

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

56. The Bread and the Cup

Mark 14:17-26

Last week we walked through Mark 14:12-16 in which Mark tells us how Jesus gave instructions concerning the preparation for the Passover meal.

We zeroed in on the nature of these instructions.

Mark 14:10–11 (CSB) ¹⁰Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. ¹¹And when they heard this, they were glad and promised to give him money. So he started looking for a good opportunity to betray him.

Luke zeroes in on their strategy — which is at the heart of why Jesus very deliberate in the way He directed the preparations for the Passover meal

Luke 22:5–6 (CSB) ⁵They were glad and agreed to give him silver. ⁶So he accepted the offer and started looking for a good opportunity to betray him to them when the crowd was not present.

Mark 14:12–16 (CSB) ¹²On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrifice the Passover lamb, his disciples asked him, “Where do you want us to go and prepare the Passover so that you may eat it?”

Jesus deliberately didn't tell all the disciples the specific name of the host or the location of the house where they would eat the Passover meal. Instead He sent Peter and John (Luke 22:8) with instructions that would be used in a covert operation. Neither did he send Judas (who essentially held the check book and credit cards) to purchase all that was needed for the meal.

Jesus did all of that to make sure that Judas wouldn't be able to give that information to the chief priests as the perfect *opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd*. Jesus would be betrayed by Judas — but not until after that meal because *that* meal was the most important meal eaten in the history of the world! AT that house, around that meal Jesus taught them things that were absolutely ESSENTIAL to these men; absolutely ESSENTIAL to the church in its

infancy and throughout the ages; absolutely ESSENTIAL for every man and woman who would come to faith in Jesus because of the testimony of those eleven men.

We spent most of the night in a very broad overview of what happened in that house on that night around that table (Back in 2013 we spent 8 weeks walking through and basking in the apostle John's account of what took place in that room between Jesus and His friends.

1. At that table Jesus told the apostles (and us) how His disciples are to **live for Him in this world**

John 13:34–35 (CSB) ³⁴"I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

2. At that table Jesus comforted them and assured them about our future hope —

He was going to prepare a place — but He would come again and take them to Himself so that where He is they would also be.

3. At that table Jesus taught them about the person and work of the Holy Spirit

John 14:16; 26 (ESV) ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you **another Helper**, to be with you forever.... ²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

4. At that table Jesus explained to them the very essence and nature of the Christian life

John 15:5 (CSB) ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me.

5. At that table the true and forever King demonstrated the fact that He is unlike any other King — and for that reason His Kingdom is unlike any other kingdom — and that it would be by way of His citizens that the ethos of the King would be expressed on the earth until He returns.

The true and forever King got up from the table and did the work of the lowest household slave — washed the feet of the disciples — even the feet that would walk out and betray Him.

Jesus secured all of that by way of those obscure instructions.

As we pick up tonight I want to add a thought all of that that will build a bridge to what we are going to look at tonight.

Even in the face of murderous betrayal Jesus was securing and preparing a place for the deepest fellowship with His friends where He would share the ultimate Passover meal with them — where He would teach them such profound things — and as we will see tonight where He would institute communion.

Jesus was setting up all of that in the face of His betrayal. THAT is why we can **know** that Jesus understands our betrayals and our heartache. THAT is why we know that Jesus has a place for us to meet Him when we've been betrayed — a place that no betrayer knows about or understands. We sing of it, right — The Secret Place. Secret to traitors — known by Jesus. Jesus is that place!

Mark 14:17 (CSB) ¹⁷When evening came, he arrived with the Twelve.

Judas was with them now — but it was too late for Judas to get word to the chief priests and their mob. He was there because Jesus had a spot for him at the table — the seat of the guest of honor.

Luke gives us this —

Luke 22:15 *And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat **this** Passover with you before I suffer.*

Luke 22:15 (NKJV) Then He said to them, “With **fervent desire** I have **desired** to eat **this Passover** with you **before I suffer**;

The word **desire** literally means longing or craving. Jesus had been longing, craving *desiring* to eat **this Passover** with them because **this Passover** was the Passover that the first Passover in Egypt was looking forward to.

Every Passover — celebrated every year since they came out of Egypt — was pointing to and anticipating this Passover. Along with all of the Old Testament Feasts and sacrifices, Passover was *a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ (Colossians 2:17)*. We’re told that *Jesus is our Passover lamb who was sacrificed (1 Corinthians 5:7)*. His death was going to be the climax that all of human history was moving toward!

I believe He was longing to eat **this Passover** when He commanded Moses to have the first Passover meal in Egypt. I believe Jesus had been craving to eat this Passover meal from before the foundation of the world!

Mark 14:17–18 (CSB) ¹⁷When evening came, he arrived with the Twelve.
¹⁸While they were reclining and eating,

WHILE they were in the flow of that meal all of the festivity and rejoicing of that meal was shattered by a single word

¹⁸While they were reclining and eating, Jesus said, “Truly

Truly is actually the word “**Amen**” — *I’m telling you the solemn truth*

Jesus said, “Truly — Amen — I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me.”

Mark 14:19 (CSB) ¹⁹They began to be distressed

(ESV) — They began to be sorrowful

(NLT) — ¹⁹Greatly distressed

(The Message) — ¹⁹Stunned

(NIV) — ¹⁹They were saddened

As we read this, we need to remember that we know the story. They didn't. We're on THIS side of the Gospel of Mark. They were IN the Gospel of Mark.

Mark 14:19 (CSB) ¹⁹They began to be distressed and to say to him one by one, "Surely not I?"

We noted this last week — None of them are saying, "It's Judas!" None of them are saying, "I knew it was Judas." That speaks volumes! I don't know whether it speaks volumes about their lack of discernment or whether it speaks volumes about the fact that in the company of God's people there can be the worst kinds of people and His people just don't realize it.

We're not told that Judas said "**Surely not I?**" But it does tell us that the ones who did say that were deeply disconcerted by the statement and at the same time incredulous at thought that they might be capable of betraying Jesus. I'm pretty sure that none of them — especially Peter — thought they were capable of deserting Jesus in a matter of hours — let alone betray Him.

Mark 14:20 (CSB) ²⁰He said to them, "It is one of the Twelve—the one who is dipping bread in the bowl with me.

This was the most gruesome of betrayals — Jesus would be betrayed by a friend who'd eaten this meal with him!

By inspiration of the Holy Spirit Mark wants us to see that Jesus was becoming more and more alone as He approached the cross. A friend would betray Him — His other friends would abandon Him.

²¹For the Son of Man will go just as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for him if he had not been born."

Jesus Himself makes it clear that there is not a conflict between the sovereignty of God and human responsibility.

Acts 2:23 (ESV) this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Jesus knew that He was going to suffer and die just like the Scriptures foretold. But even though the details of His betrayal, suffering and death had all been predicted and prophesied by God — Jesus makes it clear that Judas was still responsible for his actions. The sovereign plan of God did not cancel out Judas' moral responsibility.

This is the truth of Scripture: God's sovereign stated goals and plans do not diminish humanity's freedom and responsibility. Both are true. We need to affirm both.

22As they were eating,

Mark tells us that while they **were eating** the Passover meal Jesus did something out of the ordinary

The normal Passover ceremony began with a blessing over the group. Then they would drink from the first cup of wine. Then the youngest child in the group (perhaps at this table the youngest of the twelve — John) would ask, "Why is this night different from other nights?" The father or the host of the gathering — Jesus in this instance — would retell the events of the original Passover in Exodus (Just try imagine everything that was going on in the heart of Jesus as He did that. HE is the very God that delivered the Israelites from Egypt on that night!)

In recounting those events the elements on the table were explained. Lamb was eaten because it was the blood of the lamb on the doorpost that saved them. (Again — What was Jesus thinking? Was He thinking. "I remember telling them about that lamb — and now here I am — I'm the lamb *that* lamb foreshadowed!) Unleavened bread because their deliverance came so fast they didn't have time to correctly bake their bread. A bowl of salt-water because of the tears shed in their years of slavery. Bitter herbs because God had rescued them from their years of bitter living. (Again — what was Jesus thinking? *Exodus 3:7 (NKJV) And the Lord said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are*

in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows). Four cups of wine because God had made them four promises before the Passover: ¹. He would bring them out of Egypt, ². He would deliver them from the Egyptians, ³. He would redeem them with great acts of judgment, and ⁴. He would take them to become his people (*Exodus 6:6-7*). After reliving the original Passover by this oral recital, they drank from the second cup of wine, and the meal itself began.

THEN — BEFORE they drank from the third cup of wine, **bread was broken**.

It is at this point Jesus veered off so that he could explain to them that HE is the lamb — that HIS blood redeems us from bondage and death. His body broken — His blood shed brings a new covenant for a new people — and that this new meal He was introducing was meant to commemorate all of that.

²²As they were eating, he took bread, blessed and broke it, gave it to them, and said, “Take it; this is my body.”

Luke tells us that Jesus closed that explanation with these words —

Luke 22:19 (CSB).... Do this in remembrance of me.”

Jesus knew the full measure of what that broken bread pictured: His face beaten beyond recognition; His beard torn out; the Roman scourge would tear His skin off down to the bones — exposing the visceral organs; a crown of thorns would be driven into His scalp. By the time they were through with Him He would not be recognizable as a human. And that was before they drove wrought iron spikes through His hands and feet fastening Him to a Roman cross.

Blessed — Broken — Given. That was the story of His life! The story of Jesus is in the bread. That’s why Jesus said, *Do this in remembrance of me*.

²³Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

He gave thanks for the cup that anticipated His blood being poured out. His blood would be poured out into the dirt of the world He had created.

Let's not miss this — Jesus said, *Do this in remembrance of Me*. Not in remembrance of the fact that He had raised Lazarus from the dead; not in remembrance of the fact that He had walked on water. He said — *Do this in remembrance of Me*. I have no doubt that they were looking right into His eyes when He said those words. And because these guys were made of the same stuff I'm made of, I'm thinking that they were thinking — “How could we ever forget YOU?” And yet — here we are — nearly 2,000 years later — and the church has forgotten Him! There are so many churches that don't honor His Word; they don't honor His miraculous entrance into our world; they don't honor His vicarious death (they mock the idea that God would be pleased to wound His Son so we could be saved); they don't honor His bodily resurrection from the grave; they mock the idea of His return (even though Jesus said He was coming back).

Jesus knows us so well.

QUOTE: Dave Guzik — *Every time Jesus is misrepresented, we have forgotten. Every time we rebel against the One who bought us, we have forgotten. Every time we look to ourselves instead of Jesus Himself, we have forgotten.*¹

²⁵Truly I tell you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

Communion not only looks back to what Jesus did on the cross — it also looks forward to the coming of Jesus, and the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9).

With these words Jesus is saying: *I am absolutely, unconditionally committed to getting you home and consummating My forever Kingdom*

COMMUNION IS NO SMALL THING

The Church is unlike Israel in that we aren't a physical nation — we are citizens of heaven living among the nations. Unlike the nation of Israel, we don't have a

¹ Guzik, D. (2013). *Luke* (Lk 22:14–20). Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik.

variety of feasts and festivals and ceremonies. But Jesus did leave us with two very important ceremonies that are outward symbols of internal realities: Baptism and Communion.

- The bread of communion REMINDS US of the incarnation — that God came into human flesh and dwelled among us. No one has a God like ours, a God who becomes one with his creatures. He knows us because he became us.

Hebrews 4:15 (ESV) For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

- Communion REMINDS US of the redeeming, cleansing, reconciling power of the blood of Jesus. Communion tells us why God became one of us. He became one of us to die for us. Without him, our only chance before God is the perfect keeping of the law. But all of us have broken His law. God is holy and he cannot have anything to do with sin. Our sins have separated us from God. We all not only sin and fall short of His glory — we are all destined for his judgment. But God the Son came into human flesh in the person of Jesus. In love He *Poured out His blood* to redeem us, reconcile us and cleanse us.

Revelation 1:5 (CSB) To him who loves us and has set us free from our sins by his blood,

*Ephesians 1:7 (CSB) ⁷In him we have **redemption** through his blood, the **forgiveness** of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.*

*Ephesians 2:13 (CSB) ¹³But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been **brought near by the blood of Christ.***

*1 John 1:7 (CSB) and the blood of Jesus his Son **cleanses us from all sin.***

I love Jesus because He loved me and gave Himself for me. But I often fail Him. Even when I'm doing the outward things that are right, I can be doing them from selfish and self-serving motives. It is so important — so wonderful — to take the

bread and the cup and remember Jesus — wounded for my transgressions; crushed for my iniquities; whose blood cleanses me from my sin.

- Communion also REMINDS US of the necessity of personal faith. Jesus blessed the bread, broke it and said, *Take it*. Each man at that table had to make the personal choice to take that bread. Your life (my life), your performance (my performance), your morality (my morality) can never be our hope. The only way anyone can ever be right with God is to place personal faith in the person of Jesus. Will I take the bread or not? Will I receive Christ? We must truly feed on Christ or there is no life!

Dr. Charles Malik (one-time Secretary-General of the United Nations) once proclaimed from the steps of the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton College:

“I can live without food, without drink, without sleep, without air, but I cannot live without Jesus.”

Will I partake of Jesus and His work for me?

Those men had to make a conscious decision to *take the bread* that represented Jesus crucified. You and I must decide to personally take the crucified Christ. THAT is how faith operates. No one can force you to become born again. You must personally receive Jesus. You must, by faith, apply the work of his body and blood to your life.

- Communion REMINDS US of the unity of the church. It is not our race, sex, education, political affiliation, zip code, or income bracket that unites us. It is His blood that unites us. The original Passover meal was meant to be celebrated inside a house with your own household, up to ten people. Communion reminds us that we are adopted children of God — members of the household of God — we belong to one another because of what He did on the cross.
- Communion REMINDS US that we live under the New Covenant.

This is my blood of the covenant

In the Old Testament covenants were ratified by blood.

Exodus 24:8 (CSB) ⁸Moses took the blood, splattered it on the people, and said, “This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you concerning all these words.”

Luke points out the nature of this covenant.

Luke 22:20 (CSB) ²⁰In the same way he also took the cup after supper and said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

Jeremiah 31:31–34 (CSB) ³¹“Look, the days are coming”—this is the Lord’s declaration—“when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ³²This one will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt—my covenant that they broke even though I am their master”—the Lord’s declaration. ³³“Instead, this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days”—the Lord’s declaration. “I will put my teaching within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴No longer will one teach his neighbor or his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know me, from the least to the greatest of them”—this is the Lord’s declaration. “For I will forgive their iniquity and never again remember their sin.

Communion reminds us that God promised to live inside us, changing and shaping us from the inside out. We must see how we are in a covenant of grace, one in which there is always hope for personal growth and sanctification and increased Christ-likeness. His mercies are new every morning, and communion reminds us of who we are in Christ -- we are his everlasting possession, and he will never let go.

²⁶After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Mark 14: