

“I Received from the Lord what I also Delivered on to You”

“For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you ...” These words which you heard from the Apostle Paul – could very well have been said some 1500 years prior by the Apostle Moses (send by God to deliver His people).

Moses received the covenant or promise of the Lord – and this is what he delivered to Israel. The Lord promised that He would send the angel of death to pass over the land of Egypt to bring death to all the firstborn males – AND, the Lord promised that, by the blood of a lamb, they would be spared.

Just as the Apostle Paul gives precise instructions – so does Moses – because these are the instructions received from the Lord Himself. To one it is “take [bread] and eat ... take [wine] and drink ... this is My Body and Blood for you.” To the other it is – take a year old male lamb without blemish, and unleavened bread – and eat it.

But there’s more! Moses passes on the Lord’s command to “eat it in haste” – “It is the Lord’s Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn of the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.”

Eat it in haste because the Lord is coming to strike your enemies and deliver you. The Lord is coming to bring you out of your bondage to slavery. He is coming to set you free from your captors – and bring you back to the Promised Land.

It is good for us to overlay the Lord’s Supper upon the Passover meal and to see the similarities – after all, the Lord’s Supper is the fulfillment of the Passover meal. It is not surprising that “on the night in which [Jesus] was betrayed” – on the night in which He instituted the Lord’s Supper – they had gathered to celebrate the Passover.

Of course, the Lamb is at the center of both meals – but there are also other things which the Lord has delivered to us – for our good.

Before the Lord gets into the details of the Passover lamb, He says – “This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.” Notice how the Lord has reordered their lives (restarted their lives) – centering their lives in the blood of the lamb who redeemed them from slavery.

This redemption is not just the beginning of their new year – but shows forth the new life that the Lord has delivered to them. Their new life is the result of the death of another – another life given up into death so that they might live.

This was an annual meal – to be celebrated each year – a celebration of the new life the Lord has given. “Do this in remembrance of me.” Each year, when your children ask “what does this mean?” – tell them about the Lord’s deliverance from the slavery of Egypt – and tell them about the greater deliverance which is yet to come.

The greater deliverance comes when the Lord sends the Messiah, our Savior Jesus Christ – to suffer and die in our place. It is the Body and Blood of this Lamb – without blemish, holy and pure – that we are given to eat and to drink. It’s “for you ... for the forgiveness of all your sins” the Lord promises.

In the Lord’s Supper the Lord Himself is “loosing” you from the chains and slavery of your sin. And where there is the forgiveness of sins, there is life and salvation – a reoriented new life – and a salvation where death passes over all who are marked by the blood of the Lamb.

“Do this in remembrance of me.” Remember that Jesus died because of your sin – His blood is shed to pay your ransom price and set you free. With each Lord’s Supper, you are given a whole new life – reoriented around the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world – who takes away your sin.

I’ve mentioned how the Old Testament and the Epistle are purposely woven together for us – but what about the Gospel reading from St. John 13? How does that fit in? Why is this the Gospel reading for Maundy Thursday?

This is part of John's account of what happened in the upper room on when Jesus and His disciples had gathered to celebrate the Passover. John doesn't record the institution of the Lord's Supper like the other evangelists – and one reason is that, since his Gospel is the last of the four – his audience already has been catechized regarding the Lord's Supper in the other Gospels.

But that doesn't mean that the Supper is absent from St. John's account. It is behind all that he records for us.

He who looks down on all things, takes the lowest place, and looks up in service to all. Jesus knows that He has come from God and is going back to God – but first, He must serve – He must become the slave.

His washing of their feet shows that there is no sin, and no sinner, beneath Him. He loves them to the end – even to the end of His life. He takes their place, sheds His blood, gives His life into death – so that death may pass over them, and they might live.

Such is His love for you – that His Body and Blood sets you free – not just from the bondage of your sin – but free to live the new life He has given.

“You should do as I have done for you” – that is, serve your fellow man by humbling yourself – considering others to be better than yourself. Sacrifice yourself. Use your new, reordered life for the sake of your neighbor. Forgive their sins (as disgusting as they may be) – because I have washed you in my blood and made you clean.

Dearly beloved, what I have received from the Lord, I deliver to you. Christ, the Passover Lamb who sets you free. Christ, the Passover Lamb who gives you new life. Christ, the Passover Lamb, who loves you to the end. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.