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Sermon Notes

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## **A Foretaste of the Heavenly Feast**

**Matthew 26:27-29**

As we gather here tonight, we really have been invited to a spiritual feast by the Lord. Now, when we think of feasting, we might think of the lavish meals we have been a part of – maybe Thanksgiving or Christmas dinners, with tons of delicious food and wafting aromas and a wide variety of dishes.

If we are more historically minded, we could consider the astonishing feasts that the greatest emperors in history threw for themselves and their guests, with exotic meats and delicate sweets and the aromas of spices carried by caravans from the Orient; attended by splendidly dressed dignitaries wearing silk robes and drinking wine from golden goblets. Such is the image of a worldly feast which leads only to gluttony and debauchery.

But yet, the scripture does not back away at all from the image of a royal feast thrown by the king of the universe with an invitation given to all the peoples of the earth. That is some of what heaven is going to be like.

And the Lord's Supper is a physical manifestation for us in the here and now:

***1 Corinthians 5:7-8 For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> Therefore let us keep the feast***

To understand this spiritual feast, we need to do three things:

1) Look back at the past

2) Look inward in the present

3) Look ahead to the future

# I. Look Back at the Past

## A. The Passover

***Matthew 26:17 On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"***

## B. The Passover Was One of Three Major Feasts in the Jewish Calendar

1. Three times a year, all Jewish people had to assemble in Jerusalem
2. It was essential to their religion... remembering the mighty work of God in the past in delivering them from slavery in Egypt
3. Central to the feast was MEMORY
4. The Jewish nation had been in bondage for 400 years in Egypt when God sent a deliverer named Moses
5. Moses was the instrument of God to deliver Israel by the mighty hand of God
6. God worked ten devastating plagues on Pharaoh and on the nation of Egypt because they refused to let the Jewish people go
7. The last plague was the most dreadful... the Lord said ahead of time what he would do... he would send forth the angel of the Lord and he would kill all the firstborn in Egypt...
8. But in order to protect the Jewish firstborn from the plague, he instituted the Passover

## C. The Passover and Its Symbolism

***Exodus 12:21-23 Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. <sup>22</sup> Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on***

*both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. <sup>23</sup> When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.*

So, the Jewish people obeyed what God had commanded them to do

*Exodus 12:29-31 At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. <sup>30</sup> Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead. <sup>31</sup> During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested.*

Then the Lord established that as a regular feast in the nation of Israel

#### D. The Centerpiece: Blood Atonement for Sins

1. The symbolism of the blood as a protective covering from death was the centerpiece of the entire Jewish religion
2. The Jewish sacrificial system was established based on animal sacrifice
3. Central to that was the concept of a transfer of guilt... the priest would put his hands on the head of the animal and confess onto it the sins of the people and put the sins symbolically and spiritually on the animal
4. Then the animal was slaughtered and the blood poured out as a sin offering

#### E. Jesus and His Disciples Were Obedient to these Laws

1. Jesus gathered in the upper room with his disciples to celebrate the Passover
2. But at that time, Jesus gave a stunning new interpretation

3. He took the bread of the feast and said “This is my body which is given for you”
4. He then took the cup of wine

***Matthew 26:27-29 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. <sup>28</sup> This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>29</sup> I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."***

5. Key statements: MY blood of the covenant
  - a. The very next day, Jesus would die on the cross as an atoning sacrifice for sins... for the sins of the world
  - b. His own blood shed once for all would become the basis of a New Covenant... infinitely superior to the Old Covenant of animal sacrifice
  - c. The blood of bulls and goats could never take away human sins... they were just symbolic; that is why they were repeated endlessly year after year
  - d. But Jesus blood was only shed once for all

***Hebrews 7:27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.***

***Hebrews 9:13-14 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. <sup>14</sup> How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!***

So Jesus is truly the fulfillment of the symbolism of the Passover Lamb. As John the Baptist said when he saw Jesus at the Jordan River:

***John 1:29 "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"***

Jesus by his once-for-all death on the cross has shed the blood of the New Covenant, for the full forgiveness of sins for all who trust in him. His blood forever supersedes the blood of the Old Covenant, the blood of animal sacrifices, which could never take away sins.

So, we have briefly looked back at the past... the past deliverances that God has worked for his people... first, the deliverance of Israel from bondage to Egypt and also from the danger of the angel of death by the blood of the Passover Lamb

Second, the real Exodus, the real "Passover Lamb", Jesus Christ, whose body and blood are the feast our soul needs.

## II. Looking Inward for the Present

### A. It Is Essential for Us to Prepare ourselves for this feast

No one who attends a royal banquet goes without putting on appropriate clothing. So must we be spiritually prepared before feasting at this banquet.

No musician playing in a symphony plays without tuning up his instrument. So our hearts must be prepared, tuned up properly.

Why is it so vital to examine ourselves?

***1 Corinthians 11:29 For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.***

It is amazing that the same cup that brings blessing to some brings judgment to others. He who eats and drinks unworthily changes the cup of blessing into a cup of wrath.

### B. So... Examine Yourself

***1 Corinthians 11:28 Each person ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.***

1. Be certain that you are in Christ... be certain that we have been born again through faith in Christ
2. It's as if we are the modern-day Israelites on the terrifying night of the Passover... are we under the blood of the Lamb? Has Christ's substitutionary blood been applied to our souls as the physical blood of the lamb was painted with hyssop on the doorposts and lintels of the homes of the Israelites...
3. Beyond that, examine yourself to see if you are spiritually healthy
  - a. Has some sin gripped your heart and is enslaving you?

***Mark 9:43 If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out.***

***Mark 9:47-48 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, <sup>48</sup> where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."***

This means that we have to analyze our spiritual lives and see if there is anything that is consistently dragging us off into sin... to resolve to cut it out of our lives.

- b. Is your soul healthy, well-supplied daily by your Bible reading and prayer life? Or are you starving spiritually through daily inactivity
4. Are we coming to the Lord's supper with a reverent attitude, with a serious heart

Thomas Watson: "Our spirits are feathery and light, like a vessel without ballast, which floats upon the water but does not sail. We float in our holy duties... even when we are about to deal with God and are engaged in matters of life and death. We should realize that God's eye is upon us, even now especially, as we approach his table."

5. Are we coming to the Lord's Supper with intelligent hearts... well-instructed in the doctrine of communion... knowing how to

“discern the Lord’s body” as we eat... not in superstition or false doctrine, but rightly and soberly, based on scriptural truth

6. Are we coming to the Lord’s Supper with truly longing hearts, yearning for closeness with Christ by this ordinance and by a sincere faith and by the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit?

Watson: “Desires are the sails of the soul which are spread to receive the gale of a heavenly blessing.”

If we come cold, not expecting anything, we will get nothing.

We should come hot, eager to meet with the Lord at his table

So... we have looked back; and we have looked inward to be spiritually dressed and prepared

Now... let’s look ahead... for all these earthly things are merely types and shadows of a future heavenly feast we will enjoy for all eternity

### III. Looking Ahead to Our Heavenly Feast

#### A. Focus on One Statement

***Matthew 26:29 I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom.***

#### B. A Foretaste of a Heavenly Feast

#### C. Location: “In My Father’s Kingdom”... the Heavenly World to Which We Are Going

#### D. The Feasting Table Clearly Predicted

***Matthew 8:11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.***

#### E. The Wedding Banquet of the Lamb

***Matthew 22:2-4 "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. <sup>3</sup> He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. <sup>4</sup> "Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.'***

F. Resurrection Bodies... able to eat and drink

***Luke 24:39-43 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." <sup>40</sup> When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. <sup>41</sup> And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" <sup>42</sup> They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup> and he took it and ate it in their presence.***

G. New Heaven and New Earth... a physical world

***Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away***

H. New Grapes?

Jesus said he would drink wine ANEW with us in his father's kingdom

I don't know what "anew" means when it comes to grapes and win

But I know that everything will be new:

***Revelation 21:5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"***

And we will be eating fruit from the tree of life:

***Revelation 22:1-2 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its***

***fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.***

I. “With You”... identities retained

Jesus said specifically “I will drink it anew WITH YOU in my Father’s Kingdom...”

***Matthew 22:31-32 But about the resurrection of the dead-- have you not read what God said to you, <sup>32</sup> 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.***

Application:

We should be filled with hope and realize that the heaven to which we are going will include a feast of the richest nature, with delicacies such as we can hardly imagine

And as we eat, our souls will be filled and our hearts will be burning within us for the love of the Lord