

The Gospel in the Elements

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[0 : 00] I want you to turn in your Bible.

Well, we're going to go a couple different places because I want to frame our lesson this morning! and its intent clearly in your hearts. But before we do that, we're going to pray.

Do you know why we pray? We do so many different things when we pray, but one of the things we do is that we confess His sufficiency in our dependence.

Isn't that right? And if there's anything we always need, it is the work of the Holy Spirit in our frail lives in rejoicing in the Lord Jesus Christ and being satisfied supremely with Him.

So you join me in prayer. And don't kind of be sitting there like a bump on a log thinking about lunch. You just be begging God to do something in your life that needs to be done. Amen? Amen? Amen. Holy Father, we are so very blessed to be able to come into Your presence this morning, to come with humility, to come with boldness that is not of our own making, but is because of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[1 : 30] And as we heard sung this morning when He said, Tetelestai, He was not only saying it is finished, but He was also saying it is paid in full.

There is now, therefore, no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. And, Lord, while it does not yet appear what we shall be, we know that the day is coming when we will see Him and we will be like Him.

And so our prayer this morning is that our hearts would be good soil to receive the Word of God and to allow the truth of the Word of God to affect our thinking and our living.

That as we study in the Scriptures this very particular truth relating to how Jesus looked at the Last Supper, that we would grow to love Him, that we would grow to appreciate the beauty and the depth of His work for us, and that our affection for the Lord Jesus Christ would be something that not only makes a difference in our life, but makes a difference in the world around us.

And most importantly, that Christ is glorified. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I will get to the sermon eventually, and I do want you to put your finger in Luke chapter 22, because that's where we will be.

[3 : 10] But one of the things that I think is important is to understand what's the takeaway? What's it really going to look like when it all plays out? Not just the sermon, but the work of the Word of God in your life.

I think about a passage in Romans chapter 8 where it says this, that God explains the issue of His sovereign care for us, and it says, all things work together for good to them that love God and are called according to His purpose.

And then it goes on and says this, that in essence, we are going to be conformed into the image of Christ. Isn't that right? I alluded in the prayer to a passage in 1 John where it says that though we don't see Him yet, the day is coming when we will see Him.

And what will be the effect of seeing Him? What will be the effect? Say it with me. We will become like Him. We will become like Him.

Can I tell you that duplication or modeling after someone else is the highest form of a compliment, isn't it? I want to be like whoever it is that you want to be like.

[4 : 21] You are crediting as being someone significant and worthy, someone that you want to model your life after. And the truth of the matter is this, is that God intends for us who are His children to be like Christ.

How does Christ-likeness happen? I'll just kind of sit there and it'll happen automatically. I want you to understand, for one, growing to be like Christ happens as the Word of God makes a difference in our life.

And I think about a passage, there are several different ones. One in particular is over there in 2 Corinthians 3, verse 18, where it says that we are transformed from glory into glory and that transformation takes place when the Word of God makes a difference in our life.

I also want you to understand that we grow to be more like Christ as we grow to appreciate who He is and to grow in our love for Him. The truth of the matter is, is that left to our own devices, we are only good at loving one person.

Who is that? Me, myself, I. In fact, I'm a little irritated when everybody else doesn't love me as much as I do. And you're the same way.

[5 : 46] When you're pouty or irritated with whatever is going on in life that's not going your way, it's just saying, hey, I want to be the center. And it is the work of the Spirit of God and the work of the Word of God that brings us to realize the supreme beauty and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And seeing that, we grow to love Him and be interested in Him. And if there's any time in our attention to the Word of God that our hearts should be stirred in loving Jesus, it is when we come to this table.

Luke chapter 22, verse 14. And when the hour came, He reclined at table and the apostles with Him. And He said to them, I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

For I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And He took a cup, and when He'd given thanks, He said, take this and divide it among yourselves.

For I tell you that from now on, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes. And He took the bread, and when He'd given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, this is My body which is given for you.

[7 : 12] Do this in remembrance of Me. And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, this cup is poured out for you. It is the new covenant in My blood.

The thing that I want you to do this morning with me is stop and think carefully, deeply, about how Jesus viewed this table.

You look there at the passage, and if you would put your finger for me on verse 15. I want you to do that consciously and deliberately. And some of you have iPads and other electronic devices.

Go ahead. You're afraid that if you tap it, it's going to, something else will happen. But kind of mark it. Look at what it says here. I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

The Hebrew reads this way. In essence, it's saying, I have desired with desire. And one of the things that we know about Hebrew language is that when something needs to be emphasized, in our culture, when we want to draw attention to something, we underline it.

[8 : 27] Or we use a yellow highlighter. Isn't that right? Judith and I are in a modest process of remodeling, and I promise it will be the last one. But we have drywallers that are coming tomorrow, I hope.

I'm going to be away deer hunting. And so I had to make some little notations on some boards in Spanish. You know? Remove this screw.

And so here I was talking with the drywaller because he is not going to be there, and his crew is going to be there. And so I was spelling out in Spanish, remove this screw. Big arrow, underline, underline.

In Hebrew, when you wanted to make something clear and emphatic, what you would do is you would double up on it. Remember Jesus said, verily, verily? Truly, truly? So when Jesus says here, with desire I have desired, he is saying, I am really into this, and I care about it a lot.

I'm kind of struck by that when I thought about it. How many of you have ever read a passage and missed it completely, and then later on it's like, wow. It's there. It's beautiful.

[9 : 35] And I was praying several weeks ago about the Lord's Table, and I have to admit that when you do something month after month, and I am now into about 35 years of the Lord's Table and have done many, many of them, right?

It can become a little tempting to be relatively routine. And I always pray about sermons, but there is a sense in which I pray more about the Lord's Table because of that routine.

And as I was praying and meditating upon a variety of scriptures, I was just, it's like, bang, there it was. I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover before I suffer.

And I stopped and thought, what was it about this that made this particular Passover so important? Well, I would suggest that it wasn't the historical significance of what the Passover represented to the nation of Israel in that it was the Passover that historically was a celebration of God's work in

delivering the nation of Israel from Egypt and from slavery.

It was more than that. I think as Jesus thought about this Passover without question, He understood several things that I want you to ponder with me and allow it to inform your thinking regarding why this Passover was so important to Jesus, and by extension, it should be important to us.

[11 : 06] For one, Jesus understood that He was the fulfillment of God's promise to provide for our sins.

Stop and think with me just for a moment that we don't even get out of Genesis chapter 3 before the world's a mess. Sin entered the world.

Sin entered the world.

Sin entered the world. and we will enjoy glory without all these impediments and heartaches. And so here, as Jesus thought about what this table represented, He understood that He was the fulfillment of the promises that had been made throughout the Old Testament regarding His coming and His salvation and His work of redemption.

He understood what was in front of Him was ultimately not this great tragic moment, but the reality that He was the fulfillment of God's promises throughout the centuries.

[12 : 40] Let me ask you, do you ever get a little impatient with God doing things slower than you'd like? You know, I'm going to, I swear, use chewing gum on the side of my face so that it doesn't move.

But, at 67, I remember thinking to myself the other day, God, why don't you go ahead and finish this process of progressive sanctification because I was at a point where I was a little frustrated with some of the gross repetition in my life of some of the difficulties I've had.

Anybody else there? Why are we doing this again, Jesus? You know, I mean, it's like, I've been through this. I know how I should be. And yet, we find that God in His mysterious plan of working out the plan of redemption over the centuries brought it to fulfillment in Christ.

And here is Christ just days prior to the fulfillment of God's promises regarding our salvation. He says, man, it is with desire that I've desired to do this.

Not only that, but I firmly believe that Jesus understood that His death for our sins would glorify His Father. Do you know that there was nothing that gave Jesus greater pleasure than making His Father feel good or happy?

[14 : 05] Turn in your Bible, if you would, to John chapter 13, verse 31. John chapter 13, verse 31. In the context of the Last Supper, after Judas had left, it says there in verse 31, when He'd gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.

The idea of glorifying someone means to draw attention to them, make them significant, or recognize something particularly exceptional about them.

How is God glorified in the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf?

I want you to stop and think with me about the religions around the world. I've said it before, and certainly not original with me, that you may divide all the religions of the world into two groups.

The majority that propose that salvation comes about by your own efforts, whether they're repeated and you allow for reincarnation to get another try at it.

[15 : 32] I don't want to ask if any of you ever had to take a class over, but the idea of Hinduism is that if you don't get it the first time, you get it the second time, or the third, or whatever else. Or the idea of slowly kind of working your way up the ladder, and you do these things, and you do these things, and you get there.

On the other hand, you have the Bible that tells us that we, unable to save ourselves, have received the grace of God who sent His Son to die in my place and satisfy the debt of my sins and to redeem me with His own blood.

God is glorified in that His plan of salvation is so marvelous and so wonderful and so unbelievably incredible that, you know, the angels kind of look at this whole thing of people like me and people like you being saved, and they go, what is that?

God is glorified in the work of Christ in coming to be our Savior and our Redeemer. I want you to recognize also that as Jesus, with desire, desired this, that He must have been thinking also about His joy in our redemption.

I think of two different passages in relationship to this. One was recited actually in our Sunday school class, one of the two Sunday school classes, or three that we have.

[17 : 04] And in Hebrews chapter 12, I want you to turn over there just for a moment. In Hebrews chapter 12, the author references Jesus in His attitude towards the cross.

Looking unto Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross.

I don't think it's right for us to think that Jesus, as He thought about the cross, went, woo-hoo, that's it, you know? But on the other hand, when He thought about the cross, He thought of our redemption, and it satisfied His soul, and it gave to Him a pleasure and a delight that you and I can only appreciate and enjoy.

Turn in your Bibles, if you would. You're there keeping your finger in Luke because we're coming back to it. But I want you to look at Galatians chapter 2, verse 20. I have to confess, one of the characteristics of the Bible is that sometimes the Bible puts more thought into an issue than our little pea brain can handle at one time.

And as a result of that, we kind of get buried on one point or another, and we don't appreciate the fact that some Bible truths are profoundly complex, and you can come back to them again and again and be enriched in each case.

[18 : 33] And so it is when you stop and think about Jesus being satisfied with the matter of this Lord's Supper as He thinks about our redemption over in Galatians 2.20, here's what it says.

I've been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. In the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith, now mark this, in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.

So why did Jesus die? He died because He loves me. I want you to listen to me carefully because this is something that I think far too often we diminish its significance simply by not thinking about it. He loved me in that He was willing to die for me. You know, when you ponder the depth of the love of Christ and you begin to gain through the Scriptures that inform us of His love, we either grow in our appreciation and affection for Christ or we harden our heart at the claim His love makes upon us.

Does that make sense? As you understand that Christ loves you as skunky as you are, and I joined the crowd with that, you know, you're either overwhelmed or you just dismiss it.

[20 : 04] And so when we come to this table, it is something that the Spirit of God intends for us to take seriously and allow the thinking of the love of Christ to affect our behavior and our living.

Don't you wish that loving Christ could be done strictly in the abstract? You know, we could kind of say nice things about loving Jesus. Oh, I love Jesus.

But really when you stop and think about it, every time the love of Christ is brought into frame for us little pea brains that we are, it's always kind of tied in with loving other people.

And other people are what? Are not as easy to love as we are. And yet, Jesus loves me.

And I, in the glory of that truth, am affected by that love and slowly grow to be like Him. Do you understand that?

[21 : 14] Well, I want you to look as you think here that as this, going back to Luke chapter 22, if you would, as this first celebration of the Lord's table was taking place, Jesus begins it by saying, I have desired with desire to partake of this with you.

And so what I would like us to do is just take a moment right now and ask the Holy Spirit to help us desire the Lord's table because what it reminds us of.

Can I say that again slowly? I'm asking that you join me in prayer quietly right now and that you say to the Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, help me this morning desire the Lord's table.

the way Jesus desired it. Not exactly because I'm human, but let me do more than just be here as a passive bump waiting for 1215.

Let's pray. Holy Spirit, this morning we are thankful that we can come in humility to you who we know in John tasked by the Father, sent by the Son for the express purpose of helping us understand and grow in our affection and grasp of the holy glory of Christ.

[23 : 00] Christ. And so we ask this morning that you would help us to appreciate the beauty of what Jesus has done for us that we remember this morning at this table.

And that as a result of our taking these elements, the bread and the cup, that our affection for the Lord Jesus who is our Savior would grow and our passion for godliness would grow and our hatred for personal sin would grow.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, we've looked, first of all, this morning at the passage and marked what it says that Jesus there in verse 15, He says, I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you.

Now let's look at the second part where Jesus says, before I suffer. Jesus never hid the fact that He was going to suffer for our sins.

He understood from the very beginning that He was destined for suffering. And He often, at various times, referred to His cross work in His ministry with His disciples.

[24 : 25] He wanted them to know what was in front. Incidentally, that is one of the characteristics of God in His dealings with us. He lets us know ahead of time how the story plays out.

Isn't that right? He tells us of the hardships and difficulties. He tells us also of the future glory that we are going to have with Christ so that in the journey and in the difficulties we face, we're not utterly overwhelmed and surprised.

We knew it because He told us ahead of time. I want you to look there with me at verse 19. It says there, He took bread and broke it and gave to them, saying, and later on, comments, this is my body which is given for you.

There are several things that I want to draw out from this passage as we think about it. For one, I want you to understand this, that Jesus did not die accidentally. It wasn't something that just kind of happened.

If you're there in Luke, turn with me just for a moment over to John chapter 10 and verse 17 and 18. Let me just read it to you if you're not there.

[25 : 36] But in 17, it says, For this reason, the Father loves me because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.

I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father. I kind of chuckle when I think about and I just finished reading the book of John and over and over again in each of the Gospels when it talks about Christ before Pilate and before the Sanhedrin, et cetera.

Remember Pilate says to him, How come you don't say anything? I've got the power to put you to death. Yeah, right. No. Jesus of his own volition and of his own choosing decided that it was appropriate for him to lay down his life for Tim Knoyer and for you.

For another thing, Jesus fully satisfied the debt for our sin. Over in John chapter 19, verse 30, I want you to look at the passage just for a moment and I have to appreciate the way in which attention to the Word of God directs the songs that we sing.

John chapter 19, verse 30. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, It is finished. And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

[27 : 05] This morning as we listen to Stephanie and Caleb sing, Te Telestai. They were referencing the point that when Jesus died for our sins, what he did was he fully satisfied the debt for my sin.

It's really hard for us to fathom the infinite offense that our sin is against the Holy God, isn't it? I mean, hey, we're pretty comfortable with our own sin. You know, I stop and realize that an indication of how serious sin is is that Jesus had to die for my sins.

Let me help you understand the two different choices that a sinner has. And there may be some of you sitting here this morning that have never come to the place where you have cast your faith completely on the finished work of Christ.

So here are the choices you have. You can spend eternity paying for the infinite offense of your sin against an absolutely holy God.

God. We finished painting the lobby several weeks ago. Kathy, you saw me, didn't you, wiping the paint off? I mean, here's the deal. I enjoy painting.

[28 : 20] It's something I kind of like. But some things happen after you finish painting something. Do you know little kids put scuff marks on walls? And within a couple days after that lobby was painted and I was having infinite pleasure and how nice it looked, there's a couple marks on the wall and I'm going around rub, rub, rub.

And Kathy walks by me. She says, what was it called? Magic eraser or something? I wasn't getting it with a paper towel and spit. You know, I was like, do something better, Tim. Now listen, if I was a little tweaked about kids' black marks on the, why do kids put marks on walls?

I don't know. I used to be a kid so let's balance that one out. But you know, here I am kind of moderately irritated at marks on walls. That's nothing compared to sin. Against the holiness of God. And Jesus satisfied my debt. He paid my price. He took my sins upon Himself and bore the full wrath of God. Remember I said, you got two choices.

[29 : 36] You can suffer for your sins for all eternity. And there are some of you sitting here today that consciously, whether you understand fully what's going on or not, every time you say no to Jesus, you're saying, hey, I'm taking it.

Bring it on. I don't care about what you did for me. On the other hand, you can come brokenhearted to Jesus and say, I realize I'm a sinner that stands justly condemned before a holy God and I understand God the Father willingly sacrificed His Son for me.

I can't help but think about the words to that song. My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin, can you say it with me, not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, oh my soul. Is that true for you this morning? My sin, oh the bliss of that glorious thought, my sin not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more. There is now, therefore, no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. Does it get any better than that? Huh? No. Later when you take the bread, I want you to think to yourself, Jesus died for my sins and He died in my place.

[31 : 14] He suffered the full measure of God's holy judgment against sin for me and there is no remaining debt on my account. Now look at verse 20.

Verse 20, it says, the cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. I don't know how excited you get about the new covenant but I want you to think with me just for a moment and we're going to kind of press things together here a little bit.

Understand the significance of the new covenant. There are really two pieces that we're going to enjoy this morning. The bread that reminds us that Jesus died for our sins and the new covenant that says, and He made a promise.

Do God's promises get you excited? Yesterday as I was out on our porch a guy was cycling by who I've gotten to know in my neighborhood and he's cycling by and he stopped and looked at me and says, hey, Reverend, pray for me.

I'm going to play my lottery ticket. I said, not in your life. Why do people expect a reverend to pray for their lottery ticket?

[32 : 19] Don't ask me again. But in comparison to a little bit of cash, I have the promise of God, the new covenant.

Let me kind of touch on three little pieces of the new covenant because I am overwhelmed when I stop and think about when I take that blood, it reminds me of promises God has made for me. One is this, the new covenant promises transformation.

In Jeremiah chapter 31, and we're not going to look there, it says, I will give them a new heart. How many of you remember when it was that you had a heart that was darkened and miserable by sin? You were absolutely burdened with the nastiness of your soul. Christ Jesus came into your life and gave you complete forgiveness and he gave you a new heart.

One of the things that I love to say to people when I'm sharing the gospel with them is you don't have to stay the way you are. Oh, by the way, to some of you who are believers, I got to tell you, you don't have to stay the way you are.

[33 : 28] In fact, everybody follow me with this. Are you with me? Over here. If you don't see the evidence of progressive change in your life, you probably ought to check your birth certificate.

Now, I agree, you're not moving probably as fast as you'd like or your family would like either. But here's the deal. If a man is in Christ Jesus, he's a different person.

He's a new creation. Old things are passed away and he's at work. And I am so very thankful that at 67, I'm not the man I used to be, but I look forward to being the man I someday will be.

Why? Because the new covenant tells me, I will give them a new heart. Secondly, the new covenant also grants me complete forgiveness through Christ's blood.

You know one of the things it says in the new covenant? In the book of Jeremiah, it says, their sins I will remember what? No more. How many of you have family members that bring up some of the old things you did that were incredibly unkind?

[34 : 38] I was a scoundrel and a skunk, still partially that way a little bit, but I have a lot of people that I grew up with that just cannot imagine that I could be any different than I ever was.

And they can't get over some of those things. Here's what Jesus says in the promise of the new covenant. It says, I will remember your sins against you no more. Satan may bring up your past, but God doesn't.

In fact, he made a promise, ironclad, bound, that he will never again bring those things up. Finally, the new covenant promises a full and unchangeable relationship.

I love this. If you ever want to have fun in kind of a little Bible survey, start in the book of Genesis and work your way to the book of Revelation asking, where all in the Scriptures do I find this concept?

I will be their God and they will be my people. God says that he will be in relationship with me.

[35 : 50] Not just kind of a distant, yeah, well, I know him. No. My name is written on his hand. The believer is as precious to God as the apple of the eye, the eye itself.

And so this morning as you take these elements, our prayer earlier was this, is that the Holy Spirit would stir your heart to desire these elements the way Jesus desired to take them.

And he took them thinking about you I want you to take them thinking about him. Do you follow that? Have the men come as we gather around the table and I would plead with you, listen, we're going to take these elements this morning to honor the Lord Jesus Christ and to remember his sacrifice and I pray that your heart is overwhelmed with thanksgiving and as we, John are you playing the instruments?

Okay, you're playing quietly, softly. Here's what I want you to do back up to the just quiet soft music. Everybody look at me. I want Bible verses from you as the elements are passed, right?

Bible verses. Now that's a little tricky. Some of you are going to have to rely on using one hand and somebody else holding the cup or you can go for memory. But I want Bible verses just to absolutely roll out of this blessed congregation.

[37 : 27] God's people said what? Let's try that again. And God's people said what? That's moderately better. Okay. We want to pray and ask God's Spirit to give us clear consciences as we come to this table, don't we?

Let's do that. Our Father God, this morning we think about the Lord Jesus Christ who you sent to be the Savior of the world and our Savior in particular.

And as we take this bread and we take this cup, we do show forth the Lord's death until He comes. We remember that He died for us.

We remember the promise that He made to us. And our hearts are lifted up. This morning we understand Father that to take this bread and take this cup in a dishonest, deceitful way is dangerous.

And so if there's someone here that does not know Christ, Father, on the basis of Your Word I would plead with them to trust in Christ as Savior and then take the elements or to let the elements pass.

[38 : 47] and let us as believers who take these elements take them with a clear conscience, allowing the Spirit of God to challenge us to think carefully if there are things in our lives that we need to confess and to forsake.

And let that confessing and that forsaking be something that is genuine and deep that we would be a people that are marked by holiness and the desire for the glory of Christ.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.