

“What Jesus Wants”
Luke 22:14–20
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The Lord’s Supper is often shared and usually it is taught from I Corinthians 11 but there is also the betrayal in each of the first three Gospels – in Matthew 26, Mark 14 and here in Luke 22. Hear now the Word of God. Luke 22:14–20 says [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.”*

Here ends the reading of God’s Word.

There is much to be said about the Lord’s Supper. The I Corinthians 11 text and the these from the Gospels which all address the Lord’s Supper are rich texts and I’d like to introduce it by speaking a little theologically, a 10,000 foot view of the Lord’s Supper so to speak. I would like to refer to the shorter catechism question 96. This is what it says;

Q: What is the Lord's Supper?

A: The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, His death is shewed forth;¹ and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner (not in a literal sense), but by faith, made partakers of His body and blood, with all His benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace.²

(1. **Matthew 26:26–27.** And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it. **1 Corinthians 11:26.** For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 2. **1 Corinthians 10:16.** The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? **Ephesians 3:17.** That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.)

Regarding the past, this section reminds us that when Jesus established the Lord’s Supper on Maundy Thursday they were celebrating the Passover and it commemorated that great act of deliverance recorded in Exodus 12, when the Jewish people were enslaved in Egypt and they came along that night to put blood on the doorways, the posts and the lentil from the sacrificial lamb. Seeing that blood that day the death angel passed over the homes of those Jewish people and did not take in judgment their first born, but even now we understand that this is a much greater deliverance that’s implied in the Lord’s Supper. Jesus’ blood was spilt for you and me, not that of a little lamb, so that we might have the ability by faith to come to Christ and know we’re delivered from the judgment of sin and clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

It’s a great picture of what happened in the past but regarding the future, the Lord’s Supper is also a picture that looks forward to the coming of Christ to consummate His Kingdom when we will celebrate with Him, not just by faith as we do here, but by sight for we will celebrate with Him in the marriage feast of the Lamb. The Apostle Paul writes 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.* It always has that forward looking aspect when we eat this meal together.

Then there are the present implications of the Lord's Supper, because this supper is my testimony. It's our testimony before a watching world that we are showing forth Christ's death for my sins and by faith we are partaking in that death as we embrace Christ as Savior and Lord and enjoy all the benefits of our union with Him. In other words, I would remind young people that if it ever becomes against the law to be a Christian in the United States of America, all my accuser would have to do is to go to one of you and say 'Did you ever see that preacher eat the Lord's Supper in front of you?' And you would say 'sure' and the accuser would say 'then he is guilty' and I would agree. I am guilty as charged for I have no defense for I'm a believer and lover of the Lord Jesus Christ as I am publicly declaring at this Table, and it's a source of great joy. There is no contest for this meal is not a converting meal, for this meal is a confirming meal that I have trusted Christ as my Lord and Savior.

That's kind of the 10,000 feet view but I want to go down closer to the ground so to speak, in Luke 22 because it has sentence in its account that is not contained Matthew, Mark or in I Corinthians. Jesus says in Luke 22:15, [15] *And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."* This is found only in Luke and literally Jesus is saying in the Greek, 'with desire I have desired.' It's a very intense, passionate passage. At the Lord's Supper here Jesus is doing more than changing the observance of the Lord's Supper and establishing a sacrament for the church that both Jews and Gentiles will enjoy until the end of time.

Jesus is also meeting with His men. In a sense, we are spying on a very private and personal interaction between Jesus and His Disciples. Jesus earnestly desires to have this meal with them shortly before their world is going to collapse. It was only a few days before on what is known as Palm Sunday that Jesus had come into Jerusalem riding on a donkey. It was exciting and thrilling and there were crowds all around. The excitement was so high people were throwing palm branches on the ground and even their cloaks as this King came riding into Jerusalem on that donkey just filled with messianic meaning, but the tide began to change quickly and in the next few hours Jesus is going to be shown, betrayed and it will be absolutely devastating to these Disciples.

The excitement of the Disciples was just overwhelming because after all they were Jesus' first lieutenants. They had walked with Him for the previous years and they were probably shaking their heads saying 'Now, Jesus is going to finally do it – He's going to finally take the proper role as the King and cast off the wicked Romans as He establishes the Messianic King and we're right here with Him.' They were probably thinking they are just a bunch of fishermen and farmers who have been lifted up to this lofty state and will be the right hand lieutenants of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

You can see the evidence of the Disciples' pride in our text just four verses later from our text. Luke 22:24 says [24] *A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest.* In their minds they were the greatest. They were excited because they thought they were on the verge of seeing Jesus' ministry vindicated and show His victory over all His enemies, but Jesus knows far better.

Jesus knows in the next few hours, number one, their expectations will be shattered. The Lord they have come to love, the King of Israel, will be rudely arrested, unjustly tried, brutally tortured and shamefully executed on a cross in crucifixion. Secondly, more than that, their failures will haunt them, because Judas leaves that meal to go and betray Jesus, but also when Jesus was arrested a few hours later all the Disciples scattered except Peter who hung on a little but until he was accosted three times and denied that he ever knew Jesus. After Peter denied

Him three times the rooster crowed just as Jesus had predicted. Hanging over those Disciples weren't just shattered expectations but haunting failures and then thirdly there were fears that were growing by the minute. With Jesus gone, suddenly these Disciples have become enemies of the state and all the religious authorities. They are terrified about what may happen to them and we know this from John 20:19.

John 20:19 says [19] *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."* In the first part of this verse we see they were locking their doors because of being fearful of what the Jews might do to them. So in just a matter of hours from the Lord's Supper their expectations were shot, their failures would haunt them and their world came crashing down as their fears were growing by the minute.

Yet the texts tells us that Jesus earnestly desired to eat this meal with them. Why was Jesus yearning to eat that meal with them? I think we can glean some information from the shorter Catechism as well as the Scripture to draw three reasons on this. One, is that He wants to remind His Disciples that He is in control of all that was happening, as it says in the confession, 'according to Christ's appointment.' That little phrase is just chalked with meaning, because sure Jesus had lined up this meal. He had found the location and He had even invited Judas to join them at this meal, but Christ's appointment started long before that, even as far back as Genesis 3.

Genesis 3:15 is where God told Satan, [15] *"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he (Jesus) shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."* That was about to happen here in Luke, because the next day Satan would certainly bruise the heel of Jesus at the cross but Sunday morning, resurrection morning, Jesus came back and broke the power of sin and death through His resurrection from the dead which we see in Romans 1:4 which says [4] *and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.* Satan ended up with a real bruise on his head and Jesus gained victory over Satan.

All this was part of the appointment of Jesus and we see Him actually through the whole testament fulfilling prophecies and promises. Occasionally we see Jesus appearing as the Christophany as He appeared as the Commander of the Lord before Joshua, as He appeared to protect Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace, and later in Daniel He closed the mouths of the lions. Jesus was there with appointment after appointment fulfilling what had been prophesied about Him and He comes to this climax and the Disciples believe it's a disaster. Jesus says 'No, I'm in control' and the reality is that He continues to be in control, even for us in the midst of our disasters. Jesus is always working out His will even though things don't seem to go His way or our way. The Disciples expectation were shattered but not His. He had their back so to speak.

This teaches me that this is a Table for people with shattered expectations. We all have them. Perhaps marriage hasn't turned out the way you thought it would or your career turned out to be a dud because you're working in an area you thought you would never work in or a family member or friend has let you down and hurt you badly or your health is beginning to decline and you thought you would be much healthier at the age you are at now. If we're not careful those shattered expectations can begin to preoccupy us and even begin to become idols and become excuses for why you think Jesus doesn't love you or you don't need Him. Do you know what Jesus did with His Disciples whose expectations were about to be shattered? He came to them

and said ‘I earnestly desire to eat this meal with you.’ It’s a stunning picture where Jesus takes their pain and brokenness and fellowships with them.

Another lesson we can learn from this is, that Jesus cherishes our fellowship. The confession reminds us in a most graphic language that in the Lord’s Supper we are made partakers of His body and blood. That speaks of unprecedented intimacy. In fact, the confession echoes what Jesus said in John 6:54–56, [54] *Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.* [55] *For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.* [56] *Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.* That is pretty bold but Jesus is talking about the intensity of the intimate fellowship that He anticipates with His Disciples and with you and me.

Do you remember the story of Paul’s conversion as a Pharisee by the name of Saul? Before his conversion, he was persecuting and imprisoning Christians and he was even giving some over to be executed. As part of his wicked strategy, he had planned to go to the city of Damascus and while he was on the way to that city Jesus appeared to him on the road. Do you remember what Jesus said to him? Jesus said to Him in “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?” (Acts 22:7). Jesus so closely identifies with the lives of His followers that when persecution hit them it hit Him. When difficulty and adversity hit them, it hit Him and that’s the intimacy we enjoy at the Lord’s Table and in our daily relationship with Christ. When hurts and pains hit us, it comes to Jesus as well.

In writing about the heart of Jesus, I recently read a book titled *Gently and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers* by Dane Ortlund and I highly recommend this for it’s a wonderful piece on Jesus’ heart. Ortlund writes, ‘What did Jesus do when He saw the unclean? What was His first impulse when He came across prostitutes and lepers? He moved toward them. Pity flooded His heart, the longing of true compassion. He spent time with them. He touched them. We can all testify to the humaneness of touch. A warm hug does something warm words of greeting alone cannot do, but there is something deeper in Christ’s touch of compassion. He was actually reversing the Jewish system. When Jesus the Clean One, touched an unclean sinner, Jesus did not become unclean, the sinner became clean.’ This completely turning over the Old Testament system. That’s why Jesus longs to enjoy this Table with us.

Jesus has invited you to this meal because He knows your failures, difficulties and pain. He knows your sin and still desires to be with you. It’s not just you being with Him but Him being with you and He cherishes and earnestly desires that time. So, we come with shattered expectations but this is also a Table for people with failures and He enjoys our fellowship.

Thirdly, Jesus is not only in control and cherishes our fellowship but He provides for our future. Fear is a reality for most of us as we grow up in life. We are nervous and anxious about things especially when we have children and then grandchildren. We’re anxious about what will happen with the future of the economy, the future of our nation and we grow fearful for our own health. What will happen to me as I feel the aches and pains of growing older?

Jesus has purchased our salvation but the confession reminds us that we also enjoy all His benefits to our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. Jesus is supplying for our needs in the midst of our fears. That certainly includes prayer, His Word but think about what He promises in John 16 for He says He has something a lot better for you than His presence and that is, He will send His Holy Spirit. Jesus says in John 16:7, [7] *Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper (Holy Spirit) will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you.*

Have you ever thought about how cool it would be if you could have been living when Jesus was living? You could have enjoyed His teaching, observed His miracles, watched people interact with Him or even ask Him questions yourself. That would have been really wonderful but Jesus said it is to our advantage that He go away and send the Holy Spirit. One of the great benefits of His work on the cross is that He would send us the Holy Spirit. In a way, He says would you rather simply just watch the second Person of the Trinity or be filled and empowered by the third Person of the Trinity? Would you rather just imitate the Son or bear a supernatural fruit of the Spirit implanted in you – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control, gentleness?

We're not just observers of God's grace in Christ, for we are trophies of God's grace because of the work of the Holy Spirit in us. When we're so tempted to lapse into fear, concern and anxiety about what is going to happen in the future, no! Jesus has supplied the Holy Spirit to live within us and give us the wisdom that we need, the protection and encouragement until He takes us home to be with Him.

More than that, He doesn't just give us His Holy Spirit, He promises to intercede for us, to pray for us. Hebrews 7:25 says [25] *Consequently, He (Jesus) is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.* Jesus always lives to pray for you and me.

Every Saturday night my administrative assistants and I put together of all those Briarwood members who have been in the hospital in the previous week and those who may have lost a loved one in death and then our assistant pastor incorporates that list of people in his pastoral prayer every Lord's Day morning service. Make no mistake for it's not an announcement, it's actually so that we as members by name can pray for members of our congregation in their time of distress, their time of need. That's really a cool thing. Some of you have been on that list one time or another and you may have been healthy enough to be back at church when your name is mentioned from the pulpit that Sunday as we pray for you. I have worked at Briarwood for 16 years and not once has anyone ever complained about that because it's just so cool. Even though one just hears their name in a fleeting way, for that moment the congregation of God's people pray for that person.

I have news for you and that is that Jesus prays for you all the time. It's not just for a moment when He has time or for a fleeting second, He makes intercession for us and we are the direct recipients of the blessings of that prayer. Can you imagine that Jesus is always doing that for us? Paul puts it explicitly in Romans 8:34 which says [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.*** Jesus is not just interceding for the church, but for us. If that doesn't help you in your fears to manage your fears then you don't understand the incredible blessing that the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings is praying for me as I am preaching this sermon and is praying for you as you are reading it. What a blessing to know He is praying for us!

Today I invite you to this Table because it's a Table for those who have shattered expectations. It's a Table for those who are haunted by failures. It's a Table for those who are gripped by fears because of the future and despite all that, Jesus is not just inviting you He earnestly desires to be here with us, to eat this meal with us.

I'd like to close with a plea from a puritan pastor by the name of Thomas Boston. Over 301 years ago on April 27 was the anniversary when Thomas Boston preached in his church on the Westminster Confession to prepare for the Lord's Supper. I thought that was a cool statistic

and it was an especially troubling time for Thomas Boston in his parish in Everett England. It was a time that an epidemic had broken out and was ravaging the community. In fact, everyone in his family had come down with the disease and I don't know what the disease was. Fortunately, his family survived but many people had died. At that particular Lord's Supper, it was a time of great urgency and great concern. Thomas Boston invited his people to come to the Lord's Table with these words;

“Prepare for this solemn ordinance if God shall allow us the opportunity. Delay not a moment to give yourselves to the Lord by receiving and embracing the Lord Jesus as your Savior and Redeemer and vouching Him as such in His holy sacrament. Let the mortality and sickness that so generously prevails excite you to be more vigorous than ever in preparing for this solemn occasion as perhaps it may be the last that many of us partake of. O then let us prepare to keep the feast in due manner.”

I think a lot about that in my pastoral care ministry. A couple of weeks ago I finished a month in which I conducted ten funerals for Briarwood members and friends. That's about three times the normal rate and it wasn't necessarily because of the COVID-19 virus. It was just that suddenly a number of people were called home from our congregation and all of them had worshipped here and taken the Lord's Supper here. At that moment some were sudden and others were a little more gradual but God called them home. I deal in this area all the time and remind people regularly that unless the Lord tarries God will call all of us home. Any Lord's Supper may be the last one we have the opportunity to share and that gripped Thomas Boston and he gave it a sense of wonderful urgency. Also, people were going to be able to meet the Lord Jesus at that Table. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, I thank You so much for the privilege we have to be in Your Word and of coming before You and sharing this intimate meal with You. Lord, You have provided it. It has come at Your appointment and You invited us, but even more, You earnestly desire to fellowship with us at this time. We thank You and ask that You will move by Your Spirit and that You will move in each one of us and that You will use this time for Your glory, for we pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Question 96: “What is the Lord's Supper?”

Answer: “The Lord's supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to Christ's appointment, His death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner (not in a literal sense), but by faith, made partakers of His body and blood, with all His benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.”