



Hidden in the Savior's Feast

‡ So simple we miss the glory

‡ Full price for our salvation

In the name of Jesus, our glorious Savior, dearly redeemed disciples, heirs of eternal life:

Imagine your masterpiece, something you'd worked on for years until it was just the way you wanted. Years ago an issue of *Fine Woodworking* pictured a gorgeous black walnut cabinet, unquestionably the work of a master craftsman. No one could figure out why he drove a 16 penny nail into the polished front of one of the doors. But what if you had a prized flower garden like one of our members? Some deer ate their way down the line, spitting out one blossom after another until nothing was left but trampled petals. Dear Christians try, but no one can improve on the masterpiece of the Master Himself. ***Behold the Hidden Glory of the Cross – Hidden in the Savior's Feast.*** It's...

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Jesus instituted His Sacrament of Holy Communion on top the glorious simplicity of the Passover in Egypt 1500 years earlier. Pharaoh refused to let God's people go as commanded by the LORD's prophet Moses. Nine devastating plagues only hardened Pharaoh's unbelief, until the LORD made it very simple. He had the Israelites slaughter a male lamb for each family at twilight and paint the blood on the doorposts of all their homes. That night the death angel killed the firstborn son of every Egyptian man and animal, but passed over the blood-protected homes of the Israelites. Finally Pharaoh could see that disobedience to God could only result in death. For "***the wages of sin is death....***" (Romans 6:23a)

Yet like Pharaoh the rest of us **miss the glory** in our Savior's **simple** words. While Jesus and His Twelve disciples were celebrating the Passover, ***Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*** Those were sins they were committing still that night, arguing about who was the greatest. So stuck on their own importance that no one could do the servant's work of washing each other's feet. In the celebration of God's past **glory** in Egypt they missed the glorious simplicity of Jesus' loving service on the way to the cross.

Don't we also **miss the glory**? In many Lutheran homes the conversation goes something like this: "Are we going to Communion today? Let's see, did we go last time? Then maybe we should go today." Perhaps even tonight in your heart or home **the glory of the Savior's Feast** was hidden in thoughts like this: "Well, it's Maundy Thursday. I guess I better go to Lord's Supper since everyone takes Communion today." How can we excuse our empty ceremony any more than those who parade Christ's body and blood, or worship it, or say it is only symbolized something in **the Savior's Feast**?

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The powerful **Glory of the Cross** is **Hidden in the Savior's Feast**, in His simple words: *"Take and eat; this is my body...Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."* The One who said that was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary as proof that *"nothing is impossible with God."* (Luke 1:37) We do not need to understand how He can be truly present in His Holy Supper. But to trust Jesus is to **Behold the Hidden Glory of the Cross – Hidden in the Savior's Feast**. Such simple faith reaps the benefits of the...

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Pharaoh missed the glorious truth that *"the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 6:23) When our Lord Jesus Christ says, *"Take and eat; this is my body,"* He is giving us His Last Will and Testament. He gave no family stocks, no bulging investment portfolio. There was no family china, no polished silver and gold, no cabin up north. Jesus had nothing of earthly treasure to give. So He gave something far better, priceless beyond measure. He gave Himself. He said, *"This is my body...this is my blood...given and shed for you."* Only hours away from the crown of thorns, bloody flogging, the nails, the spear, the cruelest suffering of the cross, Jesus was thinking about you. He made you His beneficiary. He gave Himself *"for you."*

Pharaoh may never have seen the blood painted on the doorposts of Jewish homes in Egypt. Americans watching Charlton Heston's classic movie, *The Ten Commandments*, this time of year, probably won't make the connection either. That innocent blood of the male lamb pointed ahead to the innocent blood of God's own Son, *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."* (John 1:29)

What we receive when we drink the Word-powered wine in Lord's Supper Jesus calls, *"my blood of the new covenant."* Remember? Half way between the first Passover and the first Lord's Supper, the prophet Jeremiah was given a message of great comfort and peace to believers who would see the temple burned and God's people carried into Babylonian Exile. We also need this encouragement: *"I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt...This is the covenant I will make...: I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."* (Jeremiah 31:31-34 NIV) That's glory worth all the wealth of the world to know God forgives us all.

Christ's *"blood of the new covenant"* put into effect His Last Will and Testament that makes us heirs of eternal life. This is what our church fathers called the "medicine of immortality." Bread and wine could only sustain the body. But Christ's body and blood – in, with and under the bread and wine – sustain body and soul for all eternity. All that was left to make this medicine work, all that had to be done to bring about His Last Will and Testament, was to follow through on Good Friday. With disciples still unwilling to humbly serve each other or admit their need for His divine help, Jesus would press on to the cross. He gave them His Holy Supper to strengthen them in what would be their darkest hour.

Such strength He gives to us today. No way can we improve on His holy masterpiece. In every way He wants us to love Him more and serve each other in the joyful eagerness of faith. No nails in the door fronts, no scattered petals in trampled gardens. No new theories about *how* or *when*. We come instead with hearts broken because of sin, souls thirsty for the salvation which God alone can give. We come in faith to Him who would rather think about us than about Himself. We come humbly, penitently to the One who gave Himself into death for us all. My dear fellow Christians, **Behold the Hidden Glory of the Cross – in the Savior's Feast**. Here is **simple glory, the full price for our salvation**. Here is of forgiveness full and free for you and me. Amen.