

Holy Thursday – 2025
Jeremiah 31:31-34
Hebrews 10:15-25
Luke 22:7-20

“I wish that I knew what I know now, when I was younger.” It’s a lyric from a song that was written in the early ‘70’s (Ooh La La). The song, by The Faces, has grown in popularity, mostly, I suspect, because of the catchy refrain. I wish that I knew what I know now, when I was younger. Those words give voice to a desire for the younger version of us to have had the wisdom, the insight, the clarity of thought which we possess now. The sentiment is that we could’ve used that wisdom back in the day. In actuality, the song is a jaded examination of how women operate in matters of romance, but that part doesn’t seem to stick with the listeners. Seemingly everyone can relate to the idea that the younger, less savvy iteration of ourselves would’ve been able to navigate life much better if we knew then what we know now. Implicitly, that is a statement about how we grow. Growth is good. Growth is productive. Growth is advantageous.

Imagine not growing. Thomas Gray wrote a poem in 1747 that has a line within it that you know well. Ignorance is bliss. The larger quote is this: “Where ignorance is bliss, ‘tis folly to be wise.” The sentiment here is that it might be better to be unaware of certain things to maintain happiness and a sense of peace, rather than knowing unpleasant truths.

The disciples were in a quandary. Jesus was telling them hard things. They struggled to understand. Their minds couldn’t grasp the fullness of what the Lord was conveying to them. It’s possible that they didn’t *want* to understand. The thought of Jesus’ death ripped their hearts. The thought of Jesus’ death deflated their spirit, clouded their minds. Have you ever ignored something that you didn’t want to think about? Have you ever misconstrued something, and that poorly formed notion grew in your head, making you subject to its irrational demands, making you subject to its unreal perspective? You make choices all the time. Sometimes you choose to behave in a way that your sinful nature demands. When you come to your senses, when you repent, you hold tight to the truth and renounce where you have been. One widespread Christian failure is when we pretend that we don’t know what we truly know because someone else is uncertain. It’s a twisted form of empathy but it’s faithless at its core. Can you really pretend that the resurrection is not an absolute certainty because you happen to be talking to an agnostic? That is juvenile and lame and radically inappropriate.

Death saturated the Upper Room. Passover centers around the death of the Lamb, its blood smeared around the doors of the Israelites while the first-born of Egypt were slain by the angel of death. The disciples should have been acquainted with death. But Jesus’ death was a roadblock that their hearts couldn’t navigate around. Jesus told them that He would be handed over to sinful men, that He would be mocked and flogged and crucified (Matthew 20:18-19). No one would want to hear that about their Lord. But Jesus said that He would rise. Doesn’t that change everything? Passover was a total victory for Israel. Passover had death woven into that victory. For a group of men who rehearsed the Exodus all their lives, who rehearsed the opening of the Red Sea, who rehearsed the entrance into the Promised Land, who trusted God’s mighty hand to deliver them out of slavery and death – these men couldn’t see past the word “Crucified.”

They changed. After the Lord rose from the dead, they changed. They remembered Jesus' teaching. Their spiritual wounds were dressed by the resurrection. Thomas put his hand into the Lord's side and Thomas was changed. Peter was restored after his threefold denial by the Lord asking Peter three times if Peter loved Him. Peter was changed. I wish that I knew what I know now, when I was younger. Do you think that the Lord's Supper looked one way for the disciples on Holy Thursday and another way after Easter? Which was grander, which was truer, which had more clarity, more discernment, more understanding? I regularly see articles that are intended to distress Christians. One variation of this theme is that church demographics tip toward older people. "Oh, no!" the author wants you to think, "the church is dying. It's inhabited by nothing but 'old' people." The horror! How long has this been going on, one wonders? Young people getting older and then deciding that it's a good idea to go to church. This is spun as a bad thing.

How many of you have grown as you have received the Lord's Supper? Do you commune with greater insight into what this sacrament means than you did when you were younger? The Bible describes heaven in terms of the Lord's Supper, in terms of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-10). Christ and His bride are One. Washed of her filthy rags, the church has been sanctified, made holy (Ephesians 5:27). Christ gave Himself up for His bride (Ephesians 5:25). From His side in death came a flow of blood and water (John 19:34). The Incarnate Son of God washed His bride with water and the word so that He might have union with her (Ephesians 5:26). The mystery is profound. One flesh; the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is the feast in heaven that consummates our faith. The Lord's Supper is a foretaste of that banquet. Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you. Christ and His bride become one flesh in this sacrament. Take, drink, this is my blood which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Christ and His bride united, made one.

Do you wish that you know now what you will know then? Will you know the beauty of union with Christ more fully in heaven? Will you understand what this sacrament means more fully *after* you have died, when you see the Lord face to face, as you have a place of honor at His banquet table? What is it that clouds your vision now? What hinders you from apprehending all that which is present in this holy meal? Lack of trust? Infatuation with worldly endeavors? What clouds the eyes of your heart from seeing the continuity of manna in the wilderness given to the Israelites as they made their way to the Promised Land, eating supernatural food to sustain them on their journey and you, coming to this altar, to be fed with the bread of life? Do you see the continuity between our Lord's feeding miracles and the way that He feeds us in the Lord's Supper? Do you see the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in heaven breaking through in this holy house? You are the direct beneficiaries of Jesus' death and resurrection? He wills to feed you with His victory, His love, His sacrifice. Do you remember?

Jesus said: Take, eat, this is my body. St. Paul said later, we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard Him thus no longer (2 Corinthians 5:16). Some had thought Jesus to be a mere man. So they rejected His call to the banquet He so richly offers. I cannot come to the banquet, don't bother me now, I have married a wife, I have bought me a cow. I have fields and commitments that cost a pretty sum, pray hold me excused I cannot come (Luke 14:12-24). But the Lord said: "Do this in remembrance of me." Remember that My body, which you are

receiving, was given into death for you. Remember that I bore your sin in my body, which you are receiving, to take your sin away. Remember, I took the punishment that you deserved into my body, which you are receiving, and I died bearing that load. Remember that I laid claim to you by my blood, which you are receiving, and I mean to have you as my treasured guest at the wedding banquet in heaven. Remember that my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink (John 6:55). Remember that my sacrifice destroyed death. Remember that my holiness vanquished your enemy. Remember, my blood is not cold, not distant, not a relic that is to be venerated in a perfunctory way but to be joyfully received for the forgiveness of your sins. Remember that I am among you as one who serves (Luke 22:27). Remember that I am coming soon (Revelation 22:20). Remember that whoever feeds on this bread will live forever (John 6:51). Do you remember?

What is bliss? You know what bliss is. Bliss is remembering our Lord's promises, receiving the bounty of His provision, and growing in faith, hope, and love. Christian faith is bliss. We see and we apprehend the majesty hidden in His suffering. We see and we apprehend His unwavering intent to fill us with His holiness. We see and we apprehend the present ministry of Christ the King. And so we reply: "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20). May we receive from your hand the gift of eternal life. We remember.