

Holy Week in Biblical Perspective
Maundy Thursday
The Resurrection in the Lord's Supper
I Corinthians 11:17–34
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In this study, I want to look at the passage in the Gospel of Luke, recorded for us by the Spirit of God through Luke which is the institution of the Lord's Supper and he brings us some information that I will also refer to in the I Corinthians 11 text which is buttressed here, about the resurrection in the Lord's Supper. Through the many times I've preached on the Lord's Supper I have made the point that the Lord's Supper is there to point us and recalibrate us back to the foundation of our life where the holiness of God met the justice of God and the love of God kissed at the cross where the Son of the God died for our sins. God's holiness is satisfied because of His love that made a way for us when there was no way through His Son, Jesus.

So where is the resurrection in the Lord's Supper and why focus on that here? I want to try and substantiate its importance as we come to the Lord's Supper through this homily, even as we focus on the bread which is His body that bore our sins and the fruit of the vine which tells us of His shed blood, whereby we remember His atoning death. First let's look at the text in I Corinthians 11 for this homily. This is the Word of God. It's the truth.

I Corinthians 11:17–34 says [17] But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. [18] For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, [19] for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. [20] When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. [21] For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. [22] What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.

[23] 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, [24] 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." [25] In the same way also 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." [26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

[27] Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. [28] Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. [29] For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. [30] That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. [31] But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. [32] But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

[33] So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another— [34] if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home—so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. About the other things I will give directions when I come.

As we come to the Table, there are three meals that you need to have in view. As we go through the week of Passion we have established the glory and majesty of our God in the regal enthronement ceremony whereby He is declaring His humility even as the elements of an enthronement is taking place for what we call the triumphal entry. Now all week He has ministered, every night returning to Bethany and then constantly coming back to the Jerusalem area, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday to minister at the temple. Thursday morning as He is likely in Bethany He then gives instructions to disciples who will leave to go into Jerusalem, probably near the pool of Salome and it is there He says they will find man carrying a jar of water. This man will lead them to an Upper Room that is fully furnished and it is there that Jesus says they will celebrate the Passover on this the day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

There is some unusual stuff here but it wouldn't have been unusual to find men with water, although men would normally been carrying a flask or a goat skin of water. Jars of water would have usually been carried by women and that would indicate that the water had been gathered up to be used for domestic purposes. The only exception would have been someone in the priesthood or under the priesthood who would use the waters for purification for the multiple baptism that take place. But this is a man carrying a jar of water and perhaps this water we will meet again as the Lord does the Passover supper in the Gospel of John. It is indicated that while they observed the ritual of the baptism of their hands which would have been pouring the water over the hands while you rub them, that Jesus would also use some of that water when He would wash the feet of the Disciples at this Passover.

So they arrive likely late in the afternoon on Thursday on this day of Unleavened Bread and three suppers are converging. One is the most familiar to most, which is the Passover supper. The other is the one Jesus is instituting, the New Covenant meal which is the Lord's Supper. So we have the blood meal of the Old Covenant with the sacrifice of the lamb which would have happened on the day of Unleavened Bread and the anticipation of the Lord's Supper which would be a bloodless supper because it would point back to the Lamb, but there is another supper that is being indicated in the text in Luke. Our indications are built around the resurrection statements that Jesus is making.

Luke 22:7–23 says [7] *Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. [8] So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it."* [9] *They said to him, "Where will you have us prepare it?"* [10] *He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters [11] and tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'* [12] *And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there."* [13] *And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.*

[14] *And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. [15] And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. [16] For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."* [17] *And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. [18] For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."* [19] *And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."* [20] *And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. [21] But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. [22] For the Son*

of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!” [23] And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.

There are three statements in this account that kind of jump out at us which aren't emphasized in Matthew and Mark. The first statement is in Luke 22:15 when Jesus says “I have **earnestly** desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” Some translations use the word fervently in place of earnestly and rightly so. In I Peter where we see the command of the redemptive love of God's people it says in I Peter 4:8, [8] *Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.* It is the same word used in Luke 22:15. It's a term that is used to describe a race, the stretching forth, the giving of everything at the finish line. Jesus says here in Luke ‘I am stretching out, I'm overwhelmed, I'm poured out, in My joy to eat this Supper with you.’ Why would that be true? Perhaps some clues are given to us as we move to two other statements in the text.

The second statement is when Jesus says in Luke 22:16, [16] *For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.* Then when the cup is given there is the third statement that echoes the second statement and that is in Luke 22:18 when Jesus says [18] *For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.* What is He referring to here?

He has come to this Passover meal and it's the last Passover Supper. We don't know exactly how they celebrated the Passover but we do have some information in the book of Exodus, some in Deuteronomy and some other references in the Old Testament. Probably the best we have is the oral tradition that was gathered up by the Mishna which takes us back to the third Century but that's about as far back as we can get. We know that there was a rhythm as to how the observing Jews would do Passover.

First they would have a prayer of thanksgiving, and then there would be four cups of wine where the first cup was drunk with the thanksgiving prayer. Then they would sing the first parts of the songs of the Hillel which are Psalms 113 and 114 as they would lift up their praise. If the Mishna is accurate, which I think it is, the wine was always diluted. They would use three cups of water for every cup of wine when they diluted it. After moving from that cup then the eldest son would say “Father, what is it that distinguishes this night from every other night?” Then the father would instruct his family about the Exodus and how God had passed over the houses that had the blood of the Passover lamb, placed on the two doorposts and the lintel. They were three strokes and I believe the Bible is very particular about this in the book of Exodus, affirming the Trinitarian nature of our deliverance – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Then they would eat the bitter herbs to remind them of the bitterness of their slavery.

Then there would be another cup and the eating of the meal where everyone could eat until they were fully satisfied and the lamb had to be fully taken by the family. It was a family meal with a time of instruction for the children where God alone is the One that can deliver us from our bondage. Then there would be a fourth cup passed around and the with that they would sing the last songs of the Hillel in Psalms 115 through Psalms 118 as they give praise to the Lord. Then the meal would be over because it was a meal that was to be eaten in haste and that's why there was no leaven in the bread, for its call in the life of the one of the Covenant people of God.

So here in Luke Jesus has pulled His Disciples together and what has He just told us? This is the New Covenant family. We know by the covenant God made with Abraham that the Lord works through the family when He said ‘I'll be a God to you and to your children after you’ and when He said ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved, you and your household.’

There are all of these blessings of the family from that family of creation and they are wrapped up in God's New Covenant work but in the New Covenant, as those Disciples sat there, we get the picture of the New Covenant family of God that Jesus gathers. In this moment, He is telling them 'I am the Lamb. I will have a supper that will have a cup and unleavened bread but there won't be any bitter herbs or a lamb sacrifice, for I am the Lamb.' Therefore the Passover is now fulfilled and the first Lord's Supper is given to us with all of its simplicity.

This Passover that is anticipating the Lamb of God, the Lamb of God now comes and celebrates the last Passover. He institutes a new meal that will point back to what the Lamb has done for us when He was taken outside of the city and gave His body to bear our sins as He poured forth His blood that we might be redeemed as He takes the judgment that is due for us, not only in His physical death but much more in the sword of God's judgment that strikes to His soul, as all the hell that was due to the sins of His people was put upon Him. Because of what He did there is no condemnation now I dread.

That supper reminds us of what He has done yet He kept telling us that He would not eat it again until He eats it anew. What is He anticipating? He is anticipating His resurrection. How could He eat it again with us if the One that dies stays in the grave? He is anticipating and giving us a proclamation of His resurrection and then telling us that there is coming a Day where we'll sit with Jesus in His glorified body. That will be the supper of the Lamb, the marriage supper in Revelation 19. We can't have that marriage supper if Jesus just died. We can only have that marriage supper if He is risen and because He is risen we know that His atonement is sure. Because He is risen, from the throne of God, He pours forth His Spirit upon us as we gather with His Word around this Table to point us to Him and one day bring us to be with Him in eternity at another Supper in which all of His family from every tribe and nation will be gathered at that Table to celebrate the Lamb.

Now we see why the Apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 11:26, *[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.* How can He come if He is still in the grave? He has risen. He is ascended. He has provided this meal for us to remember our salvation through His atoning death, but even in this meal He has told us "I am risen. I am coming again and there's a supper for My family that you will enjoy in My presence for all eternity."

This Lord's Supper, like every page in your Bible, from His atoning death onward, has woven into it the risen Savior. This Savior who died has been raised victorious, which is why He now says Romans 8:33-34, *[33] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. [34] Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.* He now intercedes for you until He comes again for you to sit at that Table with Him anew in the Kingdom of God in the new heavens and the new earth. Come quickly, Lord Jesus. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, the very words we sang as we came to this text of Scripture, 'Ah Holy Jesus, since I cannot pay You, I will adore You' for there is none like You. The death that you died would be meaningless if it wasn't Your death, the Son of God who came in the flesh, yet You came to humble Yourself upon that death on the cross that You would bear our sins in Your body which we remember with this bread and that You would pour forth Your life blood to declare that You have met the demands of the justice of God, for You have ransomed and redeemed Your people. You have said '*Tetelestai*, it is finished' therefore while we thank God for the Passover meal that

pointed to the pascal Lamb, we praise God that the Lamb has been slain for our sins. Praise Your Name we know it is finished for the grave could not hold You. You were delivered up for our transgressions. You were raised for our justification and salvation for evermore. So as Your people come to this Table recalibrate their hearts so their dependence is not on what they do but on what You did for them at the cross. At the cross where we see the light is where our burdens roll away. Then Jesus as we partake remind us gloriously and powerfully that we are partaking because the Savior has risen and is coming again and there is a glorious Day when we will sit at the Table of the Lamb forever. I pray this glorious blessing of Your grace as we come to this Table, for Jesus' sake, Amen.