



## MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

March 28, 2024

Pastor James Enderle

Maundy Thursday

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 116 CW

Gospel Lesson/Sermon Text: [Luke 22:7-20](#)

First Lesson: [Exodus 12:21-30](#)

Second Lesson: [1 Corinthians 10:16-17](#)

### God on Trial: Rest

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

When people ask how you're doing, how things have been going, what is one of the most popular answers we respond with? Maybe you say "Fine. Okay." But I think in our world today, what we often answer is "Busy." "I'm so busy." This week is so awesome. It's one of the greatest weeks of the whole year, as we look forward to Easter, but a lot of the talk is "Busy. It's busy." It's very easy to feel that way in our world as we are pulled this way and that way, but I think more than the busyness is also the pull on us spiritually. We are divided and the devil and the world attack us so that we do not feel at **rest**. We are busy and there are enemies all around us, so where do we find **rest**?

For Jesus and His disciples on Maundy Thursday, it was a time where things were quite busy all around them. The enemies of Jesus were gathering together. They were getting ready to do what they had been planning to do for so long. They wanted to arrest Him and put Him to death. He had been gaining popularity. Especially since (this one always fascinates me) not long before this Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. He raises someone from the dead and what do they do? Instead of saying "Oh, He must be the Son of God," they say "We must kill Him." The leaders did not want Jesus to be followed and for Him to gain this following that He had.

As they had now gotten Judas to agree to betray Him, we know that the next 24 hours were going to be a whirlwind. He was going to be arrested, put on trial, crucified, and then buried. But for those few hours on Maundy Thursday, it was quiet. They were at rest and away from those enemies, away from all of the worries, and they were together, Jesus and His disciples. Jesus often desired to get away from the stress and the worries and all the things that were out there. He often would go by Himself to pray and He would often, when the crowds were gathering, He would take His disciples and they

would go to somewhere else. This was something Jesus did so often. Even that night, before He was arrested, what would He do? He would take His disciples to go and pray. He had them go and pray with Him. He told them to "Pray so that you do not fall into temptation," but we know that they were weak. But God continued to give Jesus strength. Jesus asked for that strength. And He continued to go away and find that rest that He needed.

But more than that, in what happens later, we see the event as they gathered to celebrate the Passover meal. We are going to read a little bit more about that Passover meal, but this is something that was so important to the believers of the Old Testament. That Exodus, as God had called His people out of Egypt, as they had been oppressed and as He sent Moses and with the help of Aaron, the plagues came. And still Pharaoh would not let His people go; then finally the last plague, where God would take one of each of the families of the Egyptians. But in order to save the Israelites, He had them carry out this meal where they were to kill a perfect lamb, a spotless lamb, and put the blood of the lamb around their doorframes, marking them as God's children. This perfect lamb would make it so God would pass over them. Every year after this they would remember how God saved them; how God delivered them from the hands of the Egyptians, and how God had given them this Passover meal that saved them. So every year the people would gather together and the children would ask, "Why do we celebrate this? Why do we eat these certain things?" because God delivered them. This is a time to rest and remember what God had done for them.

They were to do this every year, and Jesus was gathering together with His disciples to celebrate this. But it wasn't just a new twist on an old tradition. We know that this was now something very different that Jesus was going to do with His disciples. There was this old covenant in the Old Testament, made at Mount Sinai. The old covenant that God had given His commands and said "Do this. Be faithful" and we know how they had fallen short. This is what God had told them over and over again, that they fall short of God's glory. So God said He would make a new covenant with His people. That's what Jesus says THIS is.

Jesus would not be just one to institute this little change, but He WAS the Lamb of God, the spotless Lamb of God, to take away the sin of the world. John pointed to Him. John the Baptist said "**Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!**" [\(John 1:29\)](#) We know the blessedness of what Jesus was giving them. He was giving them this supper to say "I have forgiven you. God remembers your sins no more." How would this happen? It would happen because of what He was going to do. He was going to go to the cross for them, for you, and for me, to redeem us and give us this forgiveness. He says that He was going to eat this with them, but then He wouldn't **eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.**

After this time of eating it with His disciples, what do we have to look forward to? Jesus said He would not do this again until it was fulfilled; until He would eat it with us in heaven; until that fulfillment of what Jesus had done for us is realized and we feast with Him forever, knowing our sins are forgiven and that we have been reconciled to God. How we long to sit there with Christ in heaven, at the banquet feast of the Lamb, and to dine with Him, to have an eternal rest and peace!

But we know that's not exactly what it is like yet today. We are surrounded by enemies, we are surrounded by assaults on our faith, and we're surrounded by stress and worries, so we're anything but at rest. So we come today to be at rest. We come to His table to know that our sins are forgiven. We go and take that body and blood and taste that forgiveness that He has given to us. As we know that we are forgiven, we can find rest in our Savior. We can find rest as we go to Him in the Lord's Supper when it's offered. But then we find rest in Him in the peace that He gives us through His Word.

There are so many things that afflict us, so many worries and stresses, and it can feel like you're on trial in front of the world. If you're on social media, it feels like you always have to project something to other people. Or just talking with other people, you have to talk about your grandchildren or your children and make yourself look better before others. It's like you are always on trial. The truth is, before God, the trial is done. We are at rest and at peace because we have the verdict. You ARE forgiven and there is no performance that we have to do in order to earn that verdict. Instead, the verdict is given and we get to show that love and forgiveness. We can find rest and not have to doubt if I have to do so much or show how much I am saved, if I rest in the forgiveness of Christ.

So as we dine today and the next couple days, we remember and taste that forgiveness that God has given us in Christ and that we have a taste of that rest and peace and forgiveness today, but we look forward to that rest that we'll have with Christ forever. As the afflictions come to you, hold on to those words that God gives us in that great Psalm, the Good Shepherd Psalm, [Psalm 23](#), where He says: ***You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.***

In the midst of busyness, in the midst of stress and worries, all the enemies around you, know the Lord is preparing a table for you and you will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. You have that peace and rest today. You will have that peace and rest forever. Amen.

***And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*** [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.