

**“God Is Present Here” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Maundy Thursday
April 2, 2026**

- I. **1 Corinthians 11:23-32** – previously read
- II. **Our lives still face the consequences of Adam and the first sin.**
 - a. This past week I read an interesting article about an artist who has worked out of Canada for many years.
 - i. She creates all kinds of sculptures, but she finds things from nature to make them.
 - ii. Unfortunately, she began to suffer from all kinds of health problems.
 1. She went to countless doctors, but none of them could figure out why she was having all these symptoms.
 2. The list included constant headaches and joint pain, she couldn't keep food down, she had neurological issues like memory problems and lack of motor skills.
 - iii. It turns out that she was spending up to 12 hours a day with a dentist drill shaping mussel shells... and the dust was making its way into her system.
 1. Mussels and other shellfish will oftentimes capture the pollution in our oceans, and in this case, she was taking in heavy metals like lead and arsenic into her system.
 2. Part of her using these natural elements in her sculptures was to capture the connection between nature and humanity... but it became poison for her.
 - iv. Here's the most striking part of the story though... the sculpture she was making was of Adam, the man who introduced the poison of sin into our world.
 1. I don't know the artist's faith, but she even said it was ironic that she got sick from making a sculpture of Adam... and that humanity is still poisoning the world by poor management.¹
- III. **Adam is still poisoning the world and everything in it...**
 - a. Original Sin is found in all the brokenness of creation... but especially in us.
 - i. I know in the world around us – and even in our own hearts – the desire is to put an optimistic view on things... we want to see the best in humanity.
 - ii. Yet, the Bible tells us something different, in that the poison of sin is in all of us... including our thoughts, our desires, our relationships, and even our worship.
 - iii. It's not hard to see when we get honest... we are easily divided... we are prideful and selfish... we turn inward and wonder, “What's in it for me?”
 - b. The people in Corinth were no different than we are today, as their church was full of sinful people too.

- i. Paul is calling out their lack of unity... he sees their destructive behaviors and lack of love in their relationships... and he points out how they misuse the Lord's Supper.
- c. You see, when they gathered for the Lord's Supper, it wasn't unity... it was separation.
 - i. It seems that the church in Corinth probably met in the home of a wealthier person, and space would have been limited inside...
 - 1. The "in" crowd ate and drank earlier, and then the worship and the reception of the Lord's Supper took place with the working-class folks outside or getting there after work...
 - ii. The gathering was separated by wealthy and poor, and some were using the time as a dinner gathering, or a sort of social gathering to eat and drink to excess... to eat with the wealthy elite while others were relegated to another area going hungry... it was the exact opposite of what Jesus intended in the fellowship of believers.
 - iii. And even worse, when the time came for the Lord's Supper to be celebrated, they were not recognizing the body of the Lord.
 - 1. They were treating the Holy Supper casually... like it was just another meal... like it was just symbolic or just remembering instead of the real presence of Christ.
- d. Paul doesn't soften the language here.
 - i. "Anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself."
 - ii. This is not just about being rude or not having good manners... this is about reality and God is present here.

IV. **Unfortunately, we can see ourselves in this picture.**

- a. How often do we approach the Lord's Supper casually without really thinking?
 - i. How often do we come distracted... unprepared... assuming this is just something we do?
 - ii. How often do we fail to recognize what is actually happening and that Jesus says we receive His true body and blood?
- b. And not just that, but how often are we not at peace with one another?
 - i. How often do we carry bitterness, division, quiet resentment... and yet still come forward as if everything is fine?
- c. The poison of Adam is still at work.
 - i. It distorts how we see one another and how we see God.
 - ii. It makes holy things seem ordinary... the presence of Christ seem like just a symbol... and it dulls our awareness... our sense of what truly happens in the Lord's Supper.

V. **But tonight, listen carefully as Jesus speaks.**

- a. We don't have to wonder or guess as He says, "Take, eat; this is My body" or, "Drink of it, all of you; this is My blood..."

- i. He doesn't say this represents... or this reminds you... or this is a symbol... He simply says, "This is."
- b. God is present here.
 - i. He is here in a concrete, physical, and tangible way.
 - ii. We receive His body and blood not just pretending He is there, or only spiritually in our hearts... but as the Word of God combines with bread and wine, it gives us a physical encounter with the living God.
 - iii. His body... His blood... given and shed for you.
- c. And this changes everything, because the same Adam who poisoned us... the same sin that has corrupted us... the same brokenness we bring with us tonight...has been dealt with.
- d. Tomorrow, we will stand at the foot of that cross and see it clearly.
 - i. The cost... the weight... the judgment... but tonight our Jesus gives us the benefit of that sacrifice in advance.
 - ii. You see, He doesn't just say, "I will die for you and your sins," He gives us everything His death on the cross accomplishes – forgiveness, life and salvation!
 - iii. Make no mistake, this is delivered to us right here... it's not some add-on or extra... a ritual or remembrance... no, our crucified and risen Lord Jesus comes to us in a very real way.... placing in our mouths the very body and blood that secured our salvation.
- e. The Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection come to us in concrete form... and we don't have to climb to God in some way to receive it... we don't have to have a huge emotional reaction... we don't have to prove we are worthy of it... it is freely given because God loves us that much.
- f. God is present here, and no one is worthy of that gift... but He loves us so much that He gives us the antidote for the poison of Adam.

VI. **Tomorrow is coming.**

- a. Good Friday and the cross are coming... but we also take heart that beyond that is the resurrection.
- b. Tonight we receive what Jesus freely gives... His body and blood... a promise... the forgiveness of sins... and an eye for eternity as it is a foretaste of the feast in heaven to come.
- c. So, when we leave this place, we never leave empty... we leave strengthened by God's very presence... Christ with us, for us, and in us.
- d. We leave with the assurance that the poison of Adam does not get the final word.... because our Savior Jesus Christ does...
 - i. And His word is this, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."
 - ii. God is present here... for you. Amen.

¹ <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/an-artist-suffered-mysterious-symptoms-for-years-then-she-realized-her-sculpture-was-poisoning-her>