**Waiting For The Lord: To Feed Us**

**Exodus 12:1-14**

Maundy Thursday - 04.14.2022

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

This Holy Week our Lenten Vigil is nearing it’s culmination. We are still Waiting for the Lord: Joining the Old Testament Saints in Vigil. On this Holy Thursday evening we are Waiting for the Lord: To Feed Us.

Man is the crowning touch of God’s creation. Adam & Eve were told all that had seed in it was food for them. When they ate the wrong food, from that ‘one’ tree, things changed. Now, they would have work for their food, by the sweat of their brow they would eat bread. AND, there was one tree from which they were cut off, the tree from which no one would be allowed to eat– the tree of Life. God even set an angel with a flaming sword to bare the way to it.

Throughout Scripture, food plays a prominent role. The first sons of Adam and Eve were involved with food – one raised crops and the other herds. After getting off the ark, "Noah began to be a man of the soil and he planted a vineyard."

When Abraham was visited by angels, he prepared a meal for them of bread and meat.

Lack of food, famines in the land, were the reason some people moved to other regions. Pharaoh's vision of seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine brought Joseph to his court. During the seven years of famine, Joseph’s family was brought to Egypt in their search for grain to make bread. In Egypt, Israel grew into a numerous people.

After many years of slavery in Egypt, God hears their pleas for freedom and takes a hand in matters to free them from bondage, bringing plagues upon Egypt. As part of the 10th plague, God visits the Israelites and instructs them concerning the Passover. It is to be a meal, a holy meal, a meal which shall be in the first month of the year according to the new calendar God gives to them.

You all know about the Passover. On the 10th day of this first month, they are to bring a lamb into their homes. This lamb is to be without blemish, a male, a year old, and of a size that each family can eat. This lamb is to be kept in their home until they slaughter it on the 14th day of this month. The entire assembly of the congregation, all of the Israelites, are to slaughter their lambs at twilight. They are to take some of the blood and put it on the two door posts and the lintels of the houses in which they are going to eat it.

They are to eat the flesh of the Lamb in their homes that night, roasted over fire; and with it, unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Nothing is to remain until morning. If something remains, it is to be burned.

They are to eat it with their belts fastened, their sandals on their feet, and their staffs in their hands. They are to eat it in haste for it is the Lord's Passover. As they ate, God was going to pass through the land of Egypt and strike dead all the firstborn of the land of Egypt, both man and beast.

But where the blood of the Lamb was on the doorposts and lintels of the homes in which the Israelites were eating the lamb, the Lord would see the blood and pass over them – no harm would befall them to destroy them.

The Lord said, “this day shall be for you a memorial day and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.”

In the morning, after the night of carnage visited upon the Egyptian firstborn, Pharaoh commanded that the Israelites be freed. Their slavery was ended! Death had passed over them! In haste they left for the promised Land.

But Pharaoh changed his mind and pursued them in order to return them to slavery. His foolishness only destroyed all his military might by God's hand in the Red Sea.

In their newfound freedom, it did not take long before the Israelites complained about their wilderness diet. First water was a problem. Then they did not like the food.

God provided water! Then God provided bread from heaven, manna that came down with the dew, and which they picked up from the ground every morning. In the evening God sent quail to feed them.

In the Gospels, Jesus feeds incredible crowds with minimal food. He fed 5000 with five loaves and two fish. Then He fed 4,000 with seven loaves and a few small fish. Yes, feeds their bodies, but in these miracles He points to the greater miracle He will institute in the upper room. He had them gather, the He took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to the disciples to give to the thousands gathered. Miraculously, all ate and were filled.

We are concerned about such things as well. What will we eat? How will we take care of ourselves, and our daily lives?

As Jesus spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness, Satan tempted Him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” “Use your divinity to make yourself something to eat, Jesus.” Jesus’ response was very simple. He quoted Deuteronomy, “Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” (Dt. 8:3)

How much time, energy, money, and preparation are spent in preparing for the family Easter meal? What will it be? Ham? Scalloped potatoes? Dinner rolls? What will be placed upon the family table? And what is it that, if it is missing, people will whine and cry that it is not Easter without it?

Is the same amount of time, energy, and preparation spent in preparing for the even greater meal that will be eaten as God's children gather around Christ's table? Is there the same amount of concern over that meal? Any time of self-examination leading to repentance for the eating of forgiveness?

On this evening, before Jesus heads out to Gethsemane where Judas will betray him into the hands of wicked men, Jesus brings to fulfillment the meal of the Passover. Jesus connects the Passover to Himself in instituting the Lord's Supper.

Christ is Himself the lamb without spot or blemish - the sinless, holy, Lamb of God. He came to his own. He made his dwelling amongst them. Upon the cross He was slaughtered, His blood marking it – that His blood might mark the doorposts and lintels of hearts.

You eat the flesh of this Lamb of God. It is hidden under the form of bread, but sacramentally united to it so that it is indistinguishable from it. His flesh that was pierced on the cross is what you eat..

Christ Himself is the food for which God's people have been waiting for generations. The cross becomes the tree of Life from which we may eat, so that eternal death passes over. It is a meal which feeds us in the journey through the wilderness of this life to the promised land of heavenly glory.

As often as we eat of this bread, the flesh of Christ – and drink of this cup, His holy precious blood – we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Each week we wait for the Lord to feed us, to nourish us, and sustain us through our walk in the wilderness of this life, to life everlasting. Every Sunday He does! And He does it abundantly.

Yes, our gracious God provides all that we need for the support of this body and life. Just as He provided manna in the wilderness…and as He multiplied fish and loaves for thousands, so He provides for all our daily needs.

But more blessed than any meal that sits on the tables of our homes, is the meal that sits on the table in His house before us this evening, and whenever we gather around it. Here is Holy food, sacred food, life giving food. Here is the food for which Christ's Church has been waiting to be fed. In this meal, He feeds us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet feast. Today we eat it with thanksgiving.

Even in our eating today though, we are being fed and nourished, prepared to wait with the saints gone before us. We wait patiently for the Lord to feed us in His kingdom, at His holy table. Indeed, we wait for the day that we will eat it in resurrected bodies, without interruption, for all eternity. We wait for Him to feed us at the eternal wedding feast. Until that day, we give thanks to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.