

Psalm 16:1-6

April 5, 2012 – MAUNDY THURSDAY

Receive the Blessings of the Cross!† **God keeps us safe in this Supper.** (vv.1-4)† **God secures our inheritance here.** (vv.5-6)

In the name of Jesus, our true Passover Lamb, dearly redeemed saints of God:

One thing I've learned from being a father is how long daughters will plan the Reception at their weddings. Cindy and I planned the last few months she was teaching. But hearing my three daughters plan has impressed me all the more how important that wedding banquet is in our culture.

It's a good thing because Jesus had His wedding banquet in mind when He first instituted His Holy Supper. But first He had to die. That's what makes Christ's wedding plans so spectacular. His Sacrament of the Altar foreshadows the heavenly wedding banquet as Jesus told His disciples in tonight's Gospel: *"I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."* (Mark 14:25 NIV84)

At first you might wonder how we know this Psalm 16 is about Jesus, but the dear Holy Spirit leaves no doubt when you hear Peter's sermon on Pentecost where he quotes Psalm 16: *"...the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David....David said about him: 'I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'"* (Acts 1:16;2:25-28 NIV84) Those later verses we will consider tomorrow evening for Good Friday. For now, **Receive the Blessings of the Cross!**

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Every once in a while you hear the sad story of a couple who die on their honeymoon. A few years ago a couple's brakes failed and their car plunged over a cliff. You never come back from that. There is no instant replay. Two families grieve. They would have parked somewhere else if they had known. Jesus knew what was coming for Him. But He also knew how much we needed Maundy Thursday. **God keeps us safe in this Supper.** Why did Jesus not run away? 1,000 years before through His forefather King David, Jesus said, *"Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge."* As a true human being He needed God's help to press on through this Holy Supper to the cross and Easter triumph.

From what must He keep us **safe**? Consider the next verse, *"I said to the LORD, 'You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.'" Do you consider the Lord the Master of your life or do you sometimes you should decide where and when things should happen – good things all the time, bad things next to never? Do you look upon God has the whole source of every good? Most young people think they'd be happy if they had more friends. Middle aged look for happiness in position and career – not just men, but women too. Later years bring the big temptations of more gold for the "Golden Years" as if somehow money could buy us happiness. We all know better. But how often don't our hearts run into those ruts of sin and worry anyway? The true test is when God takes away something we love.*

Is verse four about hardcore pagans? Think again: *"The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods. I will not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips."* The Holy Spirit is not just speaking of unbelievers *hurrying after* other gods. Whatever has our heart is our God. Do you children ever wish church would be over so you could do something else? That shows you love things more than you love God. "We should fear, love and trust in God above all things." You and I deserve God's eternal punishment in hell for breaking the First Commandment.

David promises here, ***“I will not take up their names on my lips.”*** So what do you like to talk about? Men, do you have trouble getting out more than a few thousand words a day? How easily can you spend them all on sports or other things? But to give those words to our wives and children? Or give your heart and mind to prayer and praise of God? Jesus said on Maundy Thursday, ***“Love one another as I have loved you.”*** Countless times this sinful man had to pray coming home for energy to speak kindly to my wife and children. God does not discriminate. Husbands and wives deserve more than leftovers from each other. But is it not infinitely more sinful to hold off our first and our best from God? Who of us could be worthy to receive this Holy Supper? How desperately we need God’s Son who **keeps us safe in this Supper**. Jesus did look to God for all His help. Jesus did find all His good in God. Jesus found His greatest delight in God’s will even though it cost Him everything in bitter suffering and woe.

† **God secures our inheritance here. (vv.5-6)**

At the first Passover in Egypt the LORD used the *blood* of innocent male lambs to save His people Israel from death. Likewise, the *blood* of the innocent Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world (1 John 1:7). This *blood* we receive according to God’s promise with the wine in His Holy Supper as deliverance from the slavery of sin continues in the New Covenant: ***“For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance— now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. He said, “This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep.” In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”*** (Hebrews 9:15-22 NIV84)

This is why when I consecrate the elements for Lord’s Supper with the Words of Institution from Jesus, I like to turn toward God’s people to make the sign of the cross. It reminds us of how the priests were commanded to sprinkle the people with blood from innocent animals that could never take away sin. But Christ’s blood He gives us in a most miraculous way to drink, and His body in, with and under the bread in this most blessed Sacrament of the Altar. This foreshadows our inheritance in heaven.

Years ago a man was describing the difficulties in his life. Then he paused as his face brightened. “But I found love,” he said. To him, that was all that mattered. He was remembering the woman whose face lit when he walked into a room. His for her too. Married love is a wonderful blessing. Christians who have experienced its joys say it’s as close to heaven on earth as they’ve ever been. But each must also admit that the feelings come and go, making the commitment of marriage absolutely vital. Our gracious God wants us to see His commitment in the smiling face of Jesus, our heavenly Bridegroom who takes great *delight* in all who put their faith and trust in Him as Lord and Savior. His intimate love is shown most beautifully in the Holy Supper that foreshadows the wedding feast of the Lamb.

“LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.” Your place in the Promised Land of heaven is set up and secure, wide open boundary lands to last for all eternity. Whatever you might image as the ideal place on earth to live, God’s heaven is a million times better. And you won’t have your spouse saying, “You’ll have to live there without me.” Your heavenly Bridegroom has given His body and blood into death to guarantee eternal glory with God. He delights to bring us to His delightful inheritance. He comes closest to us all right here when He says, ***“Take and eat. This is my body. Take and drink. This is my blood.”*** Lord, make us worthy in Christ alone. Amen.