

# The Lord's Supper

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let me just pray for us as we get into this passage. Father, I just feel so inadequate of bringing this passage to us this morning.

I feel my words are just not enough. I feel like there is so much here of your glory and your beauty. Words are not enough. And yet I pray this morning, open our eyes to see you. Open our eyes to see how glorious and honorable and beautiful you are and what you've done for us is. Let us not go away just going through the motions this morning. We want to see you in your name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Donald Trump.

I don't know why suddenly everyone started laughing. We don't normally start a sermon like that. Donald Trump is in many ways a polarizing president.

[ 1 : 14 ] Some people love him. Some people hate him. Social media has got all kinds of things, positive and negative. And what we have seen, regardless of the person, is over the last few months in his presidency, the fractures in American society exposed.

And, you know, one organization decided that the way that they wanted to bring healing into the fractured society was they would put on for 100 days, 100 meals, people from every background, 50, 100, 100, 100, 100, 100.

100 meals on. Because meals are powerful. Meals speak of inclusion, welcome, belonging, reconciliation.

Now, I don't know how many people actually showed up to the meals. Because in our day, just as in Jesus' day, sometimes we don't eat together.

Jews would not eat with non-Jews. The rich would not eat with the poor. The CEO would not eat with the cleaner. Business class doesn't eat with economy class.

[ 2 : 52 ] But food can unite and food can divide. Because meals speak. And today we're looking at one of the most significant meals in the Bible.

And we're following along this series, which is about who is this king that we claim to worship? This King Jesus. And we've seen that Jesus is the one who turns upside down our ways of operating. His glory is the cross. His majesty is in serving. And today we're going to look at the Last Supper. And we're going to look at communion. To see how this reveals Jesus and what it means to be part of his community.

And how he changes everything. So we're going to look at this meal which looks back. And this meal which looks forward.

And in Jesus' days, we come to look at this passage. Have the bulletin with you. Jesus says, Jesus is basically, it says, he comes and he reclines at the table with his disciples.

[ 3 : 59 ] And in Jesus' day, the host of the meal would invite people with special honor to come and eat with him. It's great networking time. You know, who you want to eat with determines who you want to associate with.

And so Jesus actually is hosting this meal. It's not just any meal. It's a Passover meal. And it's the night before Jesus is going to die. It's an emotional time.

And Jesus' last wish is, I want to eat with my disciples. And this Passover, he says, I've eagerly desired to eat this with you before I suffer.

That means, the last wish that I have, I want you desperately to eat this Passover so that you begin to see what this meal.

That Jews for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years, every single year, would get together with their families. And they would look back on a deliverance that God had brought for them.

[ 5 : 04 ] And what would happen? The father of the meal, he would bless the meal. And then a youngest child would say, why is this night any different from any other night?

And the father of the house would begin to tell the story of the exodus. He would say, we were slaves. We were suffering in Egypt.

And then, as we were trapped, God, by his mighty hand, he brought us out. He brought us out of suffering. When we thought we had no future, he came down, he rescued us, and he brought us into freedom.

He brought us into the promised land. And as he kind of told this story, during the meal, there would be different blessings, different thanks to God.

And then they'd read some psalms, and there'd be some flat bread there. And he would take the bread, and he would break it. And he would say, this is the bread of suffering that our fathers in the land of Egypt ate.

[ 6 : 09 ] Whoever's hungry, let him come and eat. Whoever's in need, let him come and conduct this Passover meal. This year we're here. Next year, in the land of Israel.

This year we're slaves. Next year we'll be free people. Every year, that's what they would say. Every year. And notice they didn't say, our ancestors were slaves.

They said, we were slaves. In fact, this meal was not just about their ancestors' story. This was about their story right today.

Because they were still waiting for freedom to come. They still felt that gap. But they were looking back at this identity-forming, shaping moment in the past.

Where God had brought them deliverance. And they were looking forward to when God would bring them a Messiah. who would come and bring the kingdom of freedom that they were looking for.

[ 7 : 12 ] And you know, there'd be four cups of wine, which they would drink. Which would symbolize this freedom. And they'd remember that the prophet Isaiah had said, On this mountain, the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples.

A banquet of aged wine. The best of meats. The finest of wines. Don't we all love a meal? A good meal? They're looking forward to a meal.

Because banquets, if you've been to a banquet, it's about abundance. You don't go and just have a little cracker. It's about satisfying your deepest desires.

If I suddenly say to you, let's go to a buffet now at the Four Seasons. Are you starting to salivate? Okay, steak. Succulent steak. Whatever.

You know, you suddenly begin. Your desires are raised. Because banquets are about belonging. They're about security.

[ 8 : 17 ] They're about satisfying your desires. It's like the ultimate family dinner with the family you actually want to be with. That's the kingdom of God. And he says it's not just for the smart people.

It's not just for the wealthy people. It's not just people who are very religious. It's for all peoples. There will be no business class and economy class then.

North Korea and America will sit down together and eat. Arab and Jew, CEO and cleaner, Man United fan and Liverpool fan will sit down together at the table. Well, I'm not sure about the last one. But anyway. But you can all come. In a society where we fracture everything, this kingdom is a kingdom where you belong. With a host of the meal who is God himself.

That's what they're looking forward to. And I think that's actually deep down what each one of us every single day are craving. It's what every politician promises us when we vote for them.

[ 9 : 20 ] Right? Security. A future. Prosperity. To make us great again. A place to belong. To be proud for ourselves and our families. And every single politician, whether it's from Nelson Mandela to Chairman Mao to Barack Obama to Donald Trump, has appeared as a great hope.

And then left disappointment in their wake. It's why we worry so much about our careers and financial security and about our kids' education, about finding a spouse, about avoiding loneliness. Because we desperately desire the belonging and abundance of the kingdom of God. Do you realize every day you're longing for the kingdom of God? And yet it always seems to be out of reach.

And Jesus says, verse 16, I'm not going to eat this meal again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And fulfilled means this meal today is a little foretaste.

It's a little picture of that meal in the future. It's going to point forward to that reality. And I'm going to take you there. So the meal of the Passover looks back and it looks forward.

[ 10 : 33 ] But I want to look at the king who reshapes the meal. Because what Jesus does next, we kind of don't get this because, you know, we kind of, if you've been in church a while, we know

communion and we know these kind of things.

But for them back then, what Jesus does next is totally shocking. He picks up the bread and he breaks it. And all the disciples are expecting him to say, okay, this is the bread of suffering. And he says, he changes it. He says, this bread, this is my body, which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. Take it. This bread is not to remember the exodus in the past in Egypt into the promised land.

There is a new story which I'm writing right today. This is a new bread. There's a new deliverance that you're going to look back on and look forward to. And the only way you're going to get to that kingdom is through me.

[11:36] I'm not going to eat this bread again. I'm not going to drink this wine again because I'm going to forge ahead a way that you can come and sit at this table. And so when he says, this is my body given for you, he says, I'm giving you something.

The way to that kingdom that our hearts are craving isn't through getting a better political system or through distributing wealth better with communism or capitalism. He doesn't say your main problem is education, that you need some more morals, so I'll give you some morals, some ethical teaching. He says, I'm the king of my kingdom and you are slaves. You are slaves and the only way you can eat at my table is if I give myself for you.

I'm the only way to satisfy the deepest desires of your heart. You see, do you see that little word? It says, I give myself for you.

Do you see that word for? That word for means on behalf of you, in your place. I am given instead of you. Because if you think you can make this meal, this banquet, the desires of your heart by yourself, you're really wrong.

[12:52] Because you know what the Bible story is? The Bible story and your story and my story says the reason we don't enjoy that kingdom is because throughout our lives, we've been making poor food choices.

Do you know that? It's because you've been choosing to sit with somebody else's host of the meal and not God himself. Because you know Adam and Eve? What happens? Adam and Eve, God tells Adam and Eve, he says, here, I'm offering you a meal, tree of life.

And they say, oh, I prefer the other one, tree of knowledge and good and evil. I want to be independent. I want to have things by myself. I don't want you. I don't want to sit at your table, God. And so we dishonor God and turn away from him.

Mount Sinai, God gives 10 commandments. And he calls Moses and 70 elders to go up and see him. And do you know what happens after he gives the 10 commandments? Most of us miss this. It says they went up and they saw God and they ate and drank. Do you know God hosted a meal? And he said, I want to host you. And do you know the very next thing they go and do?

[14:03] They go down the mountain and they say, oh, Moses is being a little wild. We've got to build a golden calf. We've got to make an idol.

And then do you know what it says? It says, and they sat down and they ate and drank and they played together. And basically what it means is they decided, oh, God made a good meal but actually we want to have a different meal by ourselves doing our thing so we indulge.

We get instant gratification for myself. Indulge myself with what I want. Let's comfort eat. Let's do sexual immorality, drinking, all the kind of things because I want to sit at a different table because I want to exalt myself.

I don't want to exalt the king. I don't want to honor him. I'm going to have a different meal. And you know, when God says, sees these throughout scripture, do you know what he says?

He says, if you honor me, you will receive honor. But if you dishonor me and turn to another table, do you know what you experience? You experience shame.

[15:06] You experience shame. Adam and Eve, shame. The people of God, shame comes on you because we were made for the glory that comes from God and to honor him.

And when we turn away and find honor in any other things, what we try and do, we get shamed and then we try and cover over our shame.

We try to boost our own egos up. Trying to make ourselves feel better about ourselves. And when we do that, we end up shaming other people. Because do you know what humanity's meal table looks like?

In Jesus' day, it looked like this. Religious people keeping in their own little circle and then a sinful, shamed woman who'd made some poor choice in her life comes along and they're like, you're not going to sit at my meal table.

Crowds come along. They're filled with hatred because they see this corrupt tax official called Zacchaeus. And they're like, Jesus, ignore him.

[16:11] Don't worry about him. Worry about me. They wouldn't forgive or reach out to him. But do you know what Jesus does to both that woman and Zacchaeus? He says, Zach, come down.

I want to grab dinner with you. Because the way Jesus does meals is different from the way we do. Because we shame other people to make ourselves feel greater than us.

You know, isn't that the way families and offices in Hong Kong work? You know, a teenage girl becomes pregnant through a poor choice and what happens as a result, the family feels shame. They can't tell their relatives so they end up excluding the girl and pushing her out. They punish her for bringing shame on the family. You know, I think we all do this.

This is humanity's meal table. I remember when I was at secondary school, I was not, there was a kid there. He was socially awkward.

[17:12] And everyone made fun of him. No one wanted to befriend him. And I knew that I should go out and befriend him. But what I did, I discovered that all my friends were laughing at him.

And so I joined in with laughing at him. Because what I saw was I wanted to belong to this community. And if it meant that I would shame the other guy, then I would do that.

Do you ever laugh at people's jokes when they're laughing at someone? Do you ever gossip to make yourself feel better? So there's this division in society in your offices.

That's what we do in our little community in our meal table. And when Jesus says, this is my body given for you, he's saying, I hate the way that your meal table works.

I don't accept that at my table. In fact, I'll remove from my presence anyone of us who is self-glory seeking because we want to boost ourselves up to cover our shame.

[18:24] You can't sit at my table. And God made a way for the people, a temporary way in the Old Testament for the people to approach God.

Once a year, the Day of Atonement, two goats would be brought to stand in the place of the people. And the priest would kill one goat and the blood would cover over the shame of the people.

And then he'd take, he would take God's anger at them and then he'd take another goat. And what he'd do with the other goat, he would lay his hands on them and he'd confess all the shameful things the people had done.

And then they'd release the goat and the goat would be excluded out of the camp, out on the side, taking all the shame away. He was substituted for the people.

And Jesus says, I am your substitute. I am that goat who your sin, your shame, the way that we have tried to honor ourselves and rejected other people, it was put onto him.

[19:30] It was put onto him. He pushed out and excluded on the cross. God's anger at our sin was placed on him on your behalf.

He was excluded. He was shamed on the cross, humiliated, so that we could be accepted back to his table. Amen. You know, generals, people in great places of honor, when you're a soldier, when an army goes out, a general normally stays at the back and just sends out his troops.

And if they die and they suffer and they're in the midst of the battlefield, the general then just sends more troops until finally all the ammunition of the enemy is used up and then the general comes in and says, wow, what a great victory I have won.

but Jesus comes himself. He comes himself. He leads the battle lines where no one else would for you, for you, for you.

Sometimes we have the impression that God the Father is kind of angry at us and Jesus is kind of just protecting us, you know, from Jesus. Okay, try not to hurt them too much.

[20:55] But the next verse says this, verse 22. The Son of Man goes as it's been determined. The Son of Man goes as it's been determined.

You know, sometimes bad stuff happens in our lives and we wonder, is God trying to punish me? Ever felt like that? Verse 22 is a powerful verse because it says, this is a grammar form.

Okay, I'm going to give you grammar. Grammar, which says, it's called a divine passive, which means, it's Bible speak for saying, the whole Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, were all sitting around a meal table plotting and planning how they could take you and me out

of this place of exclusion, not being at his meal table, and he said, how can I bring you to myself so you can enjoy the fellowship that we have?

And the only way they could do that was if that goat, if Christ came for you and took that exclusion, he was excluded so you never have to be.

So God will never punish you if you turn to him because he's already taken the punishment on himself. That's how much God desires you to eat at his table.

[ 22 : 13 ] that's the king that we remember at communion for you. How are we doing? Okay, third thing.

So we've seen the meal, it looks back and it looks forward. When Christ comes, he said, actually this meal is all about me. It's all about what I've done. There's a new time to look back on and a new thing to look forward to.

third thing. The disciples right in the midst of this emotional kind of tear-jerking moment where Jesus is talking about the suffering on the cross.

It's like the closing speech of the movie where he's describing his sacrifice for them. You can hear the violins in the background. And the disciples are moved and touched by what Jesus is going to do for them.

Are they? Look in verse 24. What do they do next? They're arguing. A dispute arose among them as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest.

[ 23 : 17 ] And they're going, okay, if Jesus is the king of God's kingdom, I want to make sure I'm on the top table. And Peter's going, well, I should be there because I've walked on water. And, you know, Philip's going, yeah, but you fell in.

And they're kind of, they're fighting against each other and totally wrapped up in themselves.

They've missed everything Jesus has said. And what are they trying to do?

They're trying to elevate themselves like everybody else in society. And I love this. What does Jesus do? Jesus doesn't go, you stupid, insensitive idiots.

I'm having a moment here and I just need a bit of support. He doesn't say that. He says, he draws this distinction between the way everyone else works and the way he works.

He says, the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them. That means, in the world, if you're the leader, you show your power and your boss by telling people what to do, by making sure you're in control of everything.

[ 24 : 25 ] That's what it means. Use force if necessary. Okay? Sometimes that may be your boss. But those in authority are called benefactors. And he says, okay, there's another way people try and control and boost their ego.

They either try and control things or they try and show how generous they are to everyone so that you think, oh, aren't they amazing? You know, in ancient Rome, every building that was built was built by a benefactor, a rich person who donated money and then made sure that they had their name on a plaque just to show how generous we were.

We do that in Hong Kong as well. I mean, we even have one on the wall here. Now, now, I'm not questioning the motivation of her, but actually, what Jesus is saying is often in our society, the way that we do that is we try and, you know, TVB, have you seen on TVB, they have, there's charity donations and they bring the big check and they show, okay, look how great I am and then you put your name on there and we try and get honor in our society.

And Jesus says, that's the way other people do it but not so with you. But not so with you. You see, society's all about boosting ourselves up, trying to boost our own image because we feel shamed and we try and make ourselves high.

But Jesus says, I'm reshaping you in my image, not the image of our society around. I'm going to change the honor so that you live for my honor and you live for honor in my eyes, not in honor of the eyes of the people around you.

[ 26 : 02 ] You see, we say, I'm not respected by my boss enough. He's not seeing my full potential. I should be more elevated than I am. And you've been working for six months in the company.

And Jesus says, yeah, that's how other people around you will think. But not so with you,

Watermark. The greatest among you will become as the youngest. We lash out angrily at our kids when they disrespect us and don't do what we want them to.

Because we desperately want to gain control. We want to be respected even by our kids. But Jesus says, anger is not so with you because you belong to me.

And we go, yeah, but how can I do that? Like, because that's natural for me to want to boost myself. It's natural for me to want these things because we're natural self-glory junkies. And Jesus doesn't say, okay, here's the three rules that you need to stop being, thinking of yourself so much.

He says, here's how you get reshaped. Look at me. Remember me. The one who reclines at the table in the place of honor who has every right to be served is me.

[ 27 : 14 ] But I am among you as one who serves. when we take communion, we're looking again at who Jesus is. We're saying, because we're all like those disciples, we constantly struggle.

We're trying to get honor from everyone else's eyes. And then we come to church and we just take communion and we don't realize that one of the major reasons we don't share the gospel, people, one of the major reasons why we struggle to share our faith is because we don't want to be shamed by other people because we crave their honor in their eyes.

And we need to take communion regularly to remind ourselves of a king who was willing to be shamed for us so that he might honor us because the king has served us.

I don't know if you imagine, you imagine Xi Jinping hears about a waiter who has been trying to discredit his regime.

Xi Jinping decides to come down to the restaurant with his troops to pay a visit to this guy. Probably wouldn't happen but he'd just send the people in front. And he comes down and he sees this waiter in front of him who's been trying to oppose him.

[ 28 : 46 ] Imagine what the waiter feels at that moment when he sees Xi Jinping, a man of huge honor, authority, and power in front of him. How would you feel? Probably terror if you know that you've actually been trying to fight against him.

And what would happen if she comes in and says, okay, Walter, let's call him Walter the waiter, Walter, Walter, sit down. I'm going to serve you.

In fact, I prepared an amazing banquet for you. In fact, I did it myself. I've spent the last 10 days trying to prepare this for you. What's the waiter going to be thinking?

You're probably going to poison me or something. And if at the end of the meal, and it's an incredible meal, you know, and he's there, he's serving him, and then he says, and I want you to come for me to dinner every week.

What's going on in that waiter's mind? His perception of the king, the emperor, the president, whatever, has got to change.

[ 30 : 01 ] But I think what we'd be thinking is that's not the way things work. That's just unrealistic. It doesn't work in the world like that because people who've got power, they don't come down and think and serve you. What they do is they serve themselves and they use you to get what they want.

Isn't that how many bosses work? But Jesus is saying, yeah, that's how honor works in the world, but that's not how honor works in my kingdom. Because I'm a different kind of king, I come and serve.

Xi Jinping may have the authority to govern a nation. He may have the authority to imprison you or execute you, but I have more authority than he has. I hold galaxies in my hands, I have the power of life and death over every single person, including the greatest presidents.

I'm in control of history from the first to the last. If you go from the end of the universe to the other end, billions of years, millions of light years, that's just a step for me.

And yet I know every hair on your head. And yet I know you. And yet I've come to serve you personally.

[ 31 : 10 ] There is no world leader who will go and do that for you. There is only one who will. That is Jesus Christ, the king of an alternative kingdom.

And he honors you. Did you get that? He honors you because if you read, you read down and he says to his disciples, I'm assigning you.

His disciples who have just been all about themselves, who are just so like us, he says, I'm assigning you, I'm giving you a kingdom what my father gave me so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel.

What he's saying is we sometimes think Jesus died just to forgive us our sins. He did, but he did more than that. He died to take your shame and to give you honor at his table so that you would see that he is the one that you are to honor as the host in all of your life.

No matter what other people think about you. You see, when he steps down, if Xi Jinping did that and stepped down and served someone who was a rebel, what do you think the troops around would think about him? Would he go up or down in their estimation?

[ 32 : 33 ] He'd go down, right? Because they're thinking you should be executing this guy. But Jesus comes down and he takes the shame of everyone else around him. He takes the shame and he removes it so you don't have to live in shame but he brings you to honor at his table.

That's where he's taking you. That's what he's done for you. At communion, we look back to what he's done and we look forward to where he's going. Jesus' command.

Someone once said this. Jesus' command to repent could be paraphrased. Stop trying to accrue honor through that group and join my group to obtain the glory of God's kingdom.

freedom. Because if that waiter was criticized for not doing something well by his boss or he felt like he didn't get the respect that he deserved at his work, he could turn around and that would sting but he could turn around and say, yeah, but I'm having dinner with the president.

So, that's just small. When his kids disobeyed and refused to listen to his command and he was tempted to get angry, and lash out at them, he could say, yeah, but I'm having dinner with the president.

[ 33 : 54 ] I don't need to crave my kids' approval or approval from other people. I don't need that because I've got a meal with the president. And Jesus is not just like an ordinary president.

He's the king of the universe and he invites you to eat with him. That's where he's taking you. So, do you see, when we come to this meal, we have a different honor system with a different king which means this.

When we look back at the cross, we realize all the different ways I'm trying to, my shame in life, the things I've done wrong, I come to communion and I realize he did it for me.

He's taken it. Like that goat, it's gone. I don't have to live in shame. But I realize that where I'm living for my own honor and my own glory, I need to repent and say, man, I don't want to eat at the table of shame.

I want to eat at the table of your honor where actually I receive honor because you are getting honor. I live for your eyes only. When we take communion then as a community, we are to then be a little picture where those divisions in society are broken down where you can come regardless of whether society says you are great or society says you are small.

[ 35 : 21 ] Whether you feel like you've done enough or you feel like you've never done enough. Whether you feel like you're a good enough Christian or you're not a good enough Christian. You can come because he invites you because he did it for you.

And so we are meant to be as a community a little glimpse of the kingdom of God that he's creating. It's the last thing. We look back, Passover, look back to slavery and freedom. Christ says, I am now the one who gives you from the slavery to your shame, the slavery and brings you to freedom just like Yiddish ed.

we see the king who brings us together in this new family. Last thing I want to share. There is a challenge when we come to communion.

A challenge and encouragement. Here's the challenge. Communion is really serious because in 1 Corinthians 11 Paul says, some of you have become judgmental.

[ 36 : 33 ] Some of you have been creating divisions, little cliques, gossiping, backbiting against other people in the church. You've been forming the rich over here, the poor over here. And what he says is, you're making a mockery of what Jesus has done for you.

You're not taking communion when you hold on to trying to self-righteously look down on other people. You come with judgmentalism, with unforgiveness, with bitterness in your heart.

Some of us, we feel like we've been disrespected, we've been hurt. There are things which have gone on where we have felt the anger inside of us and we have not forgiven other people.

And we don't even want to. God says to us, don't take communion until you come to me. Because what I want to do in your heart is I want you to get onto that journey.

And it's a journey of forgiveness. Maybe it's your spouse, maybe it's a boss, maybe it's your parents. But first of all, come and remember him. Remember what he's done for you.

[ 37 : 48 ] Remember how he honored, oh, he's got the greatest glory and honor. He came and died for you to honor you. Remember him. Let that melt your heart to bring forgiveness.

