# Follow Jesus Sermon Series

# "Follow the Way of Life" -- 1 John 5:6

## Maundy Thursday Sermon

Grace, mercy and peace to you in the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dear Baptized,

In the Proverbs, the holy writers provide a cache of wisdom. One of the proverbs is stated and then repeated a couple chapters later, namely, "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death" (Proverbs 14:12). Man's way seems right but ends in eternal death and condemnation for the impenitent. God's way is right and ends in eternal Life and salvation for those who are sorry for their sin and look to the Incarnate Son of God for forgiveness.

On this Maundy Thursday, the sermon text tells us the true Word concerning God's Way of Life. Please listen to 1 John 5:6 as we ...

... Follow the Way of Life

"This is He Who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the Water and the Blood."

Thus far the Word of the LORD our God.

Now, either way, that is, whether the Way of Death or the Way of Life, there is water and blood.

The way of death is the way of man, and the vocalist croons the way, "How can it be wrong when it feels so right?" The way of death, with its own cursed water and insufficient blood, thumbs its nose at the Almighty. It is the way of Pharaoh that leads to the consequent Divine Judgment for such unbelief.

"And the LORD said to Moses, 'Say to Aaron, "Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone."' Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded; in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, he lifted up the rod and struck the water that was in the Nile, and all the water that was in the Nile turned to blood. And the fish in the Nile died; and the Nile became foul, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt" (Exodus 7:19-21).

What happened in an isolated area of Egypt to commence the Exodus of Jehovah's Church from the land of bondage, will happen on a global scale as part of the commencement exercises of the LORD God in delivering His Church. The disciple whom Jesus loved writes of it in Revelation:

"Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, 'Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.' So the first angel went and poured his bowl on the earth, and foul and evil sores came upon the men who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The second angel poured his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a dead man, and every living thing died that was in the sea. The third angel poured his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of water, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of water say, 'Just art Thou in these Thy judgments, Thou Who art and wast, O Holy One'" (Revelation 16:1-5).

The way of death is the way of Pontius Pilate who seeks, though in vain because his word is man's word, ... who seeks an absolution via water and blood. Or, as his words are recorded in the Scriptures: "when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves'" (Matthew 27:24).

And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Cain, Jezebel, Demus, King Saul, Nabal, of Judas and the syncretists, and of the false prophets believing, teaching, confessing and practicing the Way of Death, who, through unbelief sought to set the Church ablaze, killing the prophets, murdering souls, decimating congregations and silencing the pastors who preach pure Law and Gospel.

Fear not, little flock, though one betrays innocent Blood and others rush to enforce a physical gag order on the men who are "determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2), still the incessant LORD will have His pure Word go forth and accomplish His purpose. Though He died on the cursed cross, still the Way of Life is proclaimed. Though His Body remained pinned to the tree after He commended Himself into the receiving hands of His Father, still the Way of Life is stunningly revealed - for "one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once there came out Blood and Water" (John 19:34).

This is the Way of Life. "This is He Who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the Water and the Blood."

The one-time, once-for-all Passover in Egypt led to the water and the blood for the Church. This is the order of the LORD for His Beloved. There is the water of the Red Sea that delivers as "all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:2); and there is the LORD's Passover in the wilderness that sustains and nurtures the faith of the sons of God. Baptism first; Supper second. This is the Way of Life and it comes by Water and the Blood. In the priestly preparations the cleansing with water came before the ministrations of blood, and these are all "but a shadow of the good things to come" (Hebrews 10:1), which is Christ.

Near the beginning of His ministry, Jesus performed His first miracle at a wedding in Cana. The water was first, standing at the ready for the Jewish rites of purification. Then it was that Jesus turned it into the blood of the grape for the on-going wedding feast. Near the end of His earthly service, Jesus did the same. The water was first, standing at the ready according to the custom of the Jews. Jesus washed the feet of His disciples to prepare them for the Supper, even as He said to Peter, "Unless I wash you, you have no part in Me" (John 13:8). Then it was that Jesus declared that the Passover wine is His Blood, shed for the remission of sins.

The one-time, once-for-all Sacrifice at the Place of the Skull is the source for the water and the Blood for the Church. For shortly after Jesus proclaimed the Good News of the Way of Life, "there came out Blood and Water" (John 19:34) from His pierced side. "This is He Who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the Water and the Blood."

Thus it is no surprise that the faithful journey to the font before feasting at the table. Do you not see the multitude of the faithful journeying the Way of Life? Each one goes to the Baptismal font before the Supper. The Sacrament of Baptism comes first as each is baptized into Christ; the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is second wherein each communes with Jesus. Washing first, feasting forever. This is the Way of Life; "this is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes" (Psalm 118:23).

Behold now, look through the eyes of John who wrote of those beloved in the Presence of the Lord, that is, the faithful "who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night within His Temple; and He Who sits upon the throne will shelter them with His Presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the Throne will be their Shepherd, and He will guide them to springs of living water; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Revelation 7:14-17).

Dear baptized, "This is He Who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the Water and the Blood." Amen.