

The Last Passover, Part 2

Matthew 26:20-30

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This morning it is our privilege to share at the Lord's Table, as you know. And in order to prepare our hearts for that table, I invite you to turn in your Bible to Matthew chapter 26. It's fitting that we should be in this passage on a day when we come to the Lord's Table, for it is a text that could be no more apropos, since it is the very passage where our Lord institutes His table. We'll be looking at that, and then participating in the table, I trust, with new and fresh meaning as we have shared together in this wonderful passage in Matthew chapter 26.

Now, remember that Matthew is here giving us preparation for the cross of Christ. Chapter 26 is devoted to preparing for the cross. We have discussed the preparation that God had made, the preparation of the religious leaders, the preparation of Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus who anointed Jesus with costly perfume. We have talked about the preparation of Judas. And now, beginning in verse 17, we come to the preparation of the Lord Himself as He begins to prepare for His own death. It involves the last Passover, the establishment of His table. It involves a time of exhorting the feeble disciples. It involves a time of intercessory prayer before the Father in the garden of Gethsemane. All of these elements Matthew gives us as parts of the preparation for the death of Jesus Christ, which, of course, is a climax of His life and ministry.

Now, we have begun by looking at verse 17. And from verse 17 through 25 we find our Lord experiencing the final Passover, the final Passover, an essential act our Lord has with His disciples as He moves toward the cross. Now, as we look at the text of verses 17 to 25 for a brief moment, we are reminded that there are several ingredients or elements to that text that point us in the direction of this final Passover.

First, setting the time. In verses 17 to 19, we looked in great detail to the time and the setting for this final Passover. We discussed why Jesus needed to meet with His disciples. We discussed what they would do at a Passover. We discussed when it was, and found out it is late on Thursday after the sun has gone down. The next day He will be crucified. We also discussed the fact that at that time in the history of Israel, Passover was celebrated both on Thursday and on Friday because the customs in Galilee differed from the customs in Judea. And so, the Lord on Thursday evening celebrates a Galilean Passover Day, and yet there is another Passover Day on Friday which means that Jesus can keep the Passover one day and die during the Passover as the Passover lamb the next day. And God had arranged history and tradition and custom and circumstance to make that a reality.

And so, we looked at our Lord setting the time for the Passover meal, a meal which He had to keep, which He had an intense desire to keep with His disciples in order that He might have time to instruct them, to teach them, to give them the promise of the Holy Spirit, to institute His new memorial feast which we know as the Lord's Table, or Communion, time to unmask the betrayer. It was a very important time. And we'll see another and significant reason why He wanted to keep that final

Passover in just a few moments.

So, we looked at setting the time. Let's go then, this morning, to verse 20. And the second element of this final Passover, after setting the time, is "sharing the table." And very briefly does Matthew treat this Passover. In verse 20 it says, "And when evening was come, He reclined with the 12 and as they did eat." And we can stop at that point. That's really all that Matthew has to say about the supper itself, the Passover meal, the Paschal meal as it was called. Remember now, it is after 6:00 on Thursday evening. Christ will be captured later in the night, brought to a mock trial early in the morning, crucified and He will die at about 3:00 on Friday afternoon. So, it's only a matter of hours before His death and they're eating the Passover meal. It has to be eaten, you remember, that night. It has to be eaten before midnight. It can't be that anything is left for the morrow. And so, as we come to verse 20, He is at table with His disciples, preparing to eat the meal.

Notice in verse 20 it says, "He reclined." That's an interesting note because historically if you go all the way back to the Passover in Exodus, you remember that when God set the Passover up, He said you have to eat the Passover standing up, you have to eat it with your loins girded in haste, you have to eat it with your staff in your hand and your shoes on, ready to move out. But through the years, the feast had developed the custom of being a rather elongated feast, and since they were no longer going to be hurrying out of the country of Egypt, as in the first Passover, the custom was adopted that they would recline as they did at very many feasts when the eating was leisurely. And so, we find Jesus adapting Himself to that custom and having no problem with that. He is reclining then with the 12.

And verse 21 says, "And as they did eat." And that just takes us into the Passover meal itself. Now, there was a very defined and inviolable sequence in the Passover meal. The tradition is very clear: the first thing that happened was the initial cup of red wine mixed with water. And it was their custom always to mix wine with water so that they would not become drunken. And we know at the Passover, they mixed wine with a double amount of water, lest they should desecrate such a sacred occasion by becoming affected by the intake of wine. And so, they would mix it doubly with water and take that first cup which is called "the cup of blessing." Actually, that first cup came along with a blessing. We should probably not call it "the" cup of blessing; that's reserved for the third cup, but it was "a" cup in which there was a special blessing. In other words, it symbolized the blessing of God. And you can look at Luke 22:14 to 17, and you'll find them there starting with that first cup symbolizing God's blessing.

And then, following that first cup, the next event, and this is a very significant thing, in the Passover meal would be the washing of their hands. This was a ceremonial cleansing, and it was emblematic of the fact that before they could actually get into the meal itself, they needed to recognize the need for personal holiness, for personal cleansing. They were, after all, celebrating God's salvation, God's deliverance to them. And when celebrating the salvation of God, they wanted to be sure that there was nothing in them that was unclean for how could they celebrate the God who had saved them while entertaining the sin from which He had saved them? So, there was a cleansing time, a time of ceremonial washing of hands.

Now, very likely it was at this time as they were washing their hands and there was a little bit of an interlude in the actual feast, that the conversation of the disciples turned to a very familiar theme. In Luke chapter 22 and verse 24 it says there was an argument among them: which of them should be accounted the greatest. And here we are back to that again. They started arguing right in the midst of

this event about which of them would be the greatest. It's quite an amazing thing. They were ceremonially washing their hands as a sign of the cleansing of their inward soul, and all the while they were doing the outward symbol, their souls were filled with pride, self-serving, self-glory and ambition. There was absolutely no connection between what they were doing on the outside, which was intended to be emblematic of what was going on in the inside, and what they were really doing in the inside. Not unlike many folks who come to the Lord's Table and go through the motions while entertaining sin in their own lives.

And so, they ignored the reality of the intent of this cleansing and went on cultivating their own pride in the very act of symbolizing their inward cleansing. Now, I believe it was particularly at this time, while they were washing of the hands, that it is very likely they also came to recognize the need to wash the feet. You see, it says in John 13, "And after supper had begun." So, they'd already gotten into the meal to some extent, maybe just past that first cup, and the supper had officially begun, the Passover meal. And maybe as they were washing their hands, it became very aware to everybody that the feet were also dirty. And if the washing of the hands was symbolic, the washing of the feet was just plain practical, especially if you were reclining at a meal, and your head was a matter of inches from somebody else's feet. And feet in those days were covered by sandals, and sandals didn't keep out anything, and so they were either muddy or dusty. And it was a common custom that feet were washed whenever you came into a home. No servant had done it, and no disciple would stoop to do it because they were arguing about who was the greatest, and none wanted to take the role of a servant and disqualify himself from real greatness.

So, in their pride they failed to do that. And I believe it was at that second time, that's as good as any point in the feast, that Jesus, John 13 describes the whole thing, arose from the table and took of His outer garment, girded a towel about his waist and proceeded to wash the feet of the disciples and gave them a profound lesson on humility, a profound lesson on condescending love, a profound lesson on meeting the needs of someone else and taking the role of a slave. And He said, "You do what I have done. And if you call Me Lord and Master, then do what I say and do what I demonstrate to you," and taught them the lesson of humility.

Now, the lesson of humility was a strong rebuke to their pride. But Jesus also gave them a verbal rebuke as well. In Luke 22:25 to 27, He literally verbally rebuked them for their pride. So, you're into the meal just two events. The first cup and the washing, and already these men have been intimidated, they have been confronted, they have been rebuked, they have been exhorted about their pride and their ugliness and their self-centeredness and their personal ambition and so forth. So, they're pretty well whipped by the time they just get into this. And it's important for you to keep that in mind. They have, when Jesus rebukes somebody, I believe He really rebuked them. So, they have been well-rebuked, and unmasked as egotistical and so forth. And that sets them up for what reaction we see a little bit later.

So, John 13 probably slips right in at the point of the washing. That brought the third part of the Passover feast which was the bitter herbs. And the bitter herbs, then, symbolic of the bitterness of bondage in Egypt were brought together with unleavened bread and the *charoset*, which was the sauce that they made at Passover. And into this sauce, the bread, unleavened bread, and the herbs were dipped. And then, came the fourth part of the Passover which was the second cup. Again, red wine mixed with water. And when the father, or the head of the table, in this case the Lord Himself, took that cup, instructed the company there as to the meaning of the Passover meal. And that's why it's the showing forth or the telling forth. So, a cup, a washing, bitter herbs, unleavened bread dipped,

a second cup.

Following that there was some singing. And what was sung was the *hallel*, from which we get the word “hallelujah” which means “praise.” The *hallel* is Psalm 113 through 118, and at this point they would sing Psalm 113 and 114. And so, that would be sung. Now, after the singing of the first couple of psalms in the *hallel*, the lamb would be brought out. And now, the major portion of the meal began. The bitter herbs and the unleavened bread dipped prior to this had been like an appetizer. And now, comes the main meal. And the father again would wash his hands, take pieces of bread, bless them, break them, and eat them with the lamb. And as he did that, he initiated the eating of everybody else and they would all then begin to eat the lamb. And so, that’s where we are in the scene here in verse 21, as they did eat. They were in at least to the bitter herbs by this point, at least, perhaps, to the second cup. They’re into the meal to some extent.

And as they move into the meal, we come from the setting of the time, and the sharing of the table to what I call the “shocking of the 12.” Look at verse 21 again. “And as they did eat, He said, ‘Truly I say unto you that one of you shall deliver Me up, or hand Me over, or deliver Me over, or give Me over.’” It is not really the word “betray.” The translators have done that because Judas was a betrayer. But the word simply means, “one of you will deliver Me up.” Mark adds the statement in Mark 14:18 in a parallel account, “One of you who is eating with Me will deliver Me over.” Now, this is a shocking thing. One of you who is eating with Me will deliver Me over. And, of course, in that part of the world at that time in history, when you ate a meal with a person, you were identifying yourself as a friend. And the idea of eating a meal with someone and then turning them over to their executioners was just unthinkable, because a meal was a symbol of friendship.

And you can remember back in Psalm 55 the words of David as he contemplated such betrayal. He said, “For it was not an enemy that reproached me then, I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me, then I would have hidden myself from him; but it was you, a man my equal, my guide and my familiar friend. We took sweet counsel together and walked into the house of God in company.” In other words, he says, the unbelievable part of this betrayal is that you were my friend, not my enemy. It was unthinkable for a friend to do that. And yet, Jesus said one of you who is eating with Me will do it. And Jesus always spoke the truth, so they knew one of them had done it. And they were jolted. In verse 22 it says they were exceedingly sorrowful. And that is a strong way to indicate their sadness, their grief. There may have been tears. There may have been a great amount of agonizing inside as they heard Him say: one of you who is eating at this table with Me will deliver Me up. They were exceeding sorrowful.

John 13:22, paralleling this says, “They doubted of whom He spoke.” They didn’t know who He was talking about. They didn’t know and say, ah, Judas. No, they didn’t say that. Judas was a very capable hypocrite. He was excellent at playing out the masquerade. In fact, in Luke 22:23, again a parallel account, it says, “They began to ask each other who it was,” and one would say to the other, who is it? And he would say, well, I don’t know, who is it? And the buzz was moving around that probably U-shaped table at which they were reclining in the meal and they were saying to each other, who is it? Who is it? Who is it?

You see, Judas was very adept at his hypocrisy. The fact that they had chosen him to be the treasurer shows they didn’t have any doubt about his integrity. They trusted him with their resources which were meager at best. And Jesus hadn’t done anything to outwardly expose him at all. In fact, if anything, Jesus had done everything He could to pull Judas close to Him. Here he was sitting on His

left side at the table which Edersheim, the Jewish historian and scholar, says was the place of great honor. It was to him Jesus dipped the sop and gave it. Again, a symbol of him as the honored guest. Jesus did everything He could to show anything but the fact that He disdained and despised and hated Judas and did nothing to reveal him as a traitor.

So, they didn't identify Judas as the one. Rather, you'll notice verse 22, "Every one of them began to say to Him, 'It is not I, is it, Lord?'" Every one of them. Now, why would they be so quick to imagine that they themselves might be the traitor? Very easy to understand and it's what I set up a moment ago. The fact that they had just been rebuked for the ugliness of their pride, for their sin, and ambition, and self-will, and self-design, they were whipped. I mean, they had their tails between their legs. They were shamed by their rebuke of Jesus. And then, they were doubly shamed by the washing of their feet. You remember, Peter said, "You'll never wash my feet. It is not to be that You will wash my feet." And then, Jesus rebuked Peter and said, "If I don't wash your feet, you have no part with Me." And so, they were rebuked and they were shamed. And now, in that condition where their sin has been exposed, and they can't hide it, and they're very much aware of their weakness, they don't even trust themselves in this regard and they begin to say, every one of them, "It's not I, is it? It's not I, is it?" now that they have been made very much aware of the capability of their evil.

And so, they're asking the question thinking of themselves. Well, there's something honest in that. There's some integrity in that. They knew that deep down in them was a sinful principle that could be so ugly that it might even lead them to betray the one they loved. They had, William Hendriksen says, "A wholesome self-distrust." And so, they said, surely not I, surely not I. And verse 23, Jesus answered and said, "He that dips the hand with Me in the dish," that's dipping again the unleavened bread or the bitter herbs into the *charoset*, "the same shall betray Me." They had no knives or forks; they ate with the hand, dipping the bread, dipping the herbs, dipping perhaps the lamb. He says, "The one who does that," now, who did that? All of them did it. All of them were eating. All of them were dipping. And what He is saying is it's one of you who is here, who is eating, who is dipping the sop. It's one of you. And in John 13:18 He quotes from Psalm 41:9 and He says something that points up the incongruity of this. He says in verse 18, "The Scripture is fulfilled, he that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me," Psalm 41:9. And of course that speaks of Ahithophel. Second Samuel chapter 16 talks about Ahithophel who was the familiar friend of David who betrayed him. And Ahithophel is a picture of Judas, the ultimate, the arch-traitor, if you will, who betrayed Jesus Christ. The wretched one who sat at the table, dipped the sop, ate with Christ, turned around and betrayed Him.

Luke 22:21, again paralleling this, says, "Jesus said, 'The hand of him that betrays Me is with Me on the table.'" So, first He says one of you. Then, He says one of you whose hand is on the table, and one of you who dips the sop. And the shock is beyond description that one of them could do that. But verse 24 puts it in balance. He is no victim of a fool's treachery. He is no victim of a betrayer. And they need to know that and so do we. And so, in verse 24 He says, calling Himself by His most familiar name for Himself, "The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him." In other words, don't think I'm a victim. Don't think this is a plan gone wrong. Don't think this isn't the way it was supposed to be. It is exactly what God had prewritten in prophetic history. And no one is doing anything to me that is not a direct and immediate fulfillment of the eternal plan of God. And that is why the writer of Revelation says, "He is the lamb slain from before the foundation of the world." That is why in Acts 2:23 as Peter preaches on Pentecost, he says: "Jesus of Nazareth, who was slain is slain not only by your wicked hands, but by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," he says. In other words, it is the divine plan.

So, Judas was a betrayer. Judas was a betrayer by his own choice. Judas was a betrayer who rejected grace, and rejected the offer of salvation, and rejected the grace that Christ presented to him on a personal level. Judas rejected all of that, made his own choices and yet somehow, somehow in God's marvelous mysterious sovereignty, he was planned right in to the very midst of the betrayal of Jesus Christ to accomplish holy purposes. So, an unholy man in the hand of a sovereign God accomplishes a holy end. But it doesn't make him a good man.

When I was in my senior year in seminary, I decided to do my dissertation, my thesis, on Judas. And I was amazed to read in many books people who wanted us to take Judas as a hero who should be exalted because it was Judas who forced the issue, forcing Jesus to the cross to fulfill prophecy. And some have even imagined that Judas knew what he was doing, planned for the crucifixion of Christ so that the world could be redeemed.

Don't believe that. If you look at verse 24, you will find Jesus says, "Woe, or damnation, or curse, that man by whom the Son of Man is given over." That man is a cursed man. Jesus said he was a devil. The Bible says he was a thief. He loved money. He sold Jesus for money. That's all he wanted. He had no desire to bring the Kingdom. He had no desire for the salvation of the world. He wanted money. That was all he cared about.

And yes, the Old Testament said Jesus would die on a cross. Psalm 22, it is written of Him, the whole crucifixion is described with every detail in Psalm 22. Isaiah 53 describes it again. It was written that He would die on the cross. It was written that He would die for the sins of the world, that He would be a sacrifice. But even though it was in the plan of God, the man who did it, who turned Him over is a cursed and damned man. And Jesus says of him something that is so terrifying that it's hard to even express its intent. At the end of verse 24, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born." In other words, better to have never been born than to have to endure what that man will endure. Better if the man never existed than to exist forever in eternal hell. And, of course, we realize that the degrees of punishment in eternal hell are related to the rejection. In other words, the more you reject, the more truth you understand and refuse, the greater the punishment in hell. Therefore, the severest damnation in hell comes to Judas, who really, and the words of Hebrews chapter 10, "Tread underfoot the blood of the covenant, counted it as an unholy thing," who rejected the Jesus Christ that he walked with for three years. And when the Lord says curse that man, He means it in the most profound and eternal way. And when He says it would have been better if he had never been born, that's exactly what He means. Better never to have existed than to spend forever in the very depths of hell.

So, Judas made his own choices, was the source of his own damnation, yet fit perfectly into the sovereign plan of God. And that is to say God controls not only the good of men, not only the righteous in the world, but their evil and the wicked among them to accomplish His own ends. He doesn't say who it is in verse 24, He just pronounces damnation on the one who is guilty. And I believe, in a sense, that is a gracious reminder to Judas, and even a call for him to repent. And so, the 12 sit in shock, having heard this unbelievable word that one of them is going to deliver Jesus to the rulers to be killed.

That takes us to the last thought, "signifying the traitor," signifying the traitor. Verse 25, and this is specific. "Then, Judas, who delivered Him up, answered and said, 'Master, surely not I.'" And he had to say that. If he said nothing, he would have been unmasked. He had to play the game. Everybody

was saying it so he had to say it. So, he considers himself a part of the group and the group is saying, surely not I, and so he just chimes in, surely not I, masquerading his hypocrisy as if he could hide anything, calling Jesus *ho didaskalos*, the master, the rabbi, the teacher which he no more was committed to than any other element of Jesus, truthfully. All he wanted was money and glory.

But he got a direct answer. The end of verse 25, Jesus said to him, "You said it. You said it. Out of your own mouth it came. You said it." At that particular moment, John 13 verses 23 to 26 tells us that Simon Peter leaned over to John who was on the right side of Jesus, Judas on the left, and Simon said to John, "Ask the Lord who it is." So, he didn't hear this little discussion between Judas and Jesus. Apparently, Judas was masquerading for the sake of Jesus while all the rumble was going on. And obviously, Peter and John didn't hear it, so Peter says, "John, ask Jesus who it is." And so, John 13:23 to 26 says, "John leaned over and said, 'Who is it?' And Jesus says, 'The one I give the sop to.' And He dipped it and He handed it to Judas." John knew. The rest didn't know.

In that same passage in John 13 says they didn't know, but John knew. The one He gave the sop to. So, He told Judas, He identified to John who the traitor was. John, His dear intimate beloved disciple. And then, it says in John 13:27, a most frightening thing that ever happened in the life of Judas, "And when He had dipped the sop, Satan entered into Judas." Satan entered into Judas.

A frightening thing. The very devil himself came in full personhood to reside in Judas. He was hellish to the core, at this point. He was a supreme agent for the fallen angel Lucifer to work his devilish deed against Jesus Christ. He was a victim. No less, in a sense, than any man who rejects Christ, but more than any man in the sense that he was the arch criminal of all time, indwelt by the devil himself. Hellish as is possible in the realm of the natural and the supernatural. And Jesus said to him, "Get out, and what you do, do it fast." And it says the disciples didn't know why He sent him away. Some thought he was going to go buy some more food, and some thought he was going to give money to the poor, so they still didn't know. Judas knew. Jesus knew. John knew. The rest didn't know.

But Jesus got rid of him before they actually ate the meal because he should have no part, should he, in the Lord's Table. So, he was dismissed. What a scene of preparation as Jesus has the final Passover. After that, of course, verse 26 says, "And as they were eating." They went back to the meal, back to the Passover.

Now, why this final Passover? Now, listen very carefully to what I say, it's essentially important in your understanding of Scripture. This was a very, very momentous time in history. Passover was the oldest Jewish institution, older than any other Jewish institution except the Sabbath itself. For 1,500 years they had celebrated Passover, even before the Aaronic priesthood was instituted, even before all of the Levitical ritual and the giving of the Mosaic Law. The Passover was very old, very ancient. And it was ordained by God to be held every year and every devout Jew did it every year. But now, listen, this Passover, after 1,500-plus years of Passovers, was the last divinely sanctioned and authorized Passover ever held. Any Passover ever celebrated after this one is not authorized by God. It is a remnant of a bygone economy, of an extinct dispensation, of a covenant no longer in vogue. It is vestigial. It serves no significant purpose. Jesus here celebrated the Passover as a way to bring it to its end.

The bell tolled in the upper room for the old economy. Christ ended the long years of Passover and began a new memorial feast which He begins to institute in verse 26. And this new feast is the feast

not of the old economy but the new economy, not the old covenant but the new covenant, not the Old Testament but the New Testament, not looking to a lamb in Egypt but a Lamb of God on a hill of Calvary. So, Jesus ends the old before He begins the new. And after having drawn the curtain on the Passover of the old economy, He institutes the feast of the new. And we come to that in verse 26.

And I want you only to see three things, very quickly: the directive, the doctrine, and the duration. This new feast, because we've studied it so many times and gone through it in Corinthians, we don't need to go into great detail, just to capture the scene. What are the directives that He gives? "And as they were eating," as they were eating. Verse 21, it said, "And as they did eat." We don't know exactly the point this takes place. I have a feeling that they had had the first cup, they had broken the bread and the bitter herbs and dipped them. They had had the second cup and sung the *hallel*. They had already been interrupted once with the footwashing and the lessons that came with that. They had been interrupted a second time with the dismissal of Judas. And now, as they just begin to eat the full meal of the lamb, it was the custom of the head of the feast, the father, or in this case Christ, to pick up the bread, break it, eat it along with the lamb, and that began the feast. It may have been at that very moment that this happens, we don't know. It may have been during the feast when they were already eating the lamb. We have no way to know that. But at some point in the eating of the Passover, "Jesus took bread and gave thanks," that's what the word means. He gave thanks. He thanked God for the provision of bread. All things that are received with thanksgiving, 2 Timothy, or 1 Timothy 4:4 says, and so He thanks God for the provision that God has given. Not only for the provision God gave in the food but the provision God gave in His delivering power symbolized in this wonderful feast. And then, He broke the bread. And He broke it for the simple reason that it came in large, flat pieces and had to be broken to be distributed. And then, He gave it to the disciples and said, "Take and eat."

And then, in verse 27, He took the cup. Or actually, the text here says "a cup." Mark uses a cup, Matthew uses a cup, Luke says "the cup" and Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 says "the cup." And we conclude that it was a cup but it became the cup. And He gave thanks again, *eucharisteō*, we get the Eucharist from it because it means "to give thanks, or to bless." And so, He gave thanks for the bread. Gave thanks for the cup and gave it to them and said, "All of you drink it." All of you drink it. Now, those are the directives.

Now, frankly, to hear those things at this time in the feast wouldn't be too surprising. The breaking and passing of the bread could have happened at the very initiation of the meal of the lamb itself so it wouldn't have been out of the ordinary, it wouldn't have been any different at all than a normal Passover. And the cup of verse 27 was probably the third cup which was called "the cup of blessing," the cup of blessing. In fact, Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:16 says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not," so forth and so on.

So, the cup of blessing which was a term for the third cup in the Passover meal is also referred to as the Communion cup by Paul in that 16th verse of 1 Corinthians 10, which tells us, in a sense, that it's probably the same cup. Very likely that third cup, called the cup of blessing, was the one the Lord held up. By the way, a few verses later in chapter 10 verse 21 of 1 Corinthians, Paul changes its name and calls it "the cup of the Lord." So, the cup of blessing called in the Passover becomes cup of the Lord in the new feast.

So, nothing is really out of the ordinary. He's breaking bread anyway. He breaks it and passes it around. There's no real symbolism in the breaking. Some people think it symbolizes the broken

body. But Christ's body was not broken. John 19:36, "Not a bone of Him was broken that the prophecies might be fulfilled." It was broken because that was the only way to pass it. It was incidental, frankly. The symbolism isn't in the breaking. And then, the cup was taken and also blessed. That is a prayer of thanks was given. And it was passed. Then, He said, "Take and eat," and He said, "all of you drink it."

Now, that's simple directives. By the way, Mark tells us that all 11 did drink the cup. They all shared. And that is the idea that we want to stress, that all of us who come to the Lord's Table are participants. For many, many years and it may be changing in some places, the Catholic Church had the priest alone drink the cup, never let the people do that. That's foreign to what the intent of Scripture is. And all of us participate in the blood of Christ and the body of Christ in the death and resurrection of Christ and are all partakers of His table. And so, we find Him saying, all of you drink it, all of you take it and eat it. And they did that.

Now, what about the doctrine? The directive is simple and really if that's all He said, we'd think we were still in the Passover because there's nothing different. But the doctrine comes at the end of verse 26 when He said: "This is My body." Now, that was something brand new. The unleavened bread had always been a symbol of leaving Egypt, and baking a new bread that had no leaven in it to symbolize that they were not taking anything with them from their former life in Egypt. Leaven was taken, you know, off a loaf. When a loaf was baked before the baking of the loaf, a piece was taken off and it was allowed and it was allowed to ferment and it became the starter for the next loaf. It symbolized influences, as I told you last time. And the unleavened bread was a way of saying "we're starting new; there's no influence of the old life." So, it was symbolic of new life. It was symbolic of cutting apart from Egypt, of separating from worldliness.

But now it's something different. Now, unleavened bread doesn't talk anymore of that which is not influenced by the evil of the world. Unleavened bread now means "My body," He says. And He is transforming the Passover. Now, that takes a lot of authority, folks. You're fooling with something that God ordained. But Jesus is God in human flesh, and He can rewrite the script. And having ended the old economy, He now initiates the new and says "I want you to take and eat this bread as representative of My body."

Now, some people think it's really His body. The Catholic Church teaches the doctrine of transubstantiation. That is, that the bread actually, literally, physically becomes the body of Jesus Christ. That is not what this is saying. That was the ridiculous thought of the Pharisees in John 6 which is laughable. They even made a silly remark as to the effect, "Well, if we eat Your body, how's there going to be enough of You to go around?" That kind of thinking. That's implied in John 6.

So, the intent was not to say that, any more than when it says, "Jesus is the vine," means He's growing in a field and has branches. Or when He says He's the water that He's liquid. These are image words. This is emblematic of My body. This is symbolic of My body. And Luke 22:19 adds, "Which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me." And that's what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:24. So, He takes the bread and it becomes emblematic of His body, a symbol and a picture.

Now, Christ is saying I give My body to die in death for you. That's what He's saying. My body as this bread is broken and consumed; My body will be given. And I want you to do this in remembrance of Me. Then, in verse 28 He says, regarding the cup, "This is My blood of the covenant." This is My blood of the covenant. Matthew and Mark just say "the covenant." Luke, again, and Paul say "the

new covenant.” And somehow the word “new” got in the authorized of Matthew. But what He is saying is, “This is My blood of the covenant.” It is the new covenant, the new covenant written in His blood. If you go back to Exodus 24 and verse 8, you will find that that’s basically a quote of Exodus 24:8. And what Jesus is saying is that God when He made a covenant with man required what? Blood. When God made a covenant with Abraham, there was blood shed by animals. When God made a covenant with Moses, there was blood shed. When God made a covenant with Noah, there was a sacrifice laid on an altar. God required bloodshed in making covenants with men. When God brought reconciliation with Himself, the price was blood, that men might know that a relationship to God was going to cost the blood of a sacrifice.

And all of that pointed to Christ who would be that sacrifice. And when the priest stood knee-deep in the blood of thousands upon thousands upon thousands of lambs, it was a way of reminding them all of the cost of God’s reconciliation to man, that it cost bloodshed, sacrifice. That’s why Hebrews 9:22 says “Without the shedding of blood there’s no forgiveness of sin.” A covenant with God always demanded not just death, not just death, not just hitting an animal on the head so that it died, but blood-shedding because the life of the flesh is in the blood, it says in Leviticus. And the pouring out of the blood was a very graphic, a very painful, a very vivid demonstration of the loss of life. And so, Jesus died to save us from our sin. But it wouldn’t be just enough for Him to die, He had to die, and in His death pour out blood through the wounds in His hands, the wounds in His feet, the wound in His side, the thorn marks in His head. Blood running everywhere to demonstrate that the life was flowing out of Him graphically and visibly, that He was offering Himself as a blood-shedding sacrifice for sin.

And so, Jesus says when you take this cup, it is not any more to remind you of the blood of the lamb in Egypt, blood put on the doorposts and the lintel. It is not anymore to remind you of that. It is to remind you from now on of My blood which is shed. That word “shed” is the key to the whole understanding of the verse. It is shed blood. This is My blood of the covenant, the blood being shed, the Greek says. It had to be shed blood, the graphic demonstrable way of seeing the life poured out.

Now, obviously, we were saved through His death. There was nothing in the chemistry of His blood to save us. We were saved in His dying, but He had to pour out that blood because God had required a blood-letting, a blood-shedding sacrifice so that there would be vividness, and so that it could be seen that the life was poured out. And so, Jesus says this cup will remind you of My blood shed. Notice “for many.” Literally, “for the benefit of many,” for the benefit of many. And who are the many? All who believe, Jew and Gentile. Not just the blood shed like in the old covenant for the nation of Israel, but the blood of Jew and Gentile, the many, beyond just Israel, to all. “For the forgiveness of sins.” In other words, His blood was shed to bring forgiveness of sins, the sacrificial bloodletting substitutionary death to bring about forgiveness.

That’s why Jesus came. And He instituted the memorial to that the night before His death. So, our Lord headed for the cross to pour out His blood as a sacrifice for sin. And He instituted the bread and the cup as a memorial for all time that we might remember the self-sacrificing, blood-spilling death of Christ for us. The old covenant had all those animals, none of which could take away sin. The blood of Christ alone could do it. And so, the feast that we celebrate is here at this table with the bread and the cup.

Finally, the duration. How long do we do this? Passover ended that night. There’s never been an authorized Passover since. A lot of Jewish people still doing it. It might be a nice custom, but it’s a

dead feast. It has no purpose. It ignores the true feast of redemption. So, if that ended then, how long do we do this? Well, verse 29 says, "I say to you, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine." That's just a colloquialism for the wine, "until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom." What He is saying is keep doing it until I do it with you in the Kingdom. When Jesus comes in His Second Coming and sets up the Kingdom, that great event that He was talking about in Matthew 24 and 25 was going to come. He was telling them here He was going to die. He was telling them about pouring out His blood.

This is a pretty tragic thing to hear, and so He injects this thought that I'm going to come back, and I'm going to do this with you in My Kingdom. Don't worry, I'll be back. And there's a reaffirmation in verse 29 of His Kingdom promise. I'll do it with you in My Kingdom. And I believe when Jesus comes, and we enter into His Kingdom, we're going to do this with Him. We're going to celebrate this with Him. We're going to remember His sacrifice together and I'm not sure that we won't do that forever and ever and ever and ever throughout all eternity in some marvelous way that He has designed, for it's an unforgettable and glorious redemption, never, never to be ignored, always to be celebrated.

So, He says, do this, in effect, until I do it with you in My Father's Kingdom. But the emphasis is: I'm going to come back and drink it with you again. All three gospels, by the way, state that the Lord said that. This is a wonderful, wonderful thing that He assures us all that He's coming to set up His glorious Kingdom. And then, in verse 30 it says they sung a hymn. Literally, the Greek says they hymned, they hymned. What was that? Well, they had already sung Psalm 113 and 14. They probably sung another 15 maybe, 16. Then, there was a fourth cup and then they might have sung 117, 118 and went to the Mount of Olives. And so, the final Passover; and so, the institution of the Lord's Supper. Put yourself there that night as we partake together. Let's pray.

Blessed Lord Jesus, before Thy cross, we kneel and see the ugliness of our sin, our iniquity that caused Thee to be made a curse, the evil in us that brought divine wrath on Thee. O Lord, show us the enormity of our guilt by the crown of thorns, the pierced hands and feet, the bruised body, the dying cries, the blood, Thy blood, is the blood of God incarnate. How infinite our evil our must be, how severe our guilt to demand such a price. Sin indeed is our evil, born in our very conception, alive through all our life, strong in our character, so dominant in our faculties. It trails us like a shadow, intermingling itself with every thought and motive and deed. It is like a chain that holds us captive. And we ask, O God, why should Thou be gracious to us? And yet, we bless Thee for the compassion that yearns over us as sinners, the heart that hurries to our rescue, the love that endures our punishment, the mercy that bore our stripes. We confess our sin. O Lord, we ask that we might walk humbly, tender of conscience. That we might walk also gloriously as heirs of salvation.

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