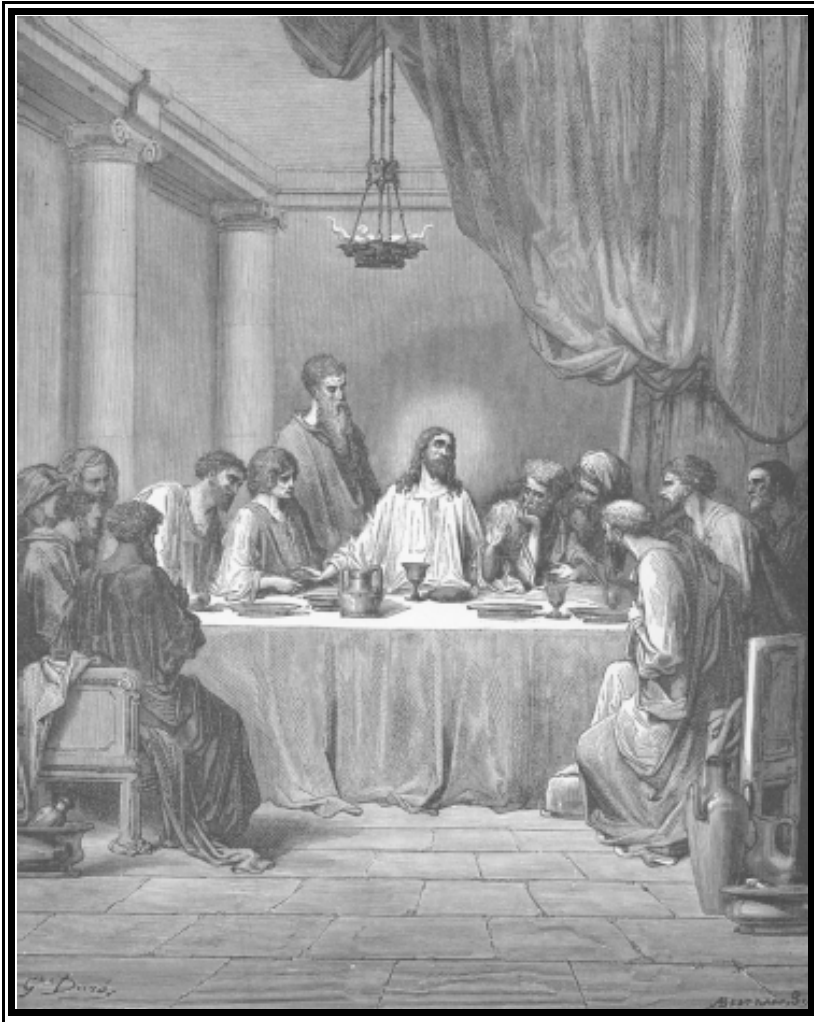


Illustration: The Last Supper

A Devotional for the
Week of Quinquagesima* Sunday

Hymn 65, 3.

Yea, so dear did He esteem me,
That His Son He loved so well
He hath given to redeem me
From the quenchless flames of hell.
O Thou Spring of boundless blessing,
How could e'er my feeble mind
Of Thy depth the bottom find,
Though my efforts were unceasing?
All things else have but their day,
God's great love abides for aye.

MONDAY.

If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.
– John 13:17.

On Thursday morning the disciples came to Jesus, saying: "Where wilt Thou that we make ready for Thee to eat the Passover?" And He said: "Go into the city to such a man and say to him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; and I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples." And the disciples did as Jesus had told them; and they made ready the Passover.

Now when the even was come, He sat down with the Twelve. And there arose also a contention among the disciples which of them should be accounted the greatest. And Jesus rose and laid aside His garment; and He took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. Then cometh He to Simon Peter; and Peter with unto Him "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" Jesus answered and said unto him: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." Peter saith unto Him: "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Jesus answered him: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Simon saith unto Him:

"Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Jesus saith unto him: "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit. And ye are clean, but not all." For He knew who would betray Him; therefore said He: "Ye are not all clean."

So after He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments, and had sat down again, He said to them: "Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither is he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." (Matthew 26:17-20; Luke 22:24; John 13:1-17.)

We Christians are clean through faith in Christ. He merely needs forgive us the sins which defile us on our journey through this life. And this He gladly does. And so we Christians must also be kind to one another, and willingly forgive one another, and serve one another in every way. If we know these things, happy are we if we do them.

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus, my Savior, I thank You that by Your blood You have cleansed me of all my sins, and that You richly and daily forgive me all my sins. Grant me Your Holy Spirit that I may prove myself Your disciple - gladly forgiving my neighbor when he has offended me, and loving and serving him. Amen.

Hymn 197, 2. 7.

O what a marvelous offering!
Behold! The Master spares
His servants, and their suffering
And grief for them He bears.
God stoopeth from His throne on high,
For me, His guilty creature,
He deigns as man to die.
And let me do to others
As Thou hast done to me:

Love all men as my brothers,
And serve them willingly,
With ready heart, nor seek my own,
But as Thou, Lord, hast helped us,
From purest love alone.

TUESDAY.

Lord, is it I? – Matthew 26:22

Now they ate the Passover. And after the blessing Jesus broke the bread for His disciples. And He also took the cup, and gave thanks, and said: "Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come." And while they were eating, He was troubled in His spirit and said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that one of you shall betray me." Then the disciples looked at each other, and not knowing of whom He spake, they said to Him one by one: "Lord, is it I?" He said to them: "It is one of the Twelve that dippeth with me in the dish. The Son of Man indeed goeth as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed ! Good were it for that man if he had never been born."

John, whom Jesus loved, sat next to Jesus, leaning on His bosom. To him Peter beckoned that he should ask who it was of whom Jesus spoke. John said to Jesus: "Lord, who is it? "Jesus answered: "He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it." And when he dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas, the son of Simon, the man from Cariot. This man then said shamelessly: "Master is it I?" Jesus answered him: "Thou hast said." And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him: "That Thou doest, do quickly." The other disciples did not understand this, because they had not heard what Jesus had said to John. Judas then, having received the sop, went out straightway. And it was night. (John 13:21-32 & Matthew 26:21-25.)

Woe unto Judas! Woe to every disciple that falls away from Jesus! Christian, you must not doubt that you will remain constant in

faith and will enter heaven. But you must not ground your constancy and eternal blessedness on your own strength. When looking upon yourself, your heart and mouth always tremblingly ask, "Is it I?" But when you thus address yourself to the Lord, and anxiously look to Him to keep you, then He will surely do so. You may safely depend on Him.

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus, help me and keep me from Satan and from the wiles of my own heart. I cannot remain true to You, I cannot obtain eternal salvation, unless You sustain me. Therefore I call upon You. My eyes look anxiously to You. You will not allow me to be put to shame. I rely upon You, the merciful Savior, doubting nothing. Amen.

Hymn 347, 1.

O GOD, forsake me not!
But lead, full of compassion,
With loving hands Thy child,
That I may gain salvation,
When here my course is run;
Be Thou my Light, my Lot,
My Staff, my Rock, my Shield, –
O God, forsake me not!

ASH WEDNESDAY.

As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come. – 1 Corinthians 11:26.

As they were eating, when the paschal meal was about over, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave a piece of it to each of His disciples, saying: "Take, eat." While thus dividing the bread, and as the disciples were eating, He said: "*This is my body*, which is given for you." And when all had eaten, He said: "This do in remembrance of me." After the same manner also He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to the disciple sitting nearest to Him,

saying: "Drink ye all of it." And while they all drank, one by one, He said: "*This is my blood* of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." And when all had drunk, He said again: "This do ye as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

We know that here the Lord Jesus instituted the Holy Communion of the New Testament, which was to take the place of the typifying paschal meal of the Old Testament. And in all Christendom this is to be celebrated to the end of time. In Holy Communion, Jesus, who is the true Lamb of God, under the bread and wine, gives us His body, which was given into death for us, and His blood, which was shed for us. In Holy Communion the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world, gets into the closest possible communion with us: we receive His body and blood, and with it the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Here we must in true faith joyously hail our Savior, remember His salutary death, and show and by an open profession proclaim His death by virtue of which we have been redeemed. Ah, how well do we own Him who in the fullness of time came to suffer and to die for us!

PRAYER. – O Lamb of God, Lord Jesus Christ, I thank You, that of Your great mercy toward me – poor sinner – You have instituted a supper where I receive the food and drink of eternal life, Your body, sacrificed for me, and Your blood, shed for me. Grant that I may often approach this Holy Supper with true hunger and thirst, that I may receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation through You, and, firmly believing, comfort myself with such salvation. And grant me grace, I implore You, to adorn such faith with a frank profession of Your blessed name and with a Christian walk, until You will come to seat me at the tables You have prepared for me in the blissful mansions above. Amen.

Hymn 441, 1. 2. 4.

JESUS Christ, our blessed Savior,
Turned away God's wrath forever;
Suffering pains no tongue can tell,
He saved us from the pains of hell.

To remind us that, to save us,
He hath died, His flesh He gave us,
With this bread, a quick'ning food,
And with this wine, His precious blood.

Thou shalt hold with faith unshaken,
That this food is to be taken
By the sick who are distressed,
By those whose heart is sin-oppressed.

THURSDAY.

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me. – John 14:6.

What terror must have seized upon the disciples, the poor sheep, that night in which their Lord was betrayed, in which the Shepherd was slain! For that reason He lingered long with them at the table after the paschal supper, seeking to comfort them, to strengthen and steel them for the approaching hours as well as for every evil hour in days to come. "Let not your heart be troubled," He said kindly. "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." And at once He directed them to the goal which they were bent on reaching, by saying: "In my Father's house are many mansions." There they are to remain forever.

If, however, a doubt should harass their poor soul, He wished to tell them that He was now going to prepare a place for them. And though He is doing this, He assures them that, nevertheless, He will come again and receive them unto Himself, that where He is, they may also be. "And," He continued, "wither I go ye know, and the way ye know." The way to the Father, He would say, is familiar to you. Thereupon Thomas said, disappointed and sad: "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?" Jesus answered him: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Jesus, the Savior, the Sin-Atoner, the Propitiator, the Redeemer, the dear, kind, merciful Lord, whom we know so well

from His Word, and who possesses our hearts, He, yea, He is the Way to the mansions of His Father. Through Him we are saved. If He is ours by faith, we are on the way that surely leads to heaven. He also is the Truth, the only Truth, fixed in God's eternal counsel; if we trust in Him, we cannot fail. And He is the Life, Eternal Life, for us sinners; if we have Him, we have life. But without Him no man cometh unto the Father. He is the only Way, the only Truth, the only Life. Without Him there is no salvation. (John 14:1-16.)

– Dear Christian, will not these words comfort, strengthen and steel you against sin and affliction and death and judgment, in life and death?

PRAYER. – O Lord Jesus, since You are the Way, the Truth, and the Life, I, a poor sinner, am of good cheer. I know You, and You are mine, beloved Savior! Keep me, O faithful Lord, lest I stray from You and err from the only way to salvation, forgetting the only saving truth, and losing eternal salvation. Let my eyes in faith be ever fixed on You, and I shall assuredly obtain salvation. Amen.

Hymn 88, 6.

Jesus I shall never leave,
To His side still firmly clinging.
Christ leads all who Him receive
To life's waters ever springing.
Blessed they who to Him cleave! –
My dear Jesus I'll not leave.

FRIDAY.

He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. – John 14:9.

Jesus wanted to comfort His disciples because of His departure. He therefore said to them: "If ye had known Me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him." Do you understand these words, dear Christian reader? He who knows Jesus aright also knows the Father aright. And,

indeed, the disciples now knew Jesus aright, hence they also knew the Father. But their fear and sadness had overpowered them now and had dimmed their knowledge. Up, up! the Savior would say, collect your thoughts! You know the Father even now, and you have seen Him. Then Philip said to Him: "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us." Jesus said to him: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? *He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father*; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself; but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake." (John 14:7-11.)

Would you, O Christian, look into the inmost heart of God, to be real sure of Him? Look upon Jesus in the Word of Holy Scripture. When seeing Jesus, you see the Father. The Son is of one and the same essence with the Father. He is the eternal personal Word, the eternal personal image of the Father. Jesus is in the Father, and the Father is in Him. Jesus' Word is the Father's Word. Jesus' work is the Father's work. Yes, Jesus' mind is the Father's mind; Jesus' compassion is the Father's compassion; Jesus' beneficial goodness is the beneficial goodness of the Father. As Jesus receives you – sinner though you be – so the Father receives you. Oh, why would you see the Father? You have seen Jesus, your dear, good Savior, in His Word – thus you have beheld and seen the Father. Why do you not rejoice? Let your heart be filled with comfort, trust, and confidence! God is your Savior. He who has seen Jesus has seen the Father.

PRAYER. – God Lord God, Heavenly Father, I thank You with a heart filled with joy – that in Your Son, Jesus Christ – You have so clearly revealed Your gracious will and Your loving heart toward us poor sinners, and I implore You to graciously grant that I may daily increase in this knowledge, that in every temptation I may comfort myself with this truth, and buoyed up with such hope, may overcome all evils that beset me, and in the end be saved. Amen.

Hymn 103, 5.

Lord God, my Father, mighty Shield,
Thou in Thy Son art all revealed
 As Thou hast loved and known me;
Thy Son hath me with Him betrothed,
In His own whitest raiment clothed,
 He for His bride will own me.
Hallelujah! Life in heaven
Hath He given, With Him dwelling,
Still shall I His praise be telling.

SATURDAY.

If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it. – John 14:14.

Jesus instilled His despondent disciples with courage in that night by giving them a great and sure promise. He said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." (John 14:12-14.)

Through faith in Him His disciples were to be men of God's power on earth. They were to do the works that He had done, and greater still. For while Jesus preached, and did signs and wonders, and brought people to faith in Him in but a small nook of the earth, they were to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel, and do signs and wonders, and bring many more people to faith in Him than He had done Himself! And such power He would give them when through suffering and death He would enter into the glory of His Father. And if they would pray in His name, trusting in Him and firmly believing His promise, they would always be endowed with such power – by Him, in order that the Father might be properly known and glorified in Him, in whom alone the Father is truly revealed and made known to mankind. And again the Lord assured them: "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it."

How is it with us who also believe in Jesus? Does this promise also pertain to us? Most certainly. True, He has not commanded us to do signs and wonders. But we are to do the greatest of all things, we are to bring men to saving faith in Him through the Gospel. And for such power of God we are to pray, and He will surely grant it to us. This is certain. Oh, that we had the true zeal for such work ! Oh, that believingly and earnestly we would pray for such power! How much would we then accomplish!

PRAYER. – Lord Jesus, strengthen my faith! Through Your Holy Spirit grant me true zeal to perform Your work on earth. Give me fervent love for my erring brother, that I may seek to win him for You and Your salvation. And give to me, O Jesus, Your power of God whereby alone such things can be done. Lord, cure me of the paralyzing idleness and indifference of my flesh. Let me be Your disciple, Your servant, Your instrument, the bearer of Your power, as long as I live on earth. Amen.

Hymn 67, 7.

O joy! My hope and trust are founded,
On His sure Word, and witness in the heart;
I know Thy mercies are unbounded,
 And all good gifts Thou freely wilt impart,
Nay, more is lavished by Thy bounteous hand
Than I can ask, or seek, or understand.

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Note: *Quinquagesima* is the Sunday before Lent. The word means fiftieth, denoting some fifty days before Easter.

These devotions are adapted from *Crumbs* by C. M. Zorn (1914).
The hymn stanzas are from *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* (1918).
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