

The Last Supper, The Lord's Super

Luke 22:1-24

Dr. Dan Doriani

We will continue to read from Luke chapter 22 together. It is a delight to spend this week with you. And now in verse 14, Luke says. *And when the hour had come, he that is, Jesus reclined at table and the apostles with him and he said to them, I have earnestly desired with desire and have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. And he took a cup and when he had given thanks, he said, Take this and divided among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God comes. He took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and he gave it to them, saying, This bread is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying This cup is poured out for you in the New Covenant in my blood. But behold the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table for the son of man goes as it has been determined. But woe to that man by whom he is betrayed and they begin to question one another. Which one of them? It could be who was going to do this? And a dispute also arose among them as to which of them was regarded as the greatest.*

This is God's Word. Let's pray together for a moment for these are remarkable events, astonishing events. Lord, we pray that even though they are familiar, we would hear them again with fresh years and ears of love, because we know that all that happened this night was because of your great love for your friends, your people, your children, despite their terrible weaknesses. And so, Lord, we thank you for giving yourself and we ask that you give us loving and adoring hearts to pray. In Jesus name, Amen.

Perhaps you would agree with me that people love to create symbols. I have a symbol on myself right now. It's known as a wedding ring around. We say it. Wedding ceremonies, various things about wedding rings. We say things like with this ring, I thee wed. Or we say, I give this ring as a symbol and pledge of our constant faith and abiding love. And again, the circle signifies that signature on a piece of paper says, What's on this paper is what I say. My signature is a sign that I mean everything on this page, we like to make symbols. Of course, the Lord himself was the first symbol maker, and of all the symbols he created, I think we could say that the Lord's Supper is the greatest of them all. Tonight we will observe. You will come forward as an act of faith. You will come forward not receiving, but being active and to receive the Lord's Supper. We look forward to that. We look forward to it tonight. And we also look forward as Jesus did to the wedding supper, the lamb to the day when he will eat it again. He says in the Kingdom of God, when all things will be renewed and his work of redemption will be absolutely complete.

Now, the events that occurred this night were completely astonishing to the apostles. They couldn't make sense of it. They couldn't imagine that one of them would betray Jesus. And yet they said, my goodness, could it be me? They thought that it could be them. Each one wondered as soon as they got done talking about who betrayed them, they all turned to talking about who was the greatest which is quite a shift in mood. We might say clearly the disciples needed some help, which was presented to them in the Lord's Supper. Now, of course, it started with Passover, which was perhaps the greatest sign God gave his people until that time.

The Passover, as you know, is a celebration of deliverance of God's people who are slaves in the land of Egypt as they escaped by God's mighty hand. When God told Farah to let them go, he hardened his

heart. And so finally, at the end, after sign after sign and command after command, and after saying over and over, he would let the Israelites go.

Finally, God said, I'm going to bring such judgment on your house that you will let my people go. And that judgment was an angel of death that went over the land. And the way to escape that which was available to, of course, God's people, but also Egyptians, too, if they would have believed, was to put the blood of a lamb over their doorframe and to escape the judgment that was coming that day, there was a celebration of a meal among the people of God ever since that from that day on till the day of Jesus, the custom you probably know, was for a little boy to ask, What does this meal represent?

And the head of the house would explain what had happened, how God had delivered his people. And this meal represents that. It included bitter herbs because of the bitterness of suffering in the land that included unleavened bread because it couldn't wait for the bread to rise because they were in such a hurry as they left the land. But there were also cups for cups.

I won't go through them all tonight, but they were cups of remembrance and cups of celebration. It was a celebration. Commonly, during that Passover, the people would sing a song like Psalm 113 where the people sang who was like the Lord, who is enthroned on high, who stoops down to look upon the earth and to deliver. And so the people had a meal.

They had a meal that day. And Jesus wanted to have that meal with his disciples. He wanted to play the role of the father, the head of the family. And so he arranged, as Bruce read for us just a little while ago, he arranged for an uninterrupted evening in a quiet upper room. Now you're all church goers. You know the Bible very well.

You may know and you may not know that when it says that the disciples were forced to look for a man carrying a water jar. Men didn't carry water jars. They carried water skins. Women carry water jars. It's a little like saying, Hey, go down to the football game, one of the big ones, and look for a man with a Purple Heart carrying a pink purse with rhinestones all over it.

And follow that guy and he'll take you to the room. It was arranged. Jesus wanted to have a meal with his disciples because the appointed time is near. So Jesus says during the final week, although Bruce gave a wonderful little summary of events, it would be very easy to think that events were hurtling out of control, that the hostility of the Jews, which had always been manifest since almost the beginning of Jesus public ministry, had had come to some kind of a raging boil, and they were just intent on murdering him.

And no matter what answers, no matter how brilliant and helpful the answers he gave to their questions, they just kept getting more and more angry. And people were looking to arrest him quietly as soon as they could. But of course, Jesus has always been waiting for this time. You know, there was a moment early in Jesus ministry when his own mother said, Hey, it's time for you to perform a sign.

Jesus said, No, it's not the time. It's not time. And later on, some people came to arrest him, sent out by the officials from the chief priests. And when they got to Jesus, they were so wowed by his teaching that they turned around. He went back to the boss and said, Boss, we couldn't arrest them. He just talks so good.

We just we just couldn't touch him. We don't understand it, but we just we just couldn't because it wasn't the hour. John says. And now it's the hour. This is the hour. Things look like they're out of control. But in fact, everything is unfolding exactly as the Lord ordained it. And so Jesus has this meal with his disciples.

He plays the head of the family, and they arrange themselves around a table, low table, very low, almost no legs at all. Lying on pillows with their legs out back, which is a posture of relaxation and of ease. We're taking our ease at this table. We are delighted to be here together. And Jesus says with desire, I desired to eat this Passover with you.

That's not the way the ESV translates it. That's what he said with desire. I desired it. It's his way of saying I desired this so much and so looked forward to this day. And we think, What do you mean? You look forward to this day? This is the day when Judas is going to betray you. This is the day when you will be arrested, mocked, falsely accused, thrashed, sleepless.

How could you possibly look forward to this day? Now, I'll tell you that as I prepared this message and I've never preached as old as I am, I've never preached on this passage before. And I kept thinking over and over again about the last meal I had with my college friends. God gave me such good college friends, godly men, thoughtful men, intelligent men who had wonderful careers, Christians who also loved to play basketball and just loved life.

And they were funny and we loved life together. In the last meal the day before we graduated, we were going to scatter, never see each other again. But we desired with great desire to have that meal which lasted about five or six hours on that night. There is such a thing as desiring something greatly, even though it's going to lead to great sorrow the next day when we scatter, graduate one day.

So it was with Jesus. He knew what his disciples are going to do. He knew that they were going to scatter. He knew that they would betray him. He knew that as soon as he said, I'm going to go to the cross, they would start asking, my goodness, somebody, the betrayer. no, no. I'm the greatest one of them all.

That's who I am. He knew how weak they were, but how he loved them and how he loves us, even when we fail him. That's the point of this last supper. We would know how much he desires to be with us. Although we fail, he wants to celebrate despite the mistakes they were going to make, despite the mistakes that we made, he said.

How earnestly I desire this. One of my friends, Phil Reichard, said Jesus Christ was a man of perfect passions. He cared about the right things in the right way to the right degree. He desired to be with his disciples one more time, one more time to set up a meal that would allow them to look back at his crucifixion and his resurrection with a sign, a symbol that would help them always remember that, and also to look forward to the time when they would have the marriage feast of the LAMB.

At the end of this age, when the Lord comes to strike all evil and all suffering from this life. And that's, of course, what Jesus wants us to do, not just the disciples, then He wants us to look back. He says, Do this in remembrance of me. We do this so we will remember and you will take bread in your hand that represents the body of Christ.

And you will take the fruit of the vine red a little bit like blood to remember the blood of Christ poured out for you. Jesus says This is the last meal men have with you too. All things are new. And what? You remember what I did. And I want you to look forward to what is coming. The Lord's Supper.

There were four cups another time someone will teach you about the four cups. But the cup that counts the most for us today is the cup. There was something new. The cups were old. They were part of the old covenant way, the Passover. And one person compared the shift from the Passover to the Lord's Supper to one of those movies where they have two scenes going simultaneously.

There's a there's a scene and that scene starts to fade and another scene comes on. And that's what's happening here. The Passover is starting to fade away, that the end of the Passover has come and we have something new, something greater, grander, something that supersedes it. By far. We have the Lord's Supper, which points us to the cross.

The people of Israel look to deliverance from Egypt. We look to a deliverance far greater than that, the deliverance from Egypt was the deliverance from bondage physical. The deliverance that Jesus produces is deliverance from bondage. Spiritual. So we have a greater bondage. And we had a lamb that was offered in times past the blood of a lamb. And now we have the one who is called the LAMB of God.

It takes away the sin of the world from almost the very beginning. But we know that a lamb, a lamb cannot take away the sins of a human. It can represent what God would do. But Jesus is the LAMB of God, not truly, but He represents the lamb, the sacrificial lamb. But he is actually a man whose blood took away the sins of the world because, you know, deaths have to be paid in kind.

I don't know who's who here, but I'm sure there's a banker here somewhere. I'm not asking you to raise your hand. I'm just sure there is one, maybe five or ten or 20. And you know, if you owe a banker \$1,000, they're probably not going to accept 25 hoagies and five milkshakes as payment for \$1,000. They probably won't accept 30 home cooked meals because you have to pay.

Connie Conn Maybe you're good with pen and ink and you drew a llama and a duck and an elephant and a rhinoceros, and they're lovely sketches, But if you present them to the to the banker and say, Here, I have four animals sketched for you for \$1,000, unless you're of the family of Da Vinci, you're probably not. It's not going to work like must be paid in like and so the blood of a man is forfeit.

Ever since rebelled against God, the wage of sin is death. And Jesus said with my human blood, but my infinite worth as the God man, I will pay the debt in full like for like we see this in the Lord's Supper. He says, Do this in remembrance of me. Do this remembering what I have done for you. This is my body which has been broken for you.

Now, of course, Christians, you know, have debates about this. Some people say it's Jesus literal physical body. But of course we know that Jesus used symbols. Jesus says, I am the door. We don't look for knobs on his chest. Jesus said, I'm the vine. We don't try to pluck grapes off his arms. We understand Jesus is using a symbol.

But it's not merely a symbol. It's not it's not just an act of of mental cognition to work ourselves up. It's it's not us thinking hard enough about God so that he'll be good to us. We should think hard about God. But there's more. There's more. And that is that God himself is here with us in the elements that the

Holy Spirit is here to empower us to live a life of love and of fruitfulness and of gratitude, which, of course, the Lord desires for us.

Jesus said, even at this meal, that he so greatly desired to share with his friends, behold the hand of him who betrays me is with me at the table where the son of man goes. It is, as it has been determined or destined by God, but woe to the man by whom he is betrayed and the disciples, as I shall already begin to question each other.

And they all ask, Is it me? Is it me? Is it me? And I need to tell you it's a question people can ask. Some perhaps of you could ask. Might I betrayed Jesus? It makes sense if you're the only believer and your family and your family members are mocking you for being so religious. And they say things like, Gosh, he's going through a phase, He'll grow out of it, she'll get out of it, and it makes some sense.

You adopt yourself if perhaps if the only believer at work and you're mocked constantly, or maybe maybe you had a mentor who made a profession of faith and then and then renounce the faith, we can ask that question of ourselves, and of course, even even the disciples that didn't betray Jesus. Start arguing about who was the greatest. Can I just point out that Jesus does not say, guys, don't be silly, don't worry about that stuff.

You'll all be fine. He doesn't say that. What he says is, I've given my life for you. I died for you. I'll rise for you. I am divine. You live in me and you are my branches. He says, Do this in remembrance of me. This will make you strong to endure. He doesn't say Don't worry about enduring. He says, Let me help you endure even through this sign this seal of the faith that we have, that God has given us.

Behold the hand of the one who betrays me is with me. Behold, behold Christ, who died for the disciples who said, Could it possibly be me? Can I just say a word about Judas? Judas acted freely and responsibly, and yet he did exactly what the father intended for him to do. The Book of Acts says it this way When Peter preached about the work of Christ, I'm going to quote from chapter two.

It says that Peter declared Peter, Preach. Jesus was handed over to you by God, set purpose and foreknowledge in you with the help of wicked men, put Him to death by kneeling under the cross. The beauty of the power of God at this moment is that all the foolishness and all the wickedness and the hard heartedness of human beings is something that he permitted and knew and foresaw and also ordained simultaneously.

God is so great that He can allow us to be free agents. And yet and yet we do what we want to do and fulfill God's purposes simultaneously. I have a very homely example, this for you. If you have kids at home and they don't like to go to bed or you remember children being at home and not wanting to go to bed, they often say things like, I don't want to go to bed, but a good parent does not say by response, you are going to bed, let's have a fight about it.

Nor does a good parent say things like, Would you like to go to bed? A good parent says a wise parent says things like, Before you go to bed. Would you like me to read you the story about the bunny or the story about the alligator? And that way the parent for ordains that the child will hear a story before they go to bed and the child freely chooses whether they will hear about a bunny or an alligator.

Now, people can do that in a much lesser way, but God can do it in all things everyone chose to follow or not follow freely. And God ordained all things. Nonetheless, I want to share for great tragedy from these

events. The first great truth is this the substitution area Atonement. The Passover meal represents the fact, the great fact that God has always intended to save his people by a blood sacrifice.

Originally it was a lamb pointing to the lamb of God. God covered the sins of his people in Egypt, and He now covers our sins. When the people of God took on themselves, the covenant of Moses. God came down from Mount Sinai with the tablets and he said, This is the covenant of God and this is what God asked you to do.

Have no other gods before me. Don't take my name in vain, honor the Sabbath and keep it holy murder no one don't steal, don't covet and the rest. And the people said, according to Exodus, Chapter 24, seven and eight, This is the blood of the Covenant. All that the Lord has said we will do. And they did not.

And Moses took blood from a giant basin and after they took the valley through the blood on them and said, This is the blood of the covenant, meaning your life is forfeit if you don't keep this covenant. Your life was forfeit. Jesus came as their substitute, as your substitute. When we rebel, our blood is forfeit and Jesus gave his law blood.

So your blood would be yours again forever. Substitution, Atonement. Number two Forgiveness of sins. You may say that's the same thing, but it's not quite the same thing. Forgiveness of sins means not only that you aren't paying the price, but you are forgiven. It's as if it never happened. This is contrary to the way we think. Not so long ago, I broke a dish.

You know what I thought to myself? What can I do to make up for breaking this dish? Sometimes when I'm playing sports, I make a mistake. The ball, You know, the ball just. I don't know. It just should be in my hands. But it's not. And there goes. Or I should make a play. And I don't make a play.

And there it goes. And what's my first thought? My first thought is I better make a better play to make up for it. We're constantly think I have to make up for that. To make up for it. I have to make up for it. In the beauty of the gospel is you don't have to. You're forgiven. Not only are you atone for, but you don't have to do anything so that the Lord will like you again.

You'll have his favor again. This, of course, means, third, that we have security as believers. Now, a very odd thing happened the last time, not this time, but the previous time I came to the fair city of Birmingham. I said I usually study when I am on the plane, but I've had vertigo and it's hard to read sometimes.

And so I sat down next to a young man who who had cut his finger and I said, How's your finger? And he told me about his finger. And one thing led to another. And before long I found out that he played on the Alabama Crimson Tide Championship team of 2020. I even guessed what position he played. He said, What position do you think I played?

And he didn't look like a tight end or a lineman or anything. And finally I said, Punter, I guess. And he said, Yep. So I'm sure you won some games by great punting. He said, I put the I put the ball at the nine yard line when it really counted one time. Way to go. He will be an NCAA football champion.

The rest of his life. Doesn't matter what else he does the rest of his life. You can't undo it. There's some really sad news about it. I don't I don't know if you've heard, but the the coach of Alabama has retired. I

don't want to make you feel sad, but he won a whole bunch of national championships. And if this year may not be so, but if this year the team is six and six and I'm not trying to scare you, it does not do undo any of those championships.

And if Alabama had nine bad years in a row, the fans would say, Yeah, but you can't take those six championships away from us. The past cannot be undone. That's true. It does not matter how bad the team is in 2025. If they won the championship in 2020, they always want it in 2020. And I'm not talking about football, the work of Christ can never be undone, never.

No matter how we mess up, no matter how dark things get, and no matter what goes on in this church or that church or in America or Europe, it cannot be undone. The work of Christ is finished, and if you trust in Him, you are right with God for ever, period. And that's what we celebrate tonight. We celebrate atonement.

We celebrate forgiveness. We celebrate eternal security with the God who loves us, who knew that as soon as he got done talking about his sacrifice, his disciples would start saying, Yeah, which one of us is the traitor? In one minute later they'd say, Which one of us is the greatest? He knew this, and yet he loves us. He says one more thing.

There's a future. I will not eat with you again until I eat with you in the kingdom. I told you I was thinking about my friends. I'm going to write them a letter to tell them they were in my sermon. I haven't written enough letters lately. One of the beautiful things about my friends is some of us stayed in touch.

Some of us haven't. But, you know, when we get together, we remember things like our favorite professor, the funniest thing that happened and and and we played basketball all the time, and we had a pretty good intramural team. We scored 122 points in 28 minutes. One time. Yeah. The other team was that bad, but we're pretty good and we talk about that.

We decided to help one of our friends do as much scoring as pass. He scored 22 points in 8 minutes. We said, Your turn to score, Tom, and we talk about that. We would have something better to talk about. We're going to talk about the Lord who carried us through the years since we went to college together. We're in talk about the Lord who gave himself as an atonement for us in the Lord forgave our sin.

Lord, who made us secure, carried us over the line all the way to the day when we don't just celebrate with each other, we celebrate with the Lord who's done a work that cannot be undone, that we will celebrate forever. And tonight we get a tiny taste of that together. Just a little taste as the elders and the pastors serve you.

Let's pray for a minute. The father I thank you so much for Passover for Lord's Supper. Thank you for the way you give us these these signs that help us remember what you've done. And thank you for what they mean. Your ineradicable grace. The beauty of our standing with you now and always for these things. We thank you. Now give us happy and humble hearts. Hearts of unity, hearts of praise, Hearts of hope. Hearts turn to you as we participate in these elements today. And we ask it in Jesus name, Amen.