

Take and Eat, this is my body (Communion)

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[0 : 00] for all his courage, for all his greatness, cannot convince us otherwise. Jesus in that upper room in Jerusalem, Jesus was pointing his disciples, pointing us, pointing us, to see in the elements that are there before us, in the bread and the wine, that these are signs, signs that remain bread and remain wine.

These are signs that point to the broken body of Christ and to the shed blood that Jesus shed on the cross. Because they help us.

We will participate in a few moments. They help us through sacrament, alongside the word of God, to show us what Jesus truly did.

He died. He died. He truly did give his life for sinners, such as me and such as you. He truly did give his life and continues to give of himself through his word, to nourish you.

You'll be nourished by the sacraments, nourished in your soul, nourished in your faith. You're nourished by his word. You're strengthened in your faith, strengthened to live for him who promises to be with you always.

[1 : 15] So, with that understanding, I hope, of the bread and wine, we're going to look at these particular words that Jesus gave at that inaugural Lord's Supper. The three headings that we've got there in our notices.

The new beginning that's announced. And the new sacrament that's revealed. And the new fellowship that's promised. Let's look firstly at the new beginning announced.

As we see from verse 26. I mean, as we know, Jesus is hours away from his arrest, his trial and his crucifixion. He's just got a few hours left before he goes to the cross.

Just a few moments before he who knew no sin became sin for us. And in that, these hours remaining, these moments remaining, he does something wonderful.

He does something so wonderful that's permeated the church through the centuries of time and will do so until the Lord returns again. What does he do? He institutes the Lord's Supper.

[2 : 20] That simple meal. That meal at that time that had been so customary, at Passover time. Through that meal, Jesus uses that meal as a meal of remembrance.

That meal, of course, the Passover that helped the Jewish people to remember what God had done for them in delivering them from their affliction in Egypt. Jesus used that very meal and he transformed it into a meal of remembrance of his death.

The death that would bring deliverance from sin for all his people, for all for whom he came to die.

So if the Passover was celebrated to remember the time when the Lamb's blood was that sign to cover the Israelite people from the judgment of God.

Remember when God passed over the homes of the Israelites who put that blood in their doorposts. So if the Passover meal was celebrated to remember that time when the Lamb's blood covered the Israelites from God's judgment.

So Jesus, the Lamb of God, would give his blood to cover the sins of his people once and for all.

And so we see Jesus telling of this through this simple meal.

[3 : 37] This meal accompanied by his word. And whether his disciples then or ourselves now, you and I, we're enabled to remember the cost to our salvation.

That cost being through the very death of the Lord Jesus Christ. So what's Jesus doing here? He's showing, he's bringing a new beginning. A new beginning in the life of God's people.

That new beginning, of course, inaugurated by the death of the Savior. And that new beginning has been marked, even mentioned in this special meal as we see here from verse 26.

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread and after blessing it, broke it and gave it to the disciples. Where do we get this aspect of new beginning from these words? Well, just picture the

scene in that upper room.

The disciples and Jesus, they're reclining at that low table. Jesus is the head of the table. They've already broken bread. A blessing's already been asked upon the meal, at the start of the meal, just before they'd actually eaten anything.

[4 : 46] But Jesus does something new. We're told here as they're eating the meal. You know, just picture the disciples as Jesus, as they're eating their meal, Jesus stands up and breaks the convention, the practice of that Passover meal.

He breaks the pattern of it. So there's the head of the table, Jesus interrupting that meal and he does so with a new blessing. This is a new taking of the bread and there's a new declaration. Take, eat, this is my body. So Jesus is deliberately doing something, doing something deliberate and doing something new. And doing so within the context of this Passover meal.

Why? Because he's revealing, making known what he's come to do and come to do something new. He's come to bring, to bring a new covenant, a new relationship between God and man achieved through his death.

And of course that death symbolized by the broken bread and by the cup of wine that Jesus is about to give to his disciples. Jesus had come to bring in a new order.

[6 : 00] A new order for the eternal blessing of all for whom he came to give his life. Come to bring in that new relationship, that new covenant that we read of here in the New Testament.

Because of course the New Testament centers on the fulfillment of the promises of the Old Testament fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. Come to bring salvation salvation for his own. Come to bring that salvation through his perfect life of obedience even unto death and the cross. And you who will be at the table in a few moments time, will you remember the privilege that's yours?

The privilege that's yours in being included in that new covenant, that new relationship with God through Jesus, through your Savior. you're a new creation because of the new covenant that Jesus has made possible by his death for you.

You know, just as Jesus broke into that Passover meal to reveal the truth about that new relationship that he gives to those who are his. So you who are the Lord's people can testify to the Lord's breaking into your life, redirecting your life, transforming your life, changing your life, so that you live for the glory of God, so that you testify to the grace of God, the love of God for sinners such as you.

[7 : 25] So, we've seen here a new beginning announced in the very manner that Jesus intervenes in that Passover meal. But then secondly, we see a new sacrament that revealed Jesus took bread and after blessing it, broke it, gave it to the disciples and said, take it, this is my body.

What's a sacrament? A sacrament's a sign. A sacrament's a sign that points away from itself to something greater. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The signs that Jesus used even there in that Passover meal.

These signs pointing to his day. He uses common elements of bread and wine to signify his day. ordinary, ordinary, everyday means of sustenance that would remind the disciples, remind all who take part in the Lord's Supper, remind you what Jesus has done for you, giving of his body for your sake.

So, I want to focus particularly on these words of Jesus. And what do we see in these words? Take, eat and drink. Well, what do we notice? It's a command. It's a command. For all who are Christ, all who are Christ's people, you who are his by faith, you're commanded to take the bread.

You're commanded to eat the bread. You're commanded to drink from the cup of wine. This is a command that Jesus gives to his disciples. Take, eat, drink.

[8 : 59] That first communion meal, the command is there. And Jesus still commands his people to take and eat and drink. Why? Well, it's for your benefit.

It's for your blessing. It's for you to feed in Christ spiritually. It's for you to take the bread, to drink from the wine. And taking the bread, taking the wine, you're nourished in your heart by faith. You're looking to the one who gave himself for you. Remember what Paul wrote, and we'll come back to these words later, of course, in 1 Corinthians 11, 26. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till he comes.

You know, in everyday life, a command presupposes a purpose. Command with a purpose. Because that purpose can be either for good or for ill.

Take a dictatorship, for example. Laws that are passed in a dictatorship. Commands from a dictator. These commands are against God's law, God's word and God's law.

[10:09] These commands have an evil purpose. You know, go to a country like North Korea, for example. Commands are given for people not to attend worship of God, not to have a Bible in their possession.

These are commands with an evil purpose. They're excluding people from worshipping the one true God. Of course, direct them to the supreme leader.

But Jesus' commands have only a good purpose. Because that purpose is God glorifying, Christ centred, honouring him.

Christ's command is for that purpose that you honour him. You give to him the glory. So this command here, take, eat, drink from these elements before you.

And it's for you to obey that command. Because it's for your benefit and it's for the glory of God. You're proclaiming the Lord's death. You're proclaiming what Jesus has done for you.

[11:10] So in taking and eating and drinking from the provisions of the supper, as Jesus says, you're proclaiming his death till he comes. So by your action, by your obedience, you're making known again the death of the Lord Jesus.

You're making known what that death has achieved in your salvation. As we said last night, we will take the bread and take the wine in silence.

You're silent witnesses, we might say, in this particular act of the Lord's Supper. But in that silent witness, you're telling others what Jesus has done for you by his death.

You're telling others, you're proclaiming that there was and there is no other way by which anyone can be saved. It's for you and it's for me to obey that command of Jesus.

It's for us to participate in that supper and to do so as an act of proclamation. You are his witnesses at the very table of the Lord.

[12:15] Lord. This new sacrament contains a command. It's a command to be obeyed. It's a command for each and every one of the Lord's people to obey in order to honor God, to glorify God.

It's for you to be reminded of the cost of your salvation. And it's for you to act upon that remembering with a renewed strength, a renewed zeal, a strengthened faith, to serve the Lord Jesus, to give of yourself because Jesus gave of himself fully and wholly for you.

So there's a command in these words. But then secondly, there's a recognition. There's a recognition of what you're taking. Listen again to the words of Jesus here.

This is my body. And then again, this is my blood. Now, as we said at the start of the service, Jesus isn't being literal here. Of course not.

How can he be? There's this physical body there giving that word. Jesus' physical body cannot be in two places. It can't be in the bread and the wine and at the same time at the table itself as Jesus is there before his disciples.

[13:31] Not indeed in Jesus' post-resurrection body. Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father. There's no real presence of Christ in the bread and the wine. The resurrected body of Christ is in glory.

You know, for all you read Martin Luther, he never ever gave a satisfactory explanation of his opinion, even when he was faced with scripture upon scripture that indicates the spiritual feeding of Christ.

He never gave way. You know, the point of taking the bread, bread, you know, when the one who officiates at the supper, the minister quotes from the words of Jesus, this is my body broken for you. Well, at that point in the service, you see in the bread, it's bread, it's still bread, but it's bread that points you to the one who gave of his body for you.

What will you do at the supper? You'll take a small piece of bread, you'll take a piece of bread broken from the loaf, because that speaking of the body of Christ broken in the cross for you, and you'll take wine from the cup, you'll take that wine that tells of the blood of Jesus shed on the cross that indicates that his life was given for you.

[14:51] There's nothing magical in the bread or the wine, but they're given for you to speak to your heart. To tell you the death of the Saviour for you. As we said, yes, there is a feeding on Christ, but it's a spiritual feeding on him.

It's a nourishing of your soul. You know, ordinary food. After the service, many of you will have a lovely meal, a Sunday lunch, ordinary food, giving you energy, energy for your physical needs,

mental needs.

So the bread and the wine of the supper gives you a spiritual energizing. Why? Because you're brought once more to discern in the bread and the wine, these pointers to the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus for you.

But when that little piece of bread comes to your mouth, when that wine comes to your lips, will you call to mind what these elements are saying to you, what they're saying about the death of Jesus for you?

And give thanks. Give thanks. Be reminded, he did this for me. Unworthy sinner, though that I am. Hell deserving wretch, so that I am.

[16:01] He became sin for me, who deserved nothing of his love, of his grace, of his sacrifice. Remember when you take that bread and take that wine, remember they're pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ and what he has done for you.

So there was that command to take and eat and drink. There's that recognition of what you're taking and eating and drinking, pointing to the Lord Jesus and his death for you. But then thirdly, there's the privilege, there's the privilege of taking and eating and drinking.

We take so much for granted in our church. We take far too much for granted. You know, even taking the bread and wine, really thinking about the privilege that ours and being able to take from these elements.

being obedient to the word and taking both the bread and wine for spiritual nourishment. But you know, it wasn't always so. Go back to the time of the Reformation.

Even the giving of wine to the ordinary people who were called the laity was forbidden. It was forbidden. And again, I've never seen a plausible reason or explanation why the cup of wine was withheld from those who were not priests.

[17:16] saints. But we take, you take both the bread and the wine because you do so in response to the command of the Lord Jesus. You do so in response to the command that, yes, that Jesus gave to his disciples because you're blessed even in receiving both the bread and the wine because you're receiving the fullness of the sacrament.

That sacrament that speaks of the wholeness of the sacrifice of Jesus for you. You know, especially when you read of what Jesus says here of the wine, you know, look at the words of Jesus.

The wine doesn't just signify his blood for you, but notice verse 28 when he speaks of his blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Now why does Jesus speak in this way? Why does he not just say take this cup that speaks of my blood? He goes into very particular detail. Why does he say these things?

Well, I want to consider four little subheadings with you. Just as Jesus gives here, what does he say firstly? He speaks of the blood of the covenant.

[18:28] The blood of the covenant. Why doesn't he just say blood? Why does he say blood of the covenant? Well, we have to go back to the Old Testament. Because when God made a covenant with the people of Israel, he did it through blood.

through the blood of an animal sacrifice. You go to Exodus 24 verse 8, you read these words, And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, Behold the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.

You see, blood had been taken from an animal. That blood from the animal first had been sprinkled on the altar to show God's side of the covenant. God had accepted this animal sacrifice, that offering to him, an offering made to him for the forgiveness of sins.

And then blood from that same animal was thrown in the people to show that they were a people holy to God. They were set apart for God by sacrifice.

And of course the sacrifice of another indicated by blood. So when Jesus speaks of his blood of the covenant, he's saying that it's only, only by his sacrificial death that God's people can be made right with God, that they can be made holy, set apart through forgiveness of sins.

[19:54] Only by his shedding of his blood that Jesus established that new covenant between God and his people. Without that sacrificial death of Jesus, without his establishing that new covenant between God and man, none of us would be at the Lord's table today.

We would all be lost, without hope. But thanks be to God for the gift of his Son. And thanks be to the Lord Jesus, to the Son of God, for his willingness to shed his blood for your sake.

So that you, so that I, might enter into that new covenant filled with the blood of Jesus. us. So, blood of the covenant Jesus mentions there.

And then secondly, he speaks of that blood being poured out. He's using this, you know, it's really quite a strong expression of blood, not just being given, but poured out. He's showing that his life has been given to the full.

And yes, even ending in violence. The pouring out of his blood, fully, wholly, completely, utterly, utterly, given and is dying for you.

[21 : 04] And again, we have to go back to the Old Testament to see Jesus referring to this pouring out. You go to the word of Isaiah. When Isaiah prophesied of Jesus and his death.

When Isaiah said, he poured out his soul to death. In other words, Jesus held nothing back. He gave himself fully for you.

And as we see, as Jesus says, the blood of the covenant poured out for many. Because his death is for the benefit of many.

Now, not all, of course. Not all. We're not universalists. Of course not. But Jesus died for many. For the sake of many people. For you. For me.

And Jesus died not for his own sake, but for the sake of those in whom the love of God is given.

You go to the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, and you read there, of people from every tribe and language and nation saved by the blood of Jesus, by the death of Jesus.

[22 : 06] The many proclaiming Christ as worthy. If you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you've included in that many for whom Jesus died.

For whom Jesus died so that you might know in the fourth little subsection here, that you might know the forgiveness of sins. your sins are forgiven.

So Jesus having carried each and every one of your sins on the cross. Because without his pouring out his blood for you, without Jesus having established that new covenant between God and man, your sins would have remained unforgiven.

And of unforgiven, none of us could stand before a holy God. but Jesus has paid the price for your sins so that you can come before God, a holy God, and so that God does declare you not guilty.

Why? Because Jesus has paid the price and paid that price in full for your sins. You are forgiven. I hope to see a little more in forgiveness at our midweek Bible study this Wednesday.

[23 : 18] But let's just for a moment think of God's forgiveness of man and our forgiveness of one another. But you who know the Lord, you who know the Lord Jesus, the Savior, you can testify to that love that has forgiven you your sins.

Well, you come to the table with the consequence of Jesus having poured out his blood for you.

You come to the table with that thankfulness of heart, knowing that he has forgiven you your sins through his blood.

So, there's a new beginning announced, there's a new sacrament revealed. And then finally, as we see there in verse 29, a new fellowship promise.

I tell you, I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. What's Jesus saying here?

Well, certainly he's informing his disciples that that meal that they're enjoying is the last meal that they're going to share together before Jesus departs this life, before his death and burial and resurrection.

[24 : 29] But that isn't the end of the fellowship that he and his true disciples will enjoy. Because Jesus here is promising a future fellowship where the new wine of God's blessing is going to be experienced by all who are Christ's in the new heaven and new earth.

I mean, the disciples here, they're promised that heavenly fellowship when Christ returns and all who are his will know that eternal banquet, that marriage supper of the Lamb that you read off in Revelation 19.

And surely then this tells us something wonderful. Yes, the Lord's Supper is given to us to help us to remember the death of the Lord Jesus. So, we're unable to look back at the work of salvation.

We're able to look back at what Jesus has done for us on the cross. But also remember the Lord's Supper is given to help us in the present so that you're strengthened in your faith in the Lord Jesus.

But there's something we forget so often. There's a future aspect of the supper. there's a pointing forward that the supper Lord's Supper gives. There's a pointing forward to that time when the Lord's people, when the many that Jesus spoke of here, the many for whom Christ died, will share in that

eternal fellowship with the Lord Jesus.

[25 : 58] When all who are his will enjoy that new wine of the new covenant in the new heaven and the new earth when all things are made new.

So we come to the table with gratitude. Gratitude for the death of the Lord Jesus. And yes, we come to with that expectation of what's yet to be in the kingdom of God.

When the best is yet to come. So even in the quiet of your heart, give thanks. Look to the Saviour.

Give thanks to the Lord Jesus for that great salvation that's yours through him.

But if you haven't yet given your life to Jesus, will you ask yourself, ask yourself this, can I remain outside of his kingdom?

I mean, there's the promise of eternal fellowship with God and his people. It's a prospect that fills the hearts of God's people with joy. What if you, what eternal prospect do you have outside of Christ?

[27 : 04] Well, you look on today, you look on as the Lord's people share in the bread and the cup of wine. As you look on, be resolved in your heart to give your life to the Lord Jesus.

And come to him. Repent of your sins. Ask him into your heart. And you'll know that rejoicing. You'll know that rejoicing in being found in the kingdom and found secure in his kingdom.

Why? Because he's given his life for sinners such as me and such as you. Amen. Let us pray. Our Lord, our God, our Heavenly Father, we tremble at these words because we realize the privilege that is ours, the undeserved privilege that is ours in being able to take of the bread and take of the wine that point to the death of the Lord Jesus.

How unworthy we are. And yet we come to the table through the worthiness of Christ, he who died for us. Lord, impress upon our hearts, yes, the solemnity of this occasion.

But again, Lord, impress upon us this time of thankfulness and gratitude, this time of thankfulness and remembering the Lord's death till he comes, the privilege that ours in so doing, even in the fellowship of the Lord's people, one with another, as we shortly sit at the area set aside for the supper.

[28 : 37] Lord, bless us we pray, shine upon us your face, make us safe. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen. We're going to sing now in Psalm 34 on page 40.

The tune is Jackson. We're going to sing from the beginning down to verse 10. At all times I will bless the Lord, at all times I will praise the Lord, I'll praise him with my voice, because I glory in the Lord, let troubled souls rejoice.

Together, let's call that we give one to another, together let us praise the Lord, exalt his name with me. I sought the Lord, his answer came from fears, he set me free.

Singing down to verse 10, Psalm 44 to God's praise. Thank you.