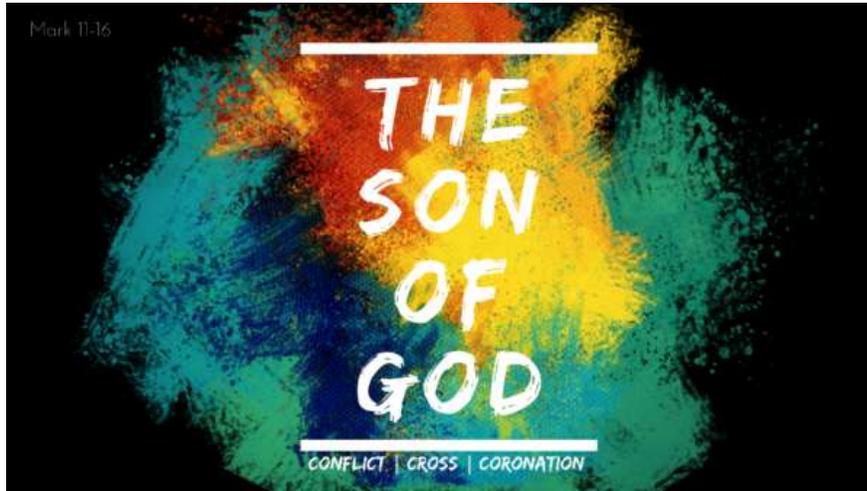


A Meal to Remember, Proclaim, & Anticipate



Mark 14:22-25

The Lord's Supper

Thanksgiving is coming. It is a holiday I love because Thanksgiving is a holiday all about a meal. The whole thing revolves around a meal that you're probably going to share with your family. You might travel, or stay here, you might have family coming in, but there's a meal involved. Just so I can make us a little bit hungry, I want you to close your eyes and picture yourself at Thanksgiving dinner. Imagine what that smell is like. What are some of those foods that you cannot wait to eat? Are you a turkey person? Are you a ham person? What casserole are you going to get to first? Is it mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, a green bean person, or a layered salad? I want you to visualize the food around the table. What are you smelling? What about the pies...can you see the pie you will have, or whatever the dessert is? You are feeling it, touching it, tasting it, and smelling it. Ahhhh...Thanksgiving is going to be a good meal. When we hear the word Thanksgiving, we probably automatically go to a meal

because it is a meal with a purpose. It's a meaningful meal. It's a meal we gather around and we remember, tell stories, and we eat.

As we get into the text this morning, we're going to see that Jesus is coming around a table with His disciples to celebrate another meal with a meaning, and that is the Passover meal. This was a meal that was given to the children of Israel when they were led out of captivity in Egypt. They were told to do this continually every single year. It's the springtime, they're gathered around the table, and the reason they're supposed to do this is to remember the bitterness of being in slavery. They're supposed to proclaim the salvation that they had. A lamb was slaughtered and now they are free. Also, there was an anticipation in the Passover. It is that they were free, but not really free. When will the Messiah come? When will He come and perform the final exodus to really make them free. In this text, we will see in this meal that Jesus is going to fulfill the Passover and transform it into His supper. It's going to be changed forevermore. In this moment in history, Jesus with His disciples will change the Passover into His own supper, as Paul would call it in 1 Corinthians, the Lord's Supper. We, as believers, have been given this meal to do that same sorts of things. We are to remember Jesus, we are supposed to proclaim the gospel, and we are supposed to anticipate Him coming back and the Kingdom being fully realized.

We have the table set this morning. We're not just going to hear a sermon this morning; we're actually going to experience a sermon this morning. We're going to get to hold the bread, taste the juice, and feel these elements that connect us deeply to the disciples in an upper room that also connects us to all of those who have come in between for the last two thousand years gathering as churches to celebrate, remember, proclaim, and anticipate the Lord's Supper.

In our text is a Markan sandwich that we will not get to this morning. We're only going to get to the meat of the sandwich, but we will see Jesus instituting the Lord's Supper in the midst of betrayal and in the midst of denying. The disciples are betraying Jesus, denying Jesus, and will desert Jesus, but right in the middle, Jesus stands as the Savior who loves them, will enter a new covenant with them, and will promise His love to them

though they will all fall away. So this morning, we will see this beauty of the Lord's Supper and we will remember Jesus, proclaim the gospel, and anticipate the Lord's return. Let's go to Mark chapter 14:22-25.

Scripture

And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

(Prayer)

Father God, I pray that You would help us to see and remember that the meal is a meal to remember You, a meal to proclaim the gospel, and a meal to anticipate Your return. We pray this in Jesus good name, amen.

I want to just walk through the text. If you haven't been with us, Jesus has given His disciples instructions that He wants to spend the Passover meal with them. They went ahead of Him, found the place, began to prepare the Passover, and now, Jesus is at that Passover meal. In verse 22, it says, "And as they were eating." The disciples and Jesus were eating the Passover meal. Now, we probably haven't eaten a Passover meal before. Some of you might have at a friend's house, or you could be Jewish and have had it before, but most of us have never had a Passover meal. So

when we hear they were eating, as westerners, we typically picture Da Vinci's painting of Jesus with a smile on His face eating The Last Supper.



The problem with us picturing this is Da Vinci lived close to fifteen hundred years after the fact. He wasn't there, he wasn't in the room, and a lot of what was painted was not true of what would have went down in first century Palestine. In fact, the Passover and the Lord's Supper would have looked like this.



In verse 18, it says they were reclining at table. We think that means putting your chair back, but it meant they would have couches that were leaned up against the table and they would actually lay out and eat. When they washed feet around the table, it was a lot easier than we imagine. We imagine pulling chairs out and propping their feet up. Their feet were

behind them, so when Jesus washes the disciples feet, it would have been a much easier task. So Jesus and the disciples were reclining at table and they were getting ready to eat this Passover meal.

This morning, we're going to set the table for us and get back into the Jewish mindset of what they would have been doing at that Passover meal. I've been trying to study this week all about the Passover and the precept women's group has been studying about it as well. You can fact check me because I've never celebrated the Passover or eaten the Passover meal, but I want us to imagine what was going on during Jesus' day.



This is a modern plate that would look like a Passover meal. Maybe these things would be at Jesus' meal, maybe some wouldn't, like the egg. It is something modern Jews have at the Passover meal to celebrate rebirth and renewal. We have no idea if Jesus had an egg during the Passover meal. As we look back in history, we have how modern Jews celebrate the Passover, and we have thoughts of how Jesus probably celebrated the Passover, but we're not exactly sure outside of what we actually read in the New Testament. There are some things we do know about the Passover that would have taken place. It would have been done in four different parts or sections. There are four cups of wine that have been drunk at the end of these sections. This was a family meal. We have the Lord's Supper all gathered at the church, but a Jewish family would not be at the synagogue; they would be at their house. It started with the dad or

the granddad giving a blessing around the table. Then it would enter into kids asking questions about why they are doing this. Why is this night sacred? Why is this night special? Then the dad or the granddad would take the cue from Deuteronomy 26:5-9 and tell the story of deliverance. He would tell the story of the exodus and how the people were in bondage. They were slaves, but God brought them out through ten plagues that ended with a sacrificed lamb. It's interesting in that text that the dads or granddads would have read. It talked about how God led them out and brought them to the Promised Land. You have to imagine all the kids around the table are thinking, *so why aren't we in the Promised Land, free anymore?* They've been free, they're out of Exodus, they're no longer slaves, but in a sense, they are still not free completely because they're under the occupation of Roman authority. Even in the meal as free Jewish people, there is a sense of not being completely free yet. So they would eat this meal in similar but different ways. For instance, if you go back to Exodus 12, which is where the Passover comes from when God told them to repeat this meal, they had to eat the meal standing up and ready to go. It was a meal eaten in haste, which is why the bread wouldn't have time to rise, so it had to be unleavened bread. It was a meal to eat and get out, but Jesus and the disciples were reclining at a table. So the Jews at this point in history were eating not in haste, not running away, they're in their homes and reclining. They're free people, but not exactly free completely.

There would be various foods in the Passover they would eat. We know from Scripture that they would eat bitter herbs, which were supposed to remind them of what it was like to be a slave. And so, their dads or granddads would remind them their great-great grandparents were in slavery and it was a bitter existence. It wasn't fun or luxurious; it was a really hard time. Then, there would probably be some of these other foods that would represent the mortar they would build the bricks with. There was probably water with salt in it that they would dip lettuce in and eat, so there would be this bitterness. This wasn't like our Thanksgiving meal. All of these things they are eating reminds them that things used to be really bad. They aren't looking forward to eating the bitter herbs. The kids are asking why they have to bite this again. It was not good and they were not having a good time at the Passover meal! Of course, they would have

some lamb, a lamb bone to represent the Passover lamb that had been slain in the temple. This meal is bitter, it is not satisfying, but there is a part of this meal where there is a lamb and because of the lamb, they are no longer bitter. Because of the lamb, they no longer have tears, which were represented by the salt water. They didn't have those things anymore because they had been set free because there has been a lamb that was slain. So Jesus is with His disciples with all of these things that were reminding them of where they once were. They were slaves, but because of a sacrificed lamb, because of the rescue of God, they are now free.

Different things would happen in the Passover meal. They would read the psalms, pray, give thanksgiving, tell stories, drink the first cup, then drink the second cup, and then the third cup. It was a very lengthy thing. It would go on until midnight when they would drink the last cup, go out and sing, and it would complete this Passover meal. At our Lord's Supper, we only have juice and bread, but they had a lot more in this first Lord's Supper during this Passover meal. I just want to set the table to see what is going on. What are the people doing? They're remembering the exodus, but they are also waiting for the Messiah. Now, traditionally at a Passover meal, there will be one cup that is called Elijah's cup, and it's the fifth cup. Nobody drinks it; it just sits there and the anticipation is Elijah going to come, the Messiah is going to come. We don't know if at Jesus' time there was an Elijah cup, but there possibly was, and it says we can't wait for the Messiah. Just imagine Jesus sitting at this Passover meal looking at the Elijah cup, and all over Jerusalem there are millions of Jews staring at a cup waiting for Elijah to come, but Jesus knows Elijah has come and been beheaded. The Messiah is here, and His name is the Lord Jesus, but so many people are blind, so many people are in darkness. They're actually going to crucify their perfect Messiah. So this traditional meal is about remembering the Exodus, proclaiming they were not slaves anymore and had been rescued, and anticipating the Messiah coming, Elijah is going to come and rescue them.

As they were eating, this was probably the third portion of the meal, so they are getting ready to have the third cup of wine. At that point, everything is reminding them of what their ancestors have gone through.

Notice what Jesus did next, "He took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them." The bread would have probably been in the middle of the table. There would have been once piece of bread in the middle that would actually be broken because slaves don't get full loaves of bread. Slaves only get broken pieces of bread. So traditionally, you would break the bread and pass it around to remind people that at one time they were slaves and didn't get whole loaves of bread; they only got pieces. Jesus is doing that very common thing, but we're going to see He is going to do it in a very uncommon way. He will show them how this broken bread actually represents something very new. The first thing He does when He gets the bread, and He blesses it. What is He doing in this? I love what Tom Constable points out. He says, "The blessing Jesus pronounced was a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the bread, not a consecration of the bread itself." Jesus is not praying to transform this bread into something magical. He is doing what the Passover required, which is giving a blessing for the bread. Traditionally, Jesus probably would have said, "Bless art thou O God our King, King of the world who brings forth bread from the earth." He and the disciples have heard that blessing all their lives growing up. This is all common, breaking the bread and passing it out.

Remember

So far, we've have just set the table trying to get a picture of what the disciples would have been smelling, seeing, hearing, and feeling as they're remembering the exodus and also remembering being free now. They're reclining; they're not in haste. Now, we're going to see Jesus do something. He doesn't just set the table; He shocks the table. He does something that is going to absolutely bow their minds. Now, we are included in what's going to transform into the Lord's Supper. The Passover was a family meal. All the kids were invited. It was primarily about the kids, trying to teach and inquire, but the Lord's Supper is transformed, not as a family act, but a family of faith act. We come to the church to do the Lord's Supper, and it's not just for all of our kids; it's for those who have believed in the Lord Jesus, repented of their sin, and been baptized. That's who the Lord's Supper is for. In our Lord's Supper, as baptized believers we simulate what the disciples experienced during this portion of the meal.

Instead of remembering the exodus and freedom from slavery in Egypt, we remember what the Lord has done for us on the cross at Calvary. When Jesus blessed the bread, broke it, and passed it out, the disciples are remembering the bread means brokenness in slavery. But then Jesus says, "Take; this is My body." I can just imagine as their eating and feeling the bread touch their mouths and they begin to chew, doing something that is normal and has always taken them back to Egypt, they start to hear what Jesus just said. 'What? What did He say? This bread is about Egypt. This bread is about brokenness. This bread is about once being slaves. Jesus just said this is His body?' We see Jesus doing something at the Passover. He is fulfilling the Passover, and He is replacing the Passover with something brand new. He is replacing it with His Supper. This bread once pointed back to Egypt, now, it points to Him. This bread is not about the exodus; this bread is about the new exodus. It's about the exodus of sin. It's about the cross where Jesus' body will be broken for us.

I can just imagine the disciples trying to put this together...'*What is Jesus saying? This bread is His body. What does it mean that He just broke it?*' I think the act of breaking it tells us what Jesus means when He says this is My body. There is some confusion about what this statement means. For instance, the Roman Catholic tradition would say what Jesus meant was the bread actually became His body, transubstantiation, and now at every mass, the priest prays and the bread and the cup actually in essence change, and become the body and blood of Jesus. I don't think that is at all what Jesus is trying to say here. It seems very obvious that the disciples would know the distinction between Jesus and bread. Jesus was there and so was the bread, so what was He meaning? He was meaning it as a metaphor like He's done all throughout the gospels. He said I am a door. He said I am a vine. He doesn't mean the vine or a door actually became Jesus. He meant that was what He was comparing Himself to. He was comparing Himself to a piece of bread, and here is what it is; it's broken, broken for you. We just celebrated Reformation Day, and this is one of the things the reformers fought for. They said the bread was not actually the body of Jesus. In fact, when they would burn the reformers at the stake, they would ask them one question before lighting the fires, "Does the bread truly become Jesus' body." When they would answer no, they would

set them on fire. Why would the reformers be willing to die over a simple question of the bread really being the body of Jesus? It was because they knew what that meant if they said yes. It meant the priest sacrificed Jesus again every single mass, and our sins are never completely forgiven because the sacrifice has to happen over and over again. The reformers knew that was not the truth.

In the sacrifice Jesus is talking about, the bread points to the cross, and at the cross, it is finished. There is no more sacrifice that needs to take place. So, when we eat this bread, it means it is representing the very body of Jesus that's broken. He's saying all of Me is given to all of you. The bread, not just the *sarx*, but the *soma*; it's not His flesh; His whole being is being broken and given to them, and here's the shocker. This whole meal that's been about Egypt and the Exodus, and now, Jesus is saying the whole meal is actually about Him. He transformed it and the whole meal is now about the Lord Jesus.

It goes on in verse 23, "And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it." They've done this a lot of times because it was more than likely that third cup, the redemption cup. They are familiar with drinking this cup because they had grown up doing this over and over, but listen to the next words Jesus says, "And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." Again, the shock that had to be on the disciples minds because they understood the cup reminds them of redemption from Egypt. Now, Jesus says the cup they were drinking is actually His blood. Again, it is not actually His blood but representing His blood that will be poured out. Notice what He says blood; it's the blood of the covenant. When they heard that, they would have remembered where that language comes from because that's an Old Testament phrase. It's in Exodus 24:8, and we see the blood of the covenant was sprinkled on the people as God said if you will obey, I will be your God. They said we will all obey, and Moses sprinkled the blood on the people as a covenant, a seal between God to say you will obey and I will be your God. That's the blood of the covenant. Now, Jesus is saying this is My blood of the covenant. There is this newness to it. Blood that was once thrown on people who promised to

obey is now poured out for people who will betray, deny, and desert Jesus. There is this sameness, but there is a complete difference.

Proclaim the Gospel

When Jesus says a covenant, the word, new, is implied in Mark's gospel. The disciples would have put it together. If He's talking about a covenant of His blood, it has to be the new covenant. In fact, Luke actually puts "new covenant." Paul speaks about it as the new covenant as well, so we know that's implied in Mark's gospel. What is this new covenant that Jesus is making with His people in blood? The disciples would have known exactly what He was talking about. They would have gone to Jeremiah 31:31-34. Here is what God would have said to His people, "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, (that's what the Passover is about) My covenant that they broke, (There's the problem. They broke the covenant.) though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put My law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." This is what the disciples and all of Israel knew; God is coming to make a new covenant with us. When is God going to make this new covenant? Jesus, standing before them, says the cup you're holding represents My blood, and it's My new covenant that I am making with you. It's a better covenant because it's not based on their obedience; it's based on His obedience. He's going to give His life for their disobedience, and His perfect life is going to be their obedience. In the old covenant, if you obeyed, you didn't get the blessing and you were cursed from God. But in the new covenant, Jesus obeys for us so that we are blessed and we will always be His people because it's not based on what we do; it's based on

what Jesus Christ has done for us. It's not made with our works; it's made with His blood. That's why it is a better covenant.

See, this meal used to represent the exodus, but now there is a new meal that will not be called Passover any longer; it will be called the Lord's Supper as Paul says in 1 Corinthians. It is now a supper that is all about the Lord Jesus. I love what Larry Hurtado says. He said, "It was the desire of the Lord, therefore, that led to the means of the supper here instituted. The church should remember His sacrifice and love Him, should reflect on the sacrifice, and embrace Him by faith, and should look forward in living hope to His glorious return." That's what Jesus was doing at the Lord's Supper. He's giving us a moment to remember, proclaim, and anticipate.

Anticipate

Jesus doesn't stop there. He doesn't stop with saying the bread is My body, the cup is My blood, celebrate this. No, He actually says something more. Verse 25 says, "Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." I love this! We've gone through this idea of the Lord's Supper. It's about remembering, not Passover, not the exodus; it's about remembering Jesus, our better Passover and our better exodus. The Lord's Supper is about the Lord. It's about Jesus. We come together, remember, and make much about Jesus, but we also proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. We proclaim the gospel. There's a new covenant based on the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It's not our works; it's based on Christ. There is also this sense of anticipating His return. We started with a wrong picture by Da Vinci, but sometimes we also have wrong language about the Lord's Supper. We often call this the last supper, like during the Easter season. I think it's wrong to call it the last supper. This was not the last supper; this was the actually the very first supper. This was the very first Lord's Supper. The last supper has not happened yet; the last supper is still to come. Jesus says as you take this bread and this drink; know that I'm not going to do it again until I drink it new with you. If Jesus in the Passover held to the traditional way, He would have drunk the third cup with them, but there was no drinking of the fourth cup. They just went away and sang the hymns. They dismissed early. They didn't complete the meal. Why? I think

it's because Jesus is anticipating that He will not complete the meal until He comes back, and when He comes back there will be a completion of this meal, and it will be the last meal that goes on forever. There will be a meal that He will be with us, and it's going to be a celebration, a banquet, a wedding feast. When He is with us forever, our sins are completely forgiven. There's a new covenant that's in His blood and it represents something better than what the Passover could ever represent. It represents what the Passover was always pointing to, and that is the cross.

We see the New Testament. We've set the table. We've shocked the table. What the New Testament would do is reset the table. So, how do we reset the table? In the New Testament, it's not a yearly holiday. Instead, the Lord's Supper becomes a normal rhythm in the life of the church, a coming together to do those things to remember, proclaim, and anticipate. The Passover with bitter herbs and a lamb is now the Lord's Supper with broken bread and sweet drink. You have this sameness, but you have this newness. Paul would say in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way, He took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." What should we do now? We don't come and have all the things of the Passover. We come now to the Lord's Table with a very specific purpose. We do three things. We remember, we proclaim, and we anticipate. We remember Jesus and His new covenant in His blood that is better than our trying and efforts. It is a better covenant. It is a rescue that involved a cross. We proclaim the Lord's death until His comes. Proclaiming His death includes a resurrection, because you can't proclaim somebody's death and then talk about him coming back. So proclaiming the Lord's death includes the burial and resurrection. Paul is saying when we come to the Lord's Table and eat the bread and drink the cup, we are saying we believe the gospel. We believe that Jesus died for us for our sins in our place, and He rose again three days later and God accepted His sacrifice on our behalf for our sins.

Now, our iniquities are no more. We are now God's people based on Jesus, not based on what we do. We proclaim the gospel. There is also an anticipation. We do it until He returns. Every time we sit down at a setting like this, we are remembering Jesus, proclaiming the gospel, but we are also telling each other things aren't how they're always going to be. There is a time coming when Jesus will return, and He will sit down at a table with us where there will be full reclining. We won't just be free; we will be completely free. See, we come to the table as free people. We are freed from our sins, but often we're still in bondage to them. We're free, but we still struggle. There will be a day when Jesus comes back where we will be free without struggle. We'll be completely free of sin, and we will live with Jesus forevermore as His people and He will be our God. This is not the last supper that Jesus had with the disciples; it's actually the very first supper. For two thousand years, the church has been gathering with a whole lot of middle suppers in between, remembering, proclaiming, and anticipating that last supper. There are a few of you that are still thinking about a Thanksgiving meal. You're still thinking about turkey and ham because we're just so engrained in Thanksgiving. I don't want you to think about grandma's Thanksgiving meal, but I want you to think what it will be like to sit down at the table with Jesus. Picture it. Smell the smells, see the people, the loved ones; you're there. You're seeing the one who died for you, rose for you, and paid your penalty. You are now with your King forevermore. What is that moment going to be like when you're in Heaven forevermore with King Jesus, and the last supper is had, and it lasts forevermore because it is now about the bride and the groom? What is that going to be like when that fourth and final cup is celebrated forevermore with our King? Can you taste it? Can you smell it? Can you see it? That's what this meal is about, remembering, proclaiming, and anticipating.