



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

April 17, 2025

Pastor James Enderle

Maundy Thursday

Sermon Text: [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)

Lesson: [Hebrews 10:15-25](#)

Lesson: [Luke 22:7-20](#)

DEAD AND BURIED **A New Covenant Buries an Old Contract** **A COVENANT OF FORGIVENESS**

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:

How well do you deal with change? Our text is going to talk about a new covenant, something new. God says He is going to do something new among His people, something new for us, so when you think about new things and change, what do you think about? First when you think change you may think *I'm not sure if I'm too comfortable with change*. But then maybe you think about some of the best things in your life that are changed. What about marriage? That change is a good thing. It brings about a lot of change, but it's really good. What about the birth of a child? It's change but there are so many good things that come from that. Sometimes you get so stuck into going to the same places all the time, maybe you get the same food or go to the same place, but when you find that new restaurant, that new place and you think *this place is great! Why did I never try this before?* There are so many good things that can come from change, but sometimes we're afraid of it as well. We're afraid of change, of going to two services (in the past) and as we look at our unifying work, what is going to happen as change comes about? As we look at how we can serve God's people better as we work together, is change a bad thing? We see so many good examples of it, but we are often fearful of it.

God was going to bring change to His people. We see this new covenant. It's good to explain what the old covenant or the old contract was. The old contract was this two-way contract. On Mount Saini, God had made this covenant with His people, but it was this two-way covenant. "You do this, you be faithful, and I'll keep my promises to you." But what have God's people done constantly? He says exactly the hurt. He says **"...because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them..."** Over and over again in the Old Testament, God uses the picture of an unfaithful wife, as one who is going away, to be an example of the Israelite people. They were, in a sense, married

but Israel continued to go to other gods, to continue to betray their God, who had delivered them from Egypt, who had promised them this Promised Land, brought them there safely and had given them all these blessings. He gives them forgiveness and peace, but what do they do? "We don't want that. We want something better." They wanted change from God, the God that loved them, and we can kind of hear the emotions in God's words when He says "I was a husband to them but they broke my covenant." So we hear in Jeremiah these amazing words that prophesy about what God was going to do through Jesus and what God did through Jesus on this very night, on Maundy Thursday, as He gave them the new covenant. He told them what Jesus was going to do but also gave them this blessing of the Sacrament.

In all this change, we know that our God is the same. He is loving and forgiving, but here we get to see to what extent. We know that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He doesn't change. But who does change? We do. We like to go after our own ways and whatever the world says is good. The Israelites were such a good example of that. We know that we fall into that over and over again, so we need this new covenant.

This is a short section of four verses, but if you look at those verses 33-34, in just these two verses, look at how many times God says what He will do. "**I will** make this covenant with the people." "**I will** put my laws in their minds and write it on their hearts." "**I will** be their God." "**I will** forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." Look at all the work that God is doing. This isn't this two-way thing, like "Make sure that you guys do this." Look at all the ways that God is pouring this out on us. This is where we get to His love for us and the Gospel. I think this is at the heart of the Gospel. When you talk to people, many Christians struggle with the Gospel because they make it a two-way thing. We call it the Gospel because it's good news. It's something that God is doing for you, giving you this gift, but so many people twist the Gospel into something you must do. *God does this for you. You have to meet Him halfway. Yes, Jesus died for you, but you need to be faithful and you need to be this, this, this, this...* But notice what He says. "**I will** forgive their wickedness and remember their sins no more." This is what we see through the Gospel but especially through the Sacraments.

Sometimes we wonder why we can't be best friends with every church and let everyone come in and preach, and why there are separations. We speak about these Sacraments as something that God is doing **for us**. Through Baptism we receive God's grace. We can bring a baby up here because it works forgiveness and gives them the Holy Spirit. It's all things that God is doing, giving that new life, that peace, that forgiveness, planting that seed of faith for a baby or for someone older, to increase that faith, giving that gift, and it forgives sins. In Scripture it says baptism saves you. [\(1 Peter 3:21\)](#) So why do we separate it? It's because people make that, this great gift of baptism, into a work—something that you must do and that when you're really faithful, when you're really a

Christian, you can show you're a Christian by being baptized and they strip away all the gifts, of the new covenant of forgiveness, of all the things that God is doing for us.

Then we get to the heart of the Lord's Supper. What we really celebrate today is this new covenant that He gives us and the blessings that we have through the Lord's Supper. In catechism class we talk about how much we should celebrate the Lord's Supper. Should you celebrate it once a month? Years ago, at Morrison it was only on more of those special holidays. We celebrate it more than they used to. But it's not a question of how much. It's also a question of being prepared and knowing what it is.

Our new hymnal changed. It's a little bit different than the old one. It has some sections that talk about what Holy Communion is. A neat thing is that it includes the catechism in the front. On Page 293 (you're welcome to look in there if you like) I'm going to look at those blessings of the Lord's Supper. It says:

The Blessings of the Lord's Supper

What blessing do we receive through this eating and drinking?

That is shown us by these words: "Given" and "poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins."

Through these words we receive forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation in this sacrament.

For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

Then you go down to:

The Reception of the Lord's Supper

Who, then, is properly prepared to receive this sacrament?

Fasting and other outward preparations may serve a good purpose, but he is properly prepared who believes these words: "Given" and "poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins."

But whoever does not believe these words or doubts them is not prepared, because the words "for you" require nothing but hearts that believe.

Notice in that explanation of who is prepared it really means you know that this is a gift **for you**. What did we hear in Jeremiah about the promises of what Jesus would do, about the new covenant, about what happens on Maundy Thursday in that room—"take and eat, this is my body which is **given for you**. In Jeremiah we hear "**I will** do this. **I will** do this." Not that you are doing this but "**I will** do this." This is poured out and given for you, so we trust in Him.

Why is there importance that we teach this? I see lots are putting their hymnals away. There is one other section. If you turn just a little bit more, if you prepare, one of the good ways to prepare for the Lord's Supper is if you can read those questions, or on Page 295, just a page later, it has the Christian questions—some questions for those

who prepare for the Sacraments. If you get here early, you're welcome to prepare for the Lord's Supper with this, or if you have this at home, there are similar questions like this that sometimes are put on the back of the Service Folder. On the back (Page 296), it says this:

Why does Christ want you to remember and proclaim his death? He wants me to do this so that (1) I learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for my sins, but only Christ, who is true God and man, could and did do that; (2) I learn to look with terror upon my sins and regard them as great indeed; (3) I find joy and comfort in Christ alone and believe that I have salvation through faith in him.

Notice what it is saying is I remember Jesus because He is the one who saved me, no one else, and that I need a Savior. I have fallen short and I believe that I am forgiven through Him. The problem, again (why do we have closed communion), is because many churches, this is all they encourage, but I don't even think they talk so much to this point. It's just remembering His death. There are many churches that take communion and do it only because they remember Jesus.

There are members here that have come from other Christian churches and we'll tell them they need to wait to take communion. We want to study it and talk about the faith and what we believe. So many times, when they get done, I know there are some members in the last few years who have even said this—until they studied it and I earned what it really is, that it's the body and blood of Christ and it's giving the forgiveness of sins, they didn't value it. They went up and thought *okay, we're doing this for God*, the two-way covenant. But it's something God is doing for us. He is pouring on us His gift of forgiveness. Often when people finish those classes, they say "Thank you for taking us through that. Now we take communion and we understand what it really is and we value it in such a different way, not just as something I do for God but as something God is doing for me."

So what we look to emphasize and cling to over and over again is this new covenant of forgiveness. We look to Jesus, who on that night told His disciples and instituted this new meal, this new covenant that had pictures of that Passover Lamb. They understood what it meant, that there was a sacrifice that needed to happen, a sacrifice that saved their people but now Jesus is saying "This is me" and He was going to go and complete it, that His body and blood is now part of this Sacrament because He gave His body and blood for you and for me, to no longer remember our sins, to forgive our wickedness. As the Bible says, He doesn't remember our sins because they are ***as far as the east is from the west...*** (Psalm 103:11-13) It's like getting Wisconsin and Hong Kong to touch each other. It's as far east as you can think. It's impossible. This is how far God's love is for you. He no longer remembers your sins.

Every time we get to partake of the Lord's Supper, every time we remember our baptism, we can remember that change that God gives us. A new life, forgiveness, the Holy Spirit, go out renewed, thankful and understanding that He has done all these things and He writes His Law on our hearts and we can go and share, not out of Law, not so that we can then go and make that step to get closer and earn heaven but because it's already done. It is finished—what we'll hear tomorrow.

So take heart in this new covenant. Change sometimes is hard. But sometimes change is really amazing and gives blessed returns, and we see in this new covenant that we can have nothing greater than this great gift of forgiveness. Amen.

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