

040215 SM

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[0:00] Well, good evening to all of you. As we prepare to participate in communion, I wanted us to look at the Last Supper of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel of Luke, Luke chapter 22.

However, even though the account is quite long and has many, many sides to it, I wanted us just to look at one verse.

That's all, just one verse. And that verse is Jesus' words in Luke 22, 20. It says, in the same way, after the supper, he took the cup saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood which is poured out for you.

This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is poured out for you. These are Jesus' words. So when I read these words, I asked myself, what was going on in Jesus' minds?

What ideas were going through him? What was he reflecting on? And I would like to suggest that he was reflecting on several things.

[1:25] So even though this verse looks very short, it turns out to be very loaded simultaneously. Let's take a look at it one by one. The first part is, Jesus says, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

The new covenant in my blood. Notice the words covenant and blood. So where does that idea come from?

When Jesus says, my blood of the covenant, or covenant in my blood, what was he thinking about? Well, believe it or not, he was thinking about Exodus 24.

So if you have Bibles, turn to Exodus 24. If not, I'll be happy to read it for you. Exodus 24 is the chapter in which God makes a covenant with Israel.

and the one who mediates in that covenant happens to be Moses. And then in Exodus, in Exodus 24, in the middle of this ceremony, in the middle of this covenant, look what Moses says.

[2:46] In verse 8, Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, this is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you.

This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord made with you. Jesus is thinking to himself that he, like Moses, is going to make a covenant that God is going to use him to make a covenant with the people.

And so he, like Moses, mentions the blood of the covenant. But what was Moses doing?

Of course, covenant is a religious term for the secular word of treaty. So a treaty and covenant are the same thing. And you can make treaties between equals when nations make treaties with each other.

Or in this case, it is a treaty between unequals when God is making it with people. So what was God wanting to accomplish in this covenant that Moses was officiating at?

[4:11] He wanted to accomplish two things. The first thing, he wanted them to realize that they belong to God, that they are God's special treasure.

Now, there's a difference between special and ordinary. Believe it or not, I have a tuxedo, but none of you have ever seen me because I only wear it to special occasions.

And the next time I wear it will probably be my funeral, so you can see it then. I also have, but I have worn it before to my daughter's wedding, but that's all.

Then I have three-piece suits, and the only time I wear those is when I go to teach class and I'm completely unprepared, and then I hope that my attire will distract them from my lousy lecture.

But when I am informal like this, I'm very prepared, so don't worry. No tie, no coat, nothing. So, there are special clothes that you wear on special occasions, wedding dresses, tuxedos, and then there is ordinary, average, normal.

[5:41] And God was saying that he wanted Israel to be the special part, not the ordinary part. And so Israel was going to be special because it was going to be the agent that God was going to use to bring salvation to the world.

And so in Exodus 19, 4, he says, you are my special treasure, segula, which 1 Peter quotes, by the way, and applies it to us.

So God wanted them to be, to realize that they belong to him. Well, all of us belong to several things. I happen to belong to the United States.

I wasn't born in this country. I was naturalized. So through naturalization, I became a U.S. citizen. I also belong to Trinity International University because they have hired me to teach there.

I belong to Christ the King Church because I agreed to become a member and I was accepted. I belong to the YMCA because I want to see if God can still perform miracles and transform me in spite of, you know what.

[7:07] Well, we all belong to different things. So, they were going to be special, but what were they going to belong to?

The statement that is made again and again is, I will be your God and you will be my people. They were going to be his people.

And that is repeated, as I said, over 50 times just in the Old Testament. I am God and you are my people. Not, I am God and you are my employees or I am God and you are my factory workers or I am God and you are my choir or I am God and you are my soccer team.

It is, I will be your God and you will be my people. So, if he wants them to become his people, how is he going to do it? And it's the thing that he says again and again.

You can see it in Exodus 6, 7. You can see, you can see, yes, Exodus 6, 7. You can see it in Exodus 19, 4 and 5.

[8:17] What he was going to do was to adopt them. God was going to adopt them. So, they were going to belong to him not by hiring them or coercing them or whatever, but through adopting them.

Now, what happens in an adoption? Several things happens. One obvious thing that happens in an adoption is a person who is an outsider becomes an insider.

And when that person becomes an insider, usually, maybe the first name is changed. Certainly, in most cases, the last name is changed and one is given a new name.

And those who were not belonging now belong. Those who were on the outside now become on the inside. And with that comes, of course, the privileges of being adopted into this family and not that family.

Presumably, the love of these parents who adopted the individual. Maybe, perhaps, the wealth of that family is rich or perhaps the prestige, the honor, the name of the family and so on and so forth.

[9:42] And so, God is saying, you belong to me, I am going to adopt you and the way that I am going to adopt you is through this covenant. And, of course, that is very special.

Now, this doesn't, this illustration doesn't deal with adoption but it will help make a point. I was a smart student when I was at UCLA and I did very good grades in philosophy.

And being an analytic philosopher, I quickly realized, surprise, surprise, it's just as easy to fall in love with a rich girl as it is to fall in love with a poor girl.

So, I thought, I'm going to put controls on my heart, none of this middle class stuff, you know, I'm going to check her last name, but regrettably, there was no Rockefeller at UCLA who was single and available.

So, I was not married into a rich family. And, not only did I inherit my own debts and student loans, but others.

[11:02] where is Rockefeller to come to the rescue? Where is J.P. Morgan? They obviously didn't send their kids to UCLA.

Well, we are being adopted. We may be adopted by a famous name like Bush or Clinton or Lincoln, or we may be adopted by an ordinary family.

and based on what we are adopted, we get the privileges and the advantages of being part of that family. Now, I want you to think for a second. Is there anything special about being adopted by God?

Is there any advantage that we have over others if we are adopted by God and this other person is not? Is there anything wonderful about being adopted by God or is it just a common ordinary thing? What does being adopted by God make available to us? God wants to adopt us. There is something very interesting that happened between the Old and the New Testaments there is a German scholar by the name of Joachim Jeremias who studied every written prayer that was prayed in the last 400 years before Jesus appeared on the scene.

[12:47] Every written prayer in the Talmud, in the commentaries, in the writings, he studied every one of them and he wasn't out to prove a point but he discovered to his great surprise that in the spirit of 400 years every prayer that was prayed that is also written, recorded for us addresses God formally and collectively.

so it is always our, it is never my and it's always father, it is never dad.

So every prayer for 400 years, out of great respect for God, the nation, the rabbis, the priests would pray our father rather than my dad.

and of course you can see that, that is the beginning of the Lord's prayer, our father who art in heaven. But if you continue to read in John's account of the Last Supper, the Lord says that part of being adopted is that we will be allowed to call God Abba.

Not Avinu as all the other prayers but Abba and Abba is Aramaic for dad. Jesus calls the father intimately the same way a child would call.

[14:24] My sons never, never called me Mr. Messuah or Professor Messuah or anything like that. It was dad because there is a relationship between me and them that allowed them to be intimate with me and allowed me to be intimate with them.

And Jesus says, you can also read it in Romans 8, the spirit bears witness with our spirit by which we cry out Abba, father, dad.

So we are adopted and we are allowed to think of God intimately although of course there is nothing wrong in thinking about God with reverence and awe and exaltation.

it's not an either or, it's two different approaches. One we approach him as his subjects, the others we approach him as his children. And the first thing that Jesus is thinking about is just as Moses accomplished that, Jesus is going to accomplish this as well.

However, if we go back to Luke 22, 20, there is a difference, slight difference between what Moses said and what Jesus said.

[15:43] Moses said, the blood of the covenant. Jesus says, my blood of the covenant. So while in Exodus they were offering animals, Jesus is announcing that he is going to offer his own life.

That this covenant that God is going to make is going to cost him his life rather than the life of bulls and goats and sheep. And so the second thing is this.

When Jesus is thinking, I am going to accomplish a great act of salvation. I am going to fulfill God's purposes and plans. And it's going to cost me my own life.

And I'm a human being. What else is he thinking about? Where else do we have an individual who is willing to give his life to bring salvation to the world in the Old Testament?

That is Isaiah 53. So Jesus is thinking about Exodus 24, but in addition to that he is thinking also of Isaiah 53.

[17:03] Take a look at, it's a familiar passage, but if you're in 53, look at verses 4-7. So Isaiah 53, 4-7.

7. Surely he took our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted, but he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, and the punishment that brought us peace was upon him.

By his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, lamb to the slaughter.

Why lamb? Because he wants us to connect this passage with the Passover, lamb. And it's not only that Isaiah saw it, guess what?

[18:28] John the Baptist saw it. And when John saw Jesus, the first thing he announced, behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And it's not just John the Baptist saw it and nobody else in the New Testament.

Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 5-7. That's a very important passage. 1 Corinthians 5-7. Let me read it for you.

1 Corinthians 5-7.

1 Corinthians 5-7. In the middle of this verse, Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. sacrificed. And that's as explicit as you can get. Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Jesus understands it. Paul understands it.

[19:35] John the Baptist understands it. Jesus is offering himself to make it possible for us to be adopted, has become our Passover lamb.

So, Jesus is thinking of Exodus 24, the blood of the covenant. He is thinking of Isaiah 53, like sheep led to the slaughter, he opened not his mouth.

But Jesus is also thinking of one more thing. Please turn to Luke 22, 20. In the same way, after the supper, he took the cup saying, this is the new covenant in my blood which is poured out for you. He doesn't say this is the covenant in my blood. He says, this is the new covenant in the blood. So, just as he adds the word my, he also adds the word new.

And so, what is he thinking about now when he says new covenant in my blood? He is thinking of Jeremiah chapter 31, 31.

[20:55] This is the only passage in all of the Old Testament, in all of the Old Testament, that uses the expression the new covenant. covenant. Nowhere else is that phrase used in the Old Testament other than Jeremiah 31, 31.

The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant. And Jesus says, this is the new covenant in my blood. So, he is thinking Jeremiah, he is thinking Isaiah, he is thinking Moses. But what is special about the new covenant? It is verse 34. I will forgive their iniquities and remember their sins no more.

So, in order for God to adopt us, he must also forgive us. He needs to forgive us first and then adopt us.

And what the new covenant emphasizes is the forgiveness of sins. So, we have been adopted by God.

[22:08] And we have the privilege of being intimate with him and call him dad, knowing that our sins are forgiven.

And that this covenant has cost him his life. Now, since I making eye contact with Mike, I will use him for an illustration.

Suppose someone kidnaps Mike and writes me a letter and says, Samir, we have Mike. If you want him back, you have to pay ransom.

And I said, oh, okay. How much do you want? Five dollars. Mike is safe. Let's say he says \$10. Mike is still safe. \$50. Still safe. \$100.

[23:14] I have to think about it, but still safe. \$2 million. No way, I don't have that kind of money. how about not just \$2 million, but \$2 million and the life of my grandchildren.

No way. I mean, I love Mike and all that, but I am not willing to give the life of my grandchildren for him. My love has limits.

So you have to ask yourself, how much do I love somebody? And how much am I willing to go? And we have the answer.

John 3. 16. God so loved the world that he gave not just \$50 or \$100 or \$2 million. God gave his son to show you how generous he is.

That he wants to adopt us so much that he is willing to pay that much. You think Ben would give the life of his son?

[24:24] Not in million years? But God is willing to. That is what we are celebrating this evening. That we are adopted by God.

God says, you can call me dad. I love you more than you realize. God and I'll even give the life of my son for you.

Not cows, not cattle, but my son. And that is what Jesus initiated. And he wants to establish it as a treaty, as a covenant, so nobody would have any question or doubts as to what he is doing. Amen.