

The New Covenant meal

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Preacher: Mark Rayfield

[0:00] Well, welcome all members and friends of Calvary Church Brighton and all who are listening further afield, whether you're in Southampton or Singapore.

! I hope you'll be blessed by this online service. I am Mark Rayfield, a member of this fellowship since 2004, and I send you my love in Christ Jesus.

It is a privilege and responsibility to serve the Lord in this way. Firstly, I would like to give a word of encouragement from Daniel.

Recently, I have been studying the book of Daniel, and I'd like to share something that has helped me at this time. In chapter 2, Daniel interprets the dream Nebuchadnezzar has had of a statue made of gold, silver, bronze, iron and clay, being hit and smashed by a rock.

This statue comes tumbling down. This is a picture of his empire, the Babylonian one, and the ones that will follow, the Medio-Persian, Greek and Roman.

[1:16] Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, which was militarily dominant and culturally magnificent, would fall, as well as the other powerful kingdoms.

In verse 35, Daniel states that the wind will sweep them away without a trace. Wow.

David, sorry, Daniel, then goes on to tell the king that God will set up his kingdom, God's, which will be one that endures everlasting.

It will never be destroyed. It will crush all other kingdoms. The rock which breaks up the statue. This is a great encouragement for us, the church, as we think about the empire's regimes, the strong men in our world.

Putin in Russia, Xi in China, the empires of the past, such as the British Empire. Though they be powerful and most tyrannical, they have all fallen, or they will fall.

[2:30] And this also applies to ourselves. One day our career will end. Perhaps it's your ministry, it will end. Our houses will be lived in by others.

There's always an end to everything. Except God's kingdom. And if you are a part of that this evening, you are a member of the best kingdom in the world.

One that will never be destroyed. One that will endure forever. Think about that. There will never be an after that. I hope that encourages you this evening.

This links with the kingdom theme we have been looking at in Matthew. As Christ has come to establish his throne. And he is that mighty rock or living stone which has dominion over all others. And is now presently building his kingdom, which one day will be fully realized when he comes back. And we are seated in heavenly places, eating the divine banquet with the King of Kings.

[3:41] What a vision. And tonight we build on Christ's foundation. Tonight we are doing just that. Building another stone on the enduring kingdom.

Be encouraged. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you this evening that we, if we are Christians, are a part of an enduring, everlasting kingdom.

One that will never end. We look to the world. We look at the newspapers. Perhaps we watch television. And we see strong men. Strong countries.

That seem to have a lot of power. But we know that they will come to an end. And we know that everything in life has a finality.

There is brevity in life. There is only one permanent thing. And that is your kingdom. And we are in such a privileged place this evening.

[4:49] Because we, if we are Christians, we can call ourselves your children, a part of your kingdom, following the King, the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you so much for coming to earth, for dying for us, for paying that great price to set us free.

Thank you for the life which you've given us. Thank you that we have security, identity, hope through Christ. We want to praise and magnify you tonight, Lord Jesus.

Lord, please forgive us again. Lord, we look at our lives. And who can say that we have served you wholeheartedly this week? Lord, we bring to you our cares and concerns, our worries.

Perhaps our besetting sins. And we ask you, the Lord of all compassion, to forgive us. Thank you that you promise that you will remember our sins no more.

As far as the east is from the west, so far have I removed your transgressions. Lord, we praise you for the costly price that you paid for us.

[6:07] And we pray that you would edify us, build us up today. Lord, we come to you in different states. Perhaps we're tired on the sofa tonight. Perhaps we feel dismayed, rejected.

Perhaps we feel lonely. Whatever our state, Lord, even if we are happy and elated, we come to you, the rock, the pillar, the bread of life.

And Lord, we come to find rest. We come to feed on you. We come to look to you. Please bless our meeting. Lord, we bring our concerns to you now.

Please answer our prayers, Lord, we pray.

We particularly pray for Anya's mother in the Ukraine. It was so upsetting to hear what happened to her. Lord, thank you that you care for the widow and the vulnerable.

[7:18] Thank you that it seems as though she's much better now. Oh, Lord. Please be with our family.

Please help Anya in particular at this time. Please help her to know how to help her mother. And we pray for her mother, Lord, that she would know your help and strength at this difficult time as she's fallen and is perhaps injured.

And we pray that there will be help. We pray for people to look out for Anya's mother. Lord, she is vulnerable. Please have mercy on her.

We thank you that she is your child. And we can see these prayers and know that you are a God that not only answers prayer here in Brighton, but also in the Ukraine.

Oh, Lord. Please answer our prayers in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Well, our first song is I Surrender All by Judson W. Van Deventner.

[8:28] He was born in Michigan in the 1800s in the USA. He then went to live in Sharon, Pennsylvania, where our friends John and Lizzie live.

If they're watching, hello to you from across the pond. And he was a talented arts teacher, apparently. And recognizing his talent for the ministry, friends urged him to give up teaching and become an evangelist.

Van Deventner wavered for five years between becoming a recognized artist or devoting himself to Christian ministry. Finally, he surrendered his life to Christian service and wrote this text.

Someone else put the music to it. He says, All to Jesus I surrender. Humbly at his feet I bow.

Worldly pleasures all forsaken. Take me, Jesus. Take me now. He gave his life, his all to Jesus.

And may we sing this song and surrender our lives to the King of Kings, whatever that looks like in our context.

[9:46] All to Jesus I surrender. All to him I freely give.

I will ever love and trust him. In his presence daily live. I surrender all.

I surrender all. All to thee, my blessed Savior. I surrender all.

All to thee, my blessed Savior. All to Jesus I surrender. Humbly at his feet I bow.

Worldly pleasures all forsaken. Take me, Jesus. Take me now. I surrender all.

[10:45] All to thee, my blessed Savior.

I surrender all. All to Jesus I surrender. Make me Savior, holy thine.

Let me feel the Holy Spirit. Truly know that thou art mine. I surrender all.

I surrender all. All to thee, my blessed Savior.

I surrender all. I surrender all. All to Jesus I surrender. Lord, I give myself to thee.

[11:46] Fill me with thy love and power. Let thy blessing fall on me. I surrender all.

All to thee, my blessed Savior.

I surrender all. All to Jesus I surrender. Now I feel the sacred flame.

Oh, the joy of full salvation. Glory, glory to his name. I surrender all.

I surrender all. All to thee, my blessed Savior.

[12:49] I surrender all. Now I would like to read from Jeremiah 31, chapter 31, if you have your Bible there.

And verse 31 to 34, the new covenant prophesied. Jeremiah says this. The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hands to lead them out of Egypt.

Because they broke my covenant. Though I was a husband to them, declares the Lord. This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel.

After that time, declares the Lord. I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their gods and they will be my people.

[14:02] No longer will a man teach his neighbor or a man his brother saying, know the Lord. Because they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord.

Brothers and sisters, this prophecy was fulfilled when Christ came and died for us. Now, this new covenant meal we're thinking about tonight is for all people, not just the Jewish nation.

For they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest. This is the new covenant, brothers and sisters, that we are a part of this evening. A better covenant through Christ, the sacrificial lamb. We'll be thinking about that later. Our next song is called Because He Lives by Bill Gaither.

This was written in 1971. And Bill, presumably, is speaking here. He says that it was written in the midst of social upheaval, threats of war and betrayals of national and personal trust.

[15:23] Perhaps you were alive at that time. It was into this world at such time that we were bringing our third little baby. Assassinations, drug traffic and war, probably the Vietnam War, monopolized the headlines.

It was in the midst of this kind of uncertainty that the assurance of the lordship of the risen Christ blew across our troubled minds like a cooling breeze in the parched desert.

Holding our tiny son in our arms, we were able to write. How sweet to hold our newborn baby and feel the pride and joy he gives.

But greater still the calm assurance this child can face on certain days because he lives. Christ lives. What about the lordship of Christ?

I love singing this boy as a young Christian in North Wales when I came to faith on Christian camps. And the lord used this song, I believe, in my conversion.

[16:33] So let us sing together. God sent his son. They called him Jesus.

He came to love. Heal and forgive. He lived and died. To buy my pardon.

An empty grave is there to prove my saviour lives. Because he lives, I can face tomorrow.

Because he lives, all fear is gone. Because I know, I know he holds the future.

And life is worth the living just because he lives. How sweet to hold a newborn baby.

[17:41] And feel the joy he gives. And feel the pride and joy he gives.

But greater still the calm assurance this child can face on certain days.

Because he lives, because he lives. Because he lives. Because he lives. Because he lives. I can face tomorrow. Because he lives. Because he lives All fear is gone Because I know, I know He holds the future And life is worth the living Just because he lives And then one day I'll cross the river I'll fight life's fight No war with pain And then as death Gives way to victory I'll see the lights of glory And I'll know he lives Because he lives

I can face tomorrow Because he lives All fear is gone Because I know, I know He holds the future And life is worth the living Just because he lives So last week Ben helpfully led us In Matthew's Gospel And he looked at the life of Judas Iscariot The betrayer And I do recommend that sermon If you haven't watched it, please Listen to it Ben gave some points He said he did it for money For self-preservation He suggested he was disillusioned by Christ

And he was resentful And now we're in the same text As last week It's just a small section A few verses But it continues the narrative Of the Lord's Supper His Last Supper In Matthew 26 Verses 26 to 30 So if you have a Bible there Or a tablet Device Please open it And we're going to read The text Matthew 26 26 to 30 While they were eating Jesus took bread And gave thanks And broke it And gave it to his disciples Saying Take and eat This is my body Then he took the cup Gave thanks And offered it to them Saying Drink from it

All of you This is my blood Of the covenant Which is poured out For many For the forgiveness Of sins I tell you I will not drink Of this fruit Of the vine From now on Until that day When I drink it And you With you In my father's kingdom When they had sung Of him They went out To the Mount Of Olives May the Lord bless His word to us Tonight Let's pray once again Lord we thank you For your words We thank you For this series In Matthew That has helped us Understand Things about your kingdom Your ways The person Who you are And once again We need your help For speaker and listener To understand Your gospel To understand your ministry To understand

[22:09] The Lord's Supper What it really means Help us Lords To have eyes Of faith And to see These things Though we see At a distance Lord May they be Close to us And may they be Real to us This evening Lord We pray In Jesus name Amen If you were To be executed Tomorrow And could choose One dish To eat Before your death What would it be This was the case For anyone On death row In Britain Before capital Punishment Was abolished Would it be A succulent Roast beef meal With all the trimmings Accompanied by a Hearty ale Perhaps something More Mediterranean An authentic Italian beef Lasagna With a good Quality bottle Of Chianti Or even Spicy chicken Fajitas With guacamole And sour cream

Well the Lord Jesus Christ Before his death Was looking Forwards To roast lamb With his friends But instead Of eating This meal He eagerly Desired It says He gave it away To ones That would Desert him And betray Him the next day What remarkable Love If it hadn't Been for Covid-19 We would have Celebrated The Lord's Supper Together I estimate About nine Or ten Times Remembering The Lord's Death One last Time Before he Comes Do you Miss the Last supper Do you Miss coming Here and Partaking Of it The Salvation Army They never Commemorate it Catholics Think that The bread And the Wine Turn into Christ's Real Body And flesh I think That's crazy Because if So they Would actually Taste His blood And taste His flesh Which is Not so When they Eat The Eucharist Lutherans Believe In the What we Call the Consubstantiation But we Believe it As a Memorial A Remembrance Meal And J.C. Ryle States This Talking About the Church He says How To To To To To Our supper is also recorded in the Synoptic Gospels in Luke 22 and Mark 14.

Similar accounts to which we have read, but they are a bit different. Paul also uses Jesus' words here in Matthew when he disciplines the church in Corinth for misusing the supper.

[25:31] So what's it all about? Well, I've got six points, all beginning with R, so you should be able to remember them. First one is remember. Yes, the Last Supper is all about remembering the Passover at that time, which was what Jesus and his disciples were celebrating in verse 17, the text which Ben read last week.

It was when the Israelites remembered their history, how they had been brought out of Egypt by an outstretched hand and miraculously being saved through the sea.

It was not their own doing, but of God's. And they were commanded to tell their children this history. On the 14th day of the first month, every year, this was an ordinance, a lasting ordinance.

God said, celebrate this. Remember this. So the generations would not forget. Yet they did. As we're reading in Jeremiah, they were punished for that because they forgot Yahweh.

Having this yearly feast remembered, helped them remember their roots as a nation. Similarly, we remember Christ coming to earth each year on the 25th of December.

[27:00] Normally, we have a meal together as families, friends. We go to church. We hear the Christmas story, how Christ entered the world. Easter is also another example.

We have some really good traditions as Christians that help us to remember what our Christian faith is, what we believe. Sadly, in our nation, many do not do these anymore and hence have forgotten the real meaning of them.

That's why they do not remember them. Easter is all about bunnies. Christmas is about Santa Claus and presents, sadly. Christmas is about Santa Claus. Like Israel, forgot the meaning of these festivals, so have we.

So the Passover was a good, healthy tradition. Likewise for us, the new Passover meal, the breaking of bread, which we haven't done for a long time.

This new covenant meal helps us to remember Christ's atoning death. It's all about remembrance. What are you doing for Passover this year, John?

[28:10] I'm going to mum's in Bethany. Brother Ben is coming down from Nazareth, looking forward to seeing them and eating the celebration together. I'm going to get the goat from Uncle Zebedee's farm.

Ah, can't wait. Perhaps these were some of the conversations they had at that time. Rings a bell? Ben said last week that the city, Jerusalem, must have been full of people making preparations for this Passover meal.

A hive activity. Lambs needed to be culled. People traveling to and fro. Turkeys need to be prepared. Bread was made hastily.

Vegetables need trimming. Families and vices from around the country. Coming together, remembering. Brothers and sisters, this last supper, this new covenant meal is all about remembrance.

We are a forgetful people. Well, I am. We need to be reminded about our salvation. Do this in remembrance of me, it says in Luke's Gospel.

[29:19] Christ is at the epicenter, the center point of the Bible. Everything points to him. The cross is pivotal.

We should not forget it. If we leave him out, if we leave that wondrous cross, him dying for me, we might fall away.

As we were looking at last week. That's why we partake, to remember who Christ is. This is our new covenant Passover meal.

And we ought to look back and remember our salvation, friends. Secondly, represents. This meal also represents Christ's body.

In verse 26 from our text. It says, Jesus says, He took bread, gave thanks and broke it to his disciples saying, Take and eat.

[30:22] This is my body. The disciples would have been familiar with the Jewish Passover recital. There was a special formula.

The children would say, What is this? And the adults would reply, This is the body of the lamb, which our fathers ate in Egypt.

So, this is my body. Would have resounded similarly to what they would have said all those years ago, during this meal. Interestingly, the Hebrew language has no term for the word to signify or to denote.

And here, the Greek naturally takes the impress of the Hebrew. It is my body means it signifies. It represents my body.

This is used throughout scripture. Also, Matthew 8.38. It says, The field is the world.

[31:30] The field represents the world. In Daniel 7.20. The ten horns are ten kings. These ten horns represent ten kings.

This is figurative language, brothers and sisters. The church has misused this over the centuries.

This is my body means this represents my body, of which we eat.

And the blood represents. The wine represents his blood. In addition, in John's gospel, as we know, Jesus refers to himself as the door, the vine, the bread of life.

These terms are figures of speech. They are clearly not literal ones. So, the Lord's Supper is about remembrance. It's about represent.

And it's about rescue, number three. Communion is all about a massive rescue operation. The Jews were rescued by painting blood on their doorposts during the Passover.

[32:42] The lamb was substituted for their firstborn. They were delivered from death, brought out of oppression under the Egyptians. We, too, have been rescued from death.

Tonight, if you're a Christian, we've been rescued from darkness and evil and sin by Christ's blood. He poured it out for us on the cross. A spear went into his body and blood flowed liberally from his

side.

He was emptied of life for you and for me. What horrific, costly rescue. I was in Hive, Hampshire, recently, where my, I think it was my great-grandfather, tried to make it on board for the Titanic. And thankfully, he wasn't successful. Otherwise, I would not be here. And there was a plaque I read about a Navy Commodore called Edwin, sorry, Edwin Unwin.

And he was in the First World War. He received a Victoria Cross for his gallantry. He was on a ship called the SS River Clyde. I think it's called a collier.

[33:53] And he was in Gallapoli, which I think is Turkey, but it sounds Italian. And he was trying to get his troops on land. And it says this, I think it says this on the plaque.

While in SS River Clyde, which is a ship, observing that the lighters, I don't know what they are, which were to form the bridge to the shore, had broken adrift, Commander Unwin left the ship and under a murderous fire attempted to get the lighters into position.

He worked on until suffering from the effects of cold and immersion. He was obliged to return to the ship where he was wrapped up in blankets. Having in some degree recovered, he returned to his work against the doctor's order and completed it.

He was later attended by the doctor for three abrasions caused by bullets, after which he once more left the ship, this time in a lifeboat, to save some wounded men who were lying in shallow water near the beach.

He continued at this heroic labour under continuous fire until forced to stop through physical exhaustion. Well, what gallantry by this man.

[35:12] And we know there are many other men, perhaps who we don't even know, that did similar things, feats that will never be remembered. But to put it into context, Christ's rescue is much more mightier than Edwin's.

Christ died to rescue humanity. Not just a few troops, not just the Jews, but ones from every nation. As I read in Jeremiah 31, 34. Let me read that again. No longer will a man teach his neighbour or a man his brother saying, know the Lord, because they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord.

They will all know me. The Lord's Supper is about remembrance. It's about representing.

It's about rescuing. And it's about rightly, doing it rightly. We ought to do this in a way, in the right way, not like the Corinthians in chapter 11.

[36:25] If you read that chapter, feel free to read it at your leisure. We see that the church was abusing this meal, using it for selfish gain.

And Paul rightly corrects the Corinthians. Some were getting drunk, drinking too much wine. Some were getting hungry. Some stuffing their faces.

It seems as though they were eating their own meals at the communion table. And Paul tells them sharply, if they want to do that, go home.

Don't do it in the church of God. At that time, apparently there was a famine in the land. So poor people had no protection of the rich houses.

They were the have-nots, the marginals. This is completely opposite to what the Lord's Supper should be about. It's about Christ laying down his life sacrificially for his chosen ones.

[37:26] It's selfishness. Selflessness, sorry. So we too should examine our own hearts before we eat this supper.

Our attitudes and actions towards others constant with the self-giving attitude and actions of Christ. We need to do this rightly.

We need to examine ourselves, as Paul says, before we eat of the bread and the wine. And we shouldn't partake if there is any sin in us. And we are living an ungodly life.

Fifthly, revive. This meal revives our faith in Christ and strengthens us. We do get weak. Our faith can get weak.

This supper is a tangible expression of our faith. We can see the bread, taste it, feel it. We remember his body. When we see the fruit juice or the wine, we tangibly drink.

[38:33] We see it. We remember his blood spilt for us. This strengthens our faith, brothers and sisters. Baptism, another ordinance, is one single event where we declare our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

publicly.

The water symbolizes the cleansing effect Jesus has had on us, the believer. For the communion table, we partake of this normally at Calvary twice every month.

It reminds the church of the gospel. The good news of Jesus coming to save humanity. It's a reviving work, a strengthening work.

It's needed to help us persevere in the Christian faith. That's why it's so important that we get back to doing it again. That would be great, wouldn't it?

Wouldn't it be great when we actually partake of it together again? I think it will be very sweet, very meaningful. I am looking forward to that time where we can break bread again as brothers and sisters together as one family.

[39:41] And lastly, return. This meal points to Christ's return. In verse 29, it says, When we take the cup, we know that it's one last time before we shall be gathered together in the redeemed kingdom.

This is a beautiful picture. It gives us hope for the future. For the Lamb Christ, that sacrificial Lamb, will be right there in the center, presiding for us.

We will drink heavenly wine together. Better than any Beaujolais, Rioja, Chateau Neuf-de-Pape. But Christ, presumably, didn't drink it 2,000 years ago.

He didn't need to. He was giving it his blood for us. But then he will. I'm sure he is eagerly desiring to eat this meal with us in glory.

Where his followers can't desert him. What a vision. So, to conclude, this is a simple meal, brothers and sisters.

[41:16] Bread and wine. Two elements. To celebrate a worthy king. You don't have to prepare that much. It's not like you've got to prepare salad, veg, meat.

It's laborious. It's simple. But yet so profound. So, it's all about remembering.

Remembering what Christ has done. It's about rescuing. Him saving us. It represents Christ. It's not him we eat. It represents who he is.

It revives us, strengthens us. We have to do it in a right way. And it points to his return. Now, if you're a non-Christian listening tonight, I ask you the question, are you attracted to this meal? Do you want to dine with us here at Calvary Church? You can participate in this meal if you give your life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

[42:20] If you confess your sinful ways and turn to him, he says, come and eat. What an invitation.

You can't say no. Jesus says, I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry. What an offer. You'll never go hungry.

I suggest tonight you get on your knees and you pray a prayer of repentance so that you can participate in this meal.

J.C. Ryle asked some good questions, which I'd like to ask you. He says, are we in the habit of coming to the Lord's table? If so, in what frame of mind do we come? Do we draw near intelligently, humbly and with faith?

Do we understand what we are about? Do we feel our sinfulness and need of Christ? Do we really desire to live a Christian life as well as profess the Christian faith?

[43:26] Happy is that soul who can give a satisfactory answer to these questions. Let him go forward and persevere. Let's finish with a song of praise.

In your hymn books, it's 695, 695 if you have one there. It's called Thank You, Jesus. Thank you for loving me.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord.

For loving me. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jesus.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord. For loving me. You went to Calvary. There you died for me.

[44:31] Thank you, Lord. For loving me. You went to Calvary. There you died for me.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord. For loving me. You rose up from the grave. To me new life you gave.

Thank you, Lord. For loving me. You rose up from the grave. To me new life you gave.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord. For loving me. Thank you, Jesus.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord. For loving me. Thank you, Jesus.

[45:38] Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord. For loving me. brothers and sisters.

The Lord bless you. And keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you. And be gracious to you. The Lord turn his face towards you.

And give you peace. Amen. Amen.