Several years ago I listened to a preacher’s message in which he suggested to his audience that whenever the Lord’s Supper is observed it is a time for celebration, jubilation, and gyration. It was, in his words, a time for people to “cut loose” with their emotional outbursts of shouting and dancing. I have looked high and low for this kind of demonstration at the table by the church about which we read on the pages of holy writ and I can find none.

I would be the first to admit that it is not necessary that we come to the table with gloom and doom in our heart; on the contrary, the table is a reminder to those who commune there that the pronouncement of “Guilty of sins!” has been removed from our judgment sentence because of the blood given by Christ on our behalf. because of what He did on the cross for us We do not need to fret our future judgment. Now, because of Him, “we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” “...He Himself is the propitiation for our sins...”

Though all of this is true and we ought to worship and praise Him at His Table for this, we must never forget what drove Him to the cross. Only because of Him could our sins be forgiven.

Peter was one of the twelve hand-picked, chosen apostles of Christ. Before the cross, He had been privileged to hear the “One Who came from God” teach and preach. He had been privileged to see miracles that few have seen. He had been selected by the Son of God to make known the “keys [to] the kingdom.” He was given honors that few, if any, have been given. None of this, however, erases Matthew 26.

Matthew 26:26 - 30 is one of the more frequently chosen passages to read at His Table as a “Lord’s Supper Meditation.” It is in these verses that we read of the institution of the New Testament Lord’s Supper that His church observes each Lord’s Day. But there is more in Matthew 26 than just those five verses to which it is proper that we give our attention at this weekly observance. There is also the record of Peter’s denial of the Lord. There is the record of Peter’s three lies.

The First Lie

“ 69 Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, ‘You also were with Jesus of Galilee.’ 70 But he denied it before them all, saying, ‘I do not know what you are saying.’”

The Second Lie

“ 71 And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, ‘this fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.’ 72 But again he denied with an oath, ‘I do not know the Man!’”

The Third Lie
"73 And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, ‘Surely you also are one of them, because your speech betrays you.’ 74 Then he began to curse and swear, saying, ‘I do not know the Man!’ And immediately a rooster crowed.”

Most Christians are familiar with these three charges and Peter’s responses of denials. But the brutal and uncomfortable truth is they were more than denials; they were outright lies. But what is not emphasized as much or as often at it should be is Peter’s immediate reaction to the lies that he allowed to slide across his tongue and come forth from his mouth. “And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ Then he went out and wept bitterly.” 

Again, those three denials were more than mere denials; they were three blatant, cowardly sins! And they broke Peter’s heart. Those three denials – lies – at that moment in time broke the relationship Peter had with his Lord. They revealed Peter’s heart. What he did was done so easily and so unexpectedly. It happened before he knew it. Had you told him the day before that he would behave the way he did, he would have denied it! It wasn’t possible. But it was possible and he did.

We come to the table and we remember Him, the Lord, as we ought. And we praise and worship Him for His obedience to His Father by going to the cross as the perfect sacrificial Lamb of God who died for our sins each of which was and is a denial of Him as much as was Peter’s. But, do we weep over them as did Peter? Do our sins break our hearts as Peter’s heart was broken? Do we feel the burden of breaking our relationship with our Lord as did Peter? There is no better place to remember them, to confess them, and to repent of them than at the Table. As much as the Table is a place where we should rejoice and celebrate because of His work of intercession it is also a place where tears – our tears – are just as appropriate as were Peter’s. Our lack of tears at the table may be a sad reflection of our failure to see how horrible our sins really are. It is enough to make you cry.

Prayer

Our God and Father in heaven, we come and kneel before your throne of grace as we now come to Your son’s Table in remembrance of Him. But we also come remembering and acknowledging our sins against You. What those sins of our brethren are we do not know; but we know ours. They may not have been sins of denying our Christ – and then again perhaps they have been and we were too ignorant to see them in that way. But we know from reading Your Word that every sin is a fracture in our relationship with You who have always been faithful to us. We are ashamed of our sins and ask that you place in us a will, a determination to live holy lives for Christ’s glory. Move us with Your Word to bring us to our knees weeping over our sins. And at the same time lift us up with hope and praise knowing that it is through the death of our Lord that we remain reconciled to You. We really do praise You, Him, and Your holy Spirit at this Table. We pray this in the name of Christ. Amen.