

“THE GARDEN OF THE UPPER ROOM”

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Redeemed In The Lord,

Little Emily sat next to her parents in church and observed how the people quietly walked in single file to the front of church. They waited in 2 straight lines in the middle aisle until a nicely dressed man turned around and motioned for them to walk all the way up the steps to the railing with the pad on it. She carefully watched how some kneeled on that pad and others remained standing. Some folded their hands and others kept their hands to their side.

Then the 1st pastor went by and put something in their hands while speaking some words and they put it in their mouths. Another man silently walked by with a shiny tray and some people, (not all) took a tiny cup from that tray. Then the 2nd pastor followed him with this big, shiny cup and some drank from it. Again he said some words that sound like the first words. He then ended his talk by drawing an invisible cross in the air and said **“DEPART IN PEACE.”** The people got up and came back to their places!

When Emily’s parents came back, her curiosity got the better of her and she asked, *“Mommy, why did you go to Pastor and get something to eat and drink? Were you hungry?”*

Little Emily asks a good question, doesn’t she? Why do you come up to the pastors and get something to eat and drink? Are you hungry? Are you looking for something beneficial for you to feast on?

This Maundy Thursday gives us another opportunity to go back to the Upper Room in Jerusalem and see where Jesus planted His special supper called the Lord’s Supper. Today we review His promises to give us His body and blood and to give us His forgiveness all at once in this sacrament. So I hope we are hungry today. I hope we are looking for something beneficial to feast on as we return to...

“THE GARDEN OF THE UPPER ROOM”

1. Where Jesus gives us His body and blood
2. Where Jesus gives us His forgiveness

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To the logical human mind, this sacrament makes no sense. Eating and drinking elements here are, physically speaking, no different than eating toast and drinking coffee. They’re just everyday human actions to take inside what’s on the outside.

To be sure the Corinthians understood that what Paul was about to tell them, he prefaced his words by saying **FOR I RECEIVED FROM THE LORD, WHAT I ALSO PASSED ON TO YOU**. What I’m about to share with you is not my idea, it’s the Lord’s idea. I didn’t make this up. I’m only a messenger, a mouthpiece of what He gave me to give you.

What did Jesus give Paul? **THE LORD JESUS, ON THE NIGHT HE WAS BETRAYED, TOOK BREAD...IN THE SAME WAY, AFTER SUPPER HE TOOK THE CUP...** After celebrating the Passover meal, Jesus used natural, physical elements that were conveniently available in this Upper Room. Unleavened bread, most likely in pancake size, easily broken. Grape wine, fermented from the grape, very easy to distribute in a cup. He blessed those elements and forever planted the seed in **THE GARDEN OF THE UPPER ROOM** exactly what He was giving the disciples.

THIS IS MY BODY WHICH IS FOR YOU...THIS CUP IS THE NEW COVENANT IN MY BLOOD. With His words, Jesus declares that those who partake of this meal are receiving His very body and blood which He gave and shed on the cross at Calvary on that first Good Friday. They were to recognize and believe that the tiny word **IS** means **IS**. It does not mean change into. It does not mean symbolize. It means **IS**, that is in its very current condition, the bread and wine are Christ’s body and blood. So what you have in the process of coming to the Lord’s altar and hearing Jesus words attached to these elements **IS** the 2 physical elements you see and taste and the 2 spiritual elements that Jesus says is really there! We still call that from our instruction days **“THE REAL PRESENCE”**.

We need to know what Jesus promises in this sacrament. The truth of God’s Word is at stake and each of wants to be sure what’s offered here. A “What I Believe” survey taken by Crossroads Consulting two years ago revealed nearly ½ of the responses agreed that the bread wine are **symbols** that **represent** Christ’s body and blood. That is NOT the truth. That is the Reformed teaching on this sacrament and not the **BIBLICAL** teaching.

Nothing is symbolic here. Nothing is given and shed figuratively speaking. Nothing is represented here. Our Lord Himself says **THIS IS MY BODY, THIS CUP IS MY BLOOD**. From the original Greek, this cannot mean anything else than that **JESUS OFFERS US HIS VERY BODY AND BLOOD** given & poured out on His cross. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:16: *The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?* (ESV) Know the truth. Believe the truth that all started in right here – in the **GARDEN OF THE UPPER ROOM**.

Emily wondered why her parents went up to the front. Do you have to ask yourself that? Maybe it's good we do today, because the Upper Room Garden reveals where Jesus gives us Body and Blood and **WHERE JESUS GIVES US HIS FORGIVENESS**.

Paul says that **THIS IS THE NEW COVENANT IN MY BLOOD**...The Lord's Supper places us right in to the very heart of our blood-bought redemption earned for us by Christ on His cross. Here Jesus stands before us with His mercy and grace in becoming the ransom payment for our guilt, our shame, our attitudes & actions which displease God. Here Jesus brings us a new promise not based on us keeping His law, but on Jesus keeping God's law perfectly and sacrificing his innocent life in our place. Here Jesus fulfills God's mission to be our substitute, our scapegoat, our Lamb to bear our sins and be forsaken by God to hell's punishment. Here Jesus offer the new covenant of the Gospel which says: **SON, DAUGHTER, BE OF GOOD CHEER, YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN!** You are freed from their curse, you are released from your debt because it's all **PAID IN FULL!**

The Upper Room is where this sacrament was planted for us to do over and over and over again. By Jesus' command, we **DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF HIM**. And everytime we do this, we publicly or privately proclaim that this pivotal, crucial event happened to redeem all people. This is our confession of faith to the truth of Good Friday...and once again today, you communicants proclaim and preach that sermon by coming to this altar.

If there are any "Emilys" out there who do not understand or believe what Jesus offers us from the Garden of the Upper Room, then do not come to this altar. In Christian love, **wait** until we pastors can teach you to examine your hearts first to see if you believe, **wait** until we pastors can instruct you first in doctrine and practice to bring you into fellowship with us in a common confession of faith, **wait** until the Holy Spirit leads you to believe His covenant of grace provided for us in the Gospel.

Let us rejoice and be glad for the Garden we visit today in the Upper Room. Because we have our own Upper Room right here as we gather around the Lord's table to be refreshed and renewed in the forgiveness of our sins given us through Christ's body and blood present in the bread and wine. Are you hungry? Then **do this** today and everytime – **IN REMEMBRANCE OF OUR LOVING LORD! AMEN**