Are You Ready For The Lord's Supper?

In the relatively small Old Testament book of Amos, God spoke to Israel and said in chapter 4 and verse 12, “Prepare to meet your God, O Israel.” What better words could be spoken than these when God’s New Testament Israel, the church, assembles herself at the Table of the Lord? “Prepare to meet your God, O Israel.”

It is not a “stretch” to say we meet with God each Lord’s Day at this sacred Table before us. After all, the Lord’s Supper is a communion — the church’s communion with Christ and Christ’s communion with His church. Every week here at this Table of the Lord we meet our Lord in a unique way.

In the Old Testament book of Exodus we are given the moving account of God’s instructions to Moses concerning God’s meeting with His people at Mount Sinai. God expected His people to be prepared for His meeting with them. Beginning at Exodus 19:10 we read these words: 10 “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. 11 And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the Lord will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. 12 You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, “Take heed to yourselves that you do not go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. 13 Not a hand shall touch it, but he shall surely be stoned or shot with an arrow; whether man or beast, he shall not live. When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain.’” 14 So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. 15 And he said to the people, ‘Be ready for the third day; do not come near your wives.’ 16 Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.”

I find it interesting that among all the things they did to prepare themselves to meet God they washed their clothes as God directed. It was not only important what was in their hearts but also what was on their backs.

If it were important that Old Testament Israel prepared themselves to meet with God to receive a covenant that God knew would last for only a few hundred years, how much more important is it that New Testament Israel prepare herself to receive the blood of the New Covenant of the Lord Jesus Christ that shall never pass away?

We are told by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:28 that “a man” is to “examine himself” at this table. To do otherwise is to eat the bread and drink
the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner and thus be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. The word “examine” is a translation of the Greek word dokimazo and it means “to prove, test, approve,” by close scrutiny. It was a word used in describing how one would “test metals” to see if the metal was what it really appeared to be. In the old days men would take their gold to an assayer to see if it were actual gold or fool’s gold. Have we come to the Table as a real Christian or have we fooled our self? Have you come to the Table prepared because of your self-examination?

What young man would “pick up” his date without first making sure that he was presentable to her? The same is true of the girl being taken out on a date. We bathe ourselves, brush our teeth, comb our hair, and put on suitable clothing for the occasion and look at ourselves in the mirror to make sure that we look our very best. To not do these things is a reflection of what the boy or the girl thinks of their date, not to mention of themselves. What groom or bride does not do his or her very best to look the “sharpest” and “prettiest” they can for their momentous wedding day? The groom stands before the mirror and checks out himself. The bride stands before the mirror to make sure that every ruffle, every curl, every bow is in place. What person, if invited to someone’s formal dinner party, does not take every measure to prepare himself for the occasion? Again we stand before a mirror to make sure that we look appropriate for the occasion.

How much more ought we to stand before the mirror of God’s Word to “examine” ourselves as we prepare to commune with our Lord? We cannot stand before that mirror very long until we see our flaws, our faults, and our failures. Our gospel clothing is tattered and torn from our spirit fighting against our flesh during the past week. We see a spot or two on our robe of righteousness that Christ gave us when we were immersed into His death. There is no halo. There are no angel’s wings. But thanks be unto God for His grace that we can come to His Table in spite of this. The Table was not intended for perfect people because there is none. His Table is intended for people who after examining themselves in God’s mirror acknowledge that they need the help that comes only from the living bread. As we examine ourselves in light of God’s Word we are more thankful than ever for His body and His blood that were given for us personally.

In a court of law after one attorney examines a witness a second attorney follows with a cross examination. We should be that second attorney at the Table by giving ourselves a “cross” examination – an examination in light of the cross of Christ. An honest “cross” examination will reveal in short order that most of us fall short of what God would have us to be. But it isn’t our coming short of what God expects that causes us to be unworthy to have communion with our Lord; it is our failure to examine ourselves at the time we commune with Him. Have you examined yourself yet? Have you come to the Table of the Lord this morning prepared or unprepared? I encourage you to give yourself a close, private “cross” examination.