**Calvary Fellowship 2.19.2023 Matthew 26:1-30 “Table Talk”**

* **So a couple years ago, my wife & I were at the annual Calvary Couples Retreat - U should really go if you’ve never been**
* If you’re not married, U should find someone to get married to just so U can go to our couples retreat - it’s a great time w/ your spouse b/c we give U time alone
* Saturday night at our retreat is date night & the last couple of years Carey & I have gone to my favorite restaurant for dinner (which is Fleming’s btw)
* My wife isn’t a huge fan of steak, so I thought I’d make a reservation at a restaurant that she likes - so we made 1 at Seasons 52
* Now, if U aren’t aware, Seasons 52 is a very nice restaurant, but they have this internal rule where every dish can’t be more than 450 calories
* The means the portions are a bit small - I have never gone there & felt full when I’ve left - well I eventually felt full b/c I’d swing my McDonald’s on the way back
* But we get to Seasons 52 & I’m looking over the menu & it’s slim pickings
* I have a pretty strict eating regiment & it’s a tough place for me to eat b/c everything has sugar or it’s breaded or it brings joy when U eat it
* So my wife says, “I’m going to order a steak.” - I say, “Wait! What? U don’t order steak. That’s why we’re here. What’s the point of this entire exercise?”
* I mean, “I love U so much. I order whatever your heart desires.”
* So the server gives me a couple of options & brings me this roasted cauliflower appeaser which she swore was delicious - that woman was a liar
* I got it & it was a giant head of cauliflower w/ parmesan & cheddar cheese
* And guess what? No amount of cheese can mask the taste of a head of cauliflower that looked like a human brain & was the size of a volleyball
* Especially after I spiked it & threw it at the server - just kidding
* But here was the kicker as I ate a whole plate of veggies & my wife is enjoying her steak - I looked out the window & could see Fleming’s from my seat
* **So we’re going to talk about a meal today - the communion meal**
* We’re going talk about what it means & why it matters
* If you’ve been a Christian for a while, then you’ve probably experienced communion here at Calvary & yet, I know there are those who aren’t exactly sure what it means beyond knowing it’s something Christians do
* Jesus calls communion a memorial - but we’re going to see another memorial when a woman’s act of worship is so extravagant & beautiful
* And we’re going to see the begins of a betrayal as 1 person’s legacy is memorialized as 1 of false belief & regrets
* **So this is message #40 in our series in the Gospel of Matthew & it’s the final week of Jesus’ earthly ministry - it’s Wednesday of the Passion week**
* By the end of our message, it will be Thursday & Jesus is hours away from being betrayed & arrested & will undergo 6 mock trials
* But there’s an undercurrent that’s traveling right underneath the text we’re going study today - it’s asking us, what do U want your life to be known for?
* Every person in our story is making decisions that are impacting their legacy & futures, whether good or bad
* And listen, wise is the person who understands that a legacy isn’t something that’s built in a day - it’s built everyday…

**———(v. 1-5)———**

**#1 - A Good Legacy Begins with Trusting God**

* **So Jesus gets done teaching His disciples on the Mount of Olives & He reminds them that He’s going to die in 2 days**
* Now, elsewhere in the city, at the same time Jesus is talking to His disciples, the chief priests & the power brokers of Judaism are plotting Jesus’ death
* **Here’s what I can’t get away from was I read this passage - the chief priests think they are in control of what’s going on**
* They are plotting & planning - they’re coming up w/ their tricks
* By the way, that word “trickery” is the Greek word “dolos”, which means to catch w/ bait - they think they’re going to deceive Jesus & catch Him like a fish
* They think they’re the ones moving the chess pieces, but Jesus is telling His disciples what’s going to happen beforehand
* And Jesus is saying, “It’s going down in 2 days” & guess what? It went down 2 days later like clockwork
* These guys had figured out how & when they were going to get Jesus & none of those things turned out to be right b/c Judas showed up
* “Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?” And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.” (Matthew 26:14-16 NKJV)
* Here’s where we miss it - b/c the think we’re geniuses & see everything
* We can see very little - this is why the more mature U get in your relationship w/ God, you’re trusting in God’s wisdom more than your own
* **When I was 18 & starting college, my dad decided to buy me a car**
* He told me to go check out some used cars & narrow the scope
* Then the next day he would come w/ me & he’d buy it
* So I went to a couple of places until I saw it – It was a low rider pick-up
* I loved it - I noted that it had over 100K miles but I didn’t care
* All I could picture was me driving it down the road blasting some music out of the state of the art speakers it had in the back
* So I took my dad to next day – He took at good look at it
* He showed me the GIANT CRACK in the windshield/ The DENTS in the car/ How 1 of the doors didn’t open very well
* It’s a weird thing that happened - I had never seen any of those things before
* That’s when I learned the principle that when I see as God sees I will do as God says - trusting God changes our perspective on the future
* **Before we leave this section, I want to talk about Judas for a moment**
* Here’s what U need to know - the name Judas is a transliteration of the Hebrew name Judah which means “praise”
* Iscariot is really 2 words: Ish Kerioth = Ish means man/ Kerioth was a town 20 miles south of Jerusalem - Since he was the only disciple not from the region of Galilee, he was Judas, man from Kerioth
* **I’m going to talk about the why he betrayed Jesus in our message, but I want to mention his payment for a moment - 30 pieces of silver - why?**
* 30 pieces of silver was not a lot - in fact, in that currency, it was about $20
* In Ex. 21:32, it was the payment a master got if his servant as accidentally killed by an animal
* **30 pieces of silver is also mentioned in Zechariah 11 & this is important**
* Zechariah is prophesying that the people aren’t listening to him & that he won’t shepherd then any longer
* “I told them, ‘If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it.’ So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter’—the handsome price at which they valued me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter at the house of the Lord.” (Zechariah 11:12-13 NIV)
* The people pay him 30 pieces of silver & it’s such an insult that Zechariah throws it to the potter - we’ll come back to this in chapter 27
* But here’s the point - the religious leaders are fulfilling bible prophecy & they don’t even realize it - b/c God is orchestrating this situation
* And that’s what we can be certain of - He hasn’t forgotten us - He isn’t distracted or unaware - Things are preceding according to His plan
* And if U think, “I’ve totally ruined my life & God will never be able to use me”
* Listen - U aren’t that powerful - God can use U & He will if you’re willing to let Him transform your life b/c U want God to use U - these guys don’t & God is still using them to accomplish His purposes

**———(v. 6-13)———**

**#2 - A Good Legacy Grows with Real Worship**

* **There’s an important note that I want U to make as we read this story**
* And that is, that is happened a few days before this - according to John’s Gospel, this happens the previous Saturday (remember, today is Wednesday)
* “Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor.” (John 12:1-2 NIV)
* So why does Matthew put it here? B/c this is all related to Judas
* Matthew records that the disciples were upset at this extravagant gift, but John records that it was 1 disciple in particular who was the ringleader
* “But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected **‘**Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.’ He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.” (John 12:4-6 NIV)
* Matthew is adding this story b/c as Judas’ life begins to unravel & his greed is seen, he wants us to see an amazing act of worship & generosity
* 1 of the reasons I love that there are 4 Gospels is b/c each Gospel writer gives a little extra even when they are recounting the same story
* And John tells us that it was Mary, the sister of Lazarus who poured the oil out
* “Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.” (John 12:3 NIV)
* This oil, called spikenard was not from the region of Israel - it was from India & had to be imported - that’s part of why it was so expensive
* **Now, there are several women called Mary in the NT - the most famous being Mary the mother of Jesus - 2nd is Mary Magdalene**
* This Mary is called Mary of Bethany - we see her 3 times in the Gospels
* The 1st is in Luke 10 when everyone is serving & rushing around, she is sitting at Jesus’ feet, learning & growing
* The 2nd is in John 11 when her brother Lazarus has died - Jesus meets her & her sister, Martha & even in their grief, they still believe
* U see, the alabaster flask was 1 moment of what marked her life - worship
* Mary was a worshipper & this moment simply encapsulated all of her
* All of us want want our lives to be know for something - we want the legacy that’s attached to our name to mean something
* But it’s never 1 thing or 1 moment - it’s lot of moments that create a legacy
* Here’s the point - whatever U want to be known for - it’s not for something U do once - it’s the things we do daily that create a legacy
* **Here’s the lesson that Mary leaves us with - don’t wait to do what’s right**
* I’ve had the privilege of sitting w/ people in the final hours of their lives
* Listen, no 1 was talking about work - no 1 was talking about their hobbies
* They were talking about the things that matter - relationships, friendships, kids
* They were wanting to say the things they should have said years ago
* **When my dad died 18 months ago, 1 of the most meaningful moments in my life was watching my parents reconcile put the past behind them**
* My parents were divorced before my 2nd birthday & the 1st time I saw my parents under the same roof was on my wedding day
* Don’t worry, they made it super awkward for me
* But they got to a moment when they realized that all the anger & bitterness didn’t amount to anything
* So here’s my encouragement to U - make the call & apologize, take that trip for wife has been asking U to take - if not now, when are U going to do it?
* Go to counseling & fix whatever is broken so U can actually be happy
* Tell the people U love that U love them - tell them constantly so they don’t doubt it or U get to the end of your life & U regret holding it all in
* **I’ve started doing this - I tell my friends that I love them - and let me tell U, these manly men didn’t take it well the 1st time I said it**
* I’d be on the phone w/ them talking about something & when the call was ending I’d say, “Hey, love U man” - they’d say, “What did U say to me?”
* 1/2 of them didn’t even know what to do w/ that piece of information
* They said, “OK. Thanks for letting me know.” - they acted like I told then their car’s extended warranty had expired
* But I decided to keep doing it b/c I wasn’t going to get to the end of my wife w/o telling the people closest to me how I feel about them
* And I remember the day 1 of my friends & I were getting off the phone & he said, “OK. Love U man.” - I said, “Yeah U do.” - No - I said, “Love U too”
* Here’s the point - sometimes you’ve got to be “Love U 1” before U get to be “I love U 2” - but when U get there, the relationship is better
* And your legacy becomes the influence U had on the people around U

**———(v. 17-25)———**

**#3 - A Good Legacy is a Life Lived Authentically**

* **OK, to understand what’s going on, we need to understand the seating arrangement of this Passover meal**
* Traditionally, Christians call this, The Last Supper b/c it is Jesus’ final meal before His arrest - but it was a Passover meal in the Jewish tradition
* I’m sure all of U have seen DaVinci’s Last Supper painting - (pic) he painted it to depict the moment Jesus said someone would betray Him
* There’s so much to this painting & so many theories & Easter eggs, if you’ll forgive the pun, in the painting
* My favorite theory is that there’s a musical composition between the bread on the table & the hands of the apostles - the music is really beautiful
* Also, art historians believe that DaVinci wrote himself into the painting
* They believe James the Less (son of Alphaeus) is actually the face of DaVinci
* But here’s the most important thing U need to know - it’s all wrong
* 1st, all of this guys look like AARP members - the apostles weren’t that old
* They were all teenagers & Peter was the oldest & max. 25 years old
* The 2nd thing is, they’re all sitting on 1 side of the table - only people who have been dating for 6 months or less sit like this - its weird & no 1 likes it
* Could you imagine a group of men going to Outback & saying, “We’d like a table for 13, but we’re all going to sit on 1 side. So table for 26 please.”
* Instead, they sat around the table - In the Jewish custom, they’d actually be laying b/c the table was only a foot off the ground
* The table was 3-sided (U-shaped) (pic) - Jesus is in the 2nd spot (the host), the 1st spot is where John the apostle is sitting (remember he leaned on Jesus’ chest - that’s how he would talk to Jesus b/c Jesus was practically behind him)
* On Jesus’ left is Judas (In the other place of honor) - How do we know? B/c he dips his bread w/ Jesus & no 1 thinks anything of it
* In the last place is Peter - We don’t know why he got stuck here - Maybe he got there late - Maybe he lost he some ancient form of “Rock, Paper, Scissors”
* But either way he ended up in the last seat - b/c of that, he was supposed to wash everyone’s feet b/c that spot was the spot where the servant sat
* This is where, in John 13, Jesus gets up & washes their feet

**———(v. 26-30)———**

* **Now, let me explain something that’s important to understanding this conversation about communion**
* When we say “communion” we’re actually referring to 1 part of Passover meal
* **For those a little newer to the faith, let me briefly explain Passover**
* When the Children of Israel were leaving Egypt & God sent the final of 10 plagues - the death of the firstborn - there was a protection for God’s people
* They were to huddle together inside their homes, put blood on the doorposts of their home & they would eat lamb & unleavened bread
* When the angel of death saw the doorposts, he would pass over the home
* **When the children of Israel leave Egypt, God tells them that they can never forget this night - So He commands them to commemorate it**
* Now, when we get to the Gospels, the writers focus in on 1 aspect of the Passover, which is the cup & the bread
* However, the Passover actually has 4 cups of wine in the feast
* **All 4 cups of wine are tied to the 4 promises of God in Exodus 6:6-7**
* **The 1st is called the cup of Sanctification -** this is where God is removing them from Egypt & bringing them to a place of freedom by setting them apart
* “Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.’ (Exodus 6:6a)
* **The 2nd cup is the cup of Praise -** this is where God declares to the people that they are going to be delivered from slavery
* “…I will free you from being slaves to them…” (Exodus 6:6b)
* This cup was the celebration of the good news that God had heard their prayers & was going to answer now
* **The 3rd cup is the cup of Redemption -** This is where God declares that He is going to take back what is rightfully His - His people
* “…and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.” (Exodus 6:6c)
* This is the cup we celebrate at communion as believers - it’s the cup that Jesus picked up at the Passover & said, “Whenever U drink this, remember Me”
* **The 4th cup is the cup of Acceptance -** It’s where God declares that these people will be His people & He will be their God
* “I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God.” (Exodus 6:7)
* When Jesus says, “This bread is My body” - and just before they take a bite, my guess is, 1 of them turns to another & says, “What did He just say?”
* Jesus is making the Passover about Him b/c it is - b/c while the people of Israel were freed from slavery in Egypt, they were still slaves to sin
* Here’s the point - when U really understand communion, U understand that all of us were slaves to sin & we all come to Jesus for freedom & forgiveness
* That’s why Jesus connects all of the symbolism in the Passover to Himself
* “Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us.” (1 Corinthians 5:7)
* My friends, communion is not a place for the perfect - it’s a place for the broken
* That’s why Jesus took bread & broke it - it an invitation for broken people
* **Part of the Passover meal is taking 3 pieces of Matzo & taking the middle 1, breaking it in 1/2, wrapping it in linen, & then hiding it**
* Then kids would search for it & whoever found it was given a prize & a celebration would follow - This piece of matzo is called the afikomen, which is interesting b/c it’s the only Greek word in an all Jewish feast
* What does Afikomen mean? The word afikomen means “I have come”
* What does it signify? Jews are baffled by its significance, but to those of us who understand the Gospel, it’s clear
* **God, who is Father, Son & Holy Spirit - the Son was sent - He told us the bread was His body that was broken for us**
* Jesus’ body was broken, wrapped in linen, & hidden away
* 3 days later He rose from the dead & His disciples celebrated
* **Here’s what I find interesting, Moroccan Jews take a piece of the Afikomen & keep it w/ them for a full year unto the next Passover**
* B/c the tradition is that if a storm comes up when they are out at sea, all they need to do is toss the Afikomen into the water & it will calm the sea
* A tradition which has its roots in Jesus, the One who came & quieted the storms by simply say, “Peace, be still”
* **That’s what we’re reminded of when we come to the Communion table**
* If you’re going to through a difficult season right now, you’re in the perfect place, b/c the Afikomen, Jesus, wants to calm the storms in your life
* It’s the place where we remember what we’ve been saved from
* Where we remember whose we belong to - where we remember who God is transforming us into by His grace…