

# Matthew 26:17-29

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[ 0 : 00 ] I have been waiting for this day for a while and anticipating it.! If you'll turn with me to Matthew chapter 26.

! We're going to begin in verse 27. I'm not smart enough to operate this. There we go. If you are trying to recollect where we are in the book of Matthew, or if you're new with us at Shoreline, I'd recommend to you checking out the last sermon that we preached. It was all the way back on March 8th. It was the last time we met together at the Holiday Inn. Before we came to this COVID shutdown. That particular passage, the first half of chapter 26. That passage, Matthew sets the stage for the end game of the whole book of Matthew. It sets up the full conclusion. And so, if you're looking to get back on track with the book of Matthew, that's a great place to go to do that.

[ 1 : 20 ] And so, as we approach the Lord's Supper, this is the first event of the conclusion of the book of Matthew. Where Jesus sets his priorities.

And sets out what he is designing to do as we get to this central act of human history. And so, as we look today at the institution of the Lord's Supper, that's what we ought to have in the beginning. This is Christ's heart for his greatest act of love. And so, join me in Matthew chapter 26, beginning in verse 27. Verse 17.

Sorry. Now, on the first day of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus saying, Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover? He said, Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, The teacher says, My time is at hand.

I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them. And they prepared the Passover. When it was evening, he reclined at table with the twelve.

[ 2 : 28 ] And as they were eating, he said, Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me. They were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, Is it I, Lord? He answered, He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me.

The Son of Man goes as it is written of him. Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would have been better for that man if he had not been born. Judas, who would betray him, answered, Is it I, Rabbi?

He said to him, You have said so. Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread and after blessing, broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat, this is my body.

And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you. But 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 again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you, my Father's kingdom. Let's pray. Lord, in these quiet moments, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts, acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer.

[ 3 : 52 ] We pray that in the name of Jesus, who made this new covenant in his blood. Amen. As we walk through this passage, you probably noticed that it sort of broke down into two sections.

The first being verses 17 through 25, where we see the Passover meal being celebrated and the focus on Judas's betrayal of Christ.

And then the second section, verses 26 through 29, where Christ institutes the Lord's supper. And we'll look at each of them in turn, but we'll give the lion's share of our attention today to that second part, where Christ institutes the Lord's supper.

So first, as we look to the betrayer, to Judas, in the celebration of the Passover meal, it's interesting that this passage holds such a tension between the first and the second part, right?

On one hand, we have the proclamation of history's greatest act of love, of selflessness, of faithfulness. And it stands here in contrast to what precedes it, this history's most famous betrayal. [ 5 : 05 ] Have you ever met someone named Judas? That would be some cruel parents, right? Like, his name has become synonymous with betrayal, right?

And it's not just any betrayal, right? Judas was in the boat when Christ calmed the storm. He had a front row seat to every sermon that Christ preached.

He ate the bread that Christ multiplied. He allowed Jesus to wash his feet.

And after three years of traveling together, here we see them celebrating the Passover together.

Now, the Passover was eaten as a household.

You can look back to Exodus and how it's established. It's for a family. And how important is family in an Eastern context? It's even more dear than we hold it here in the West.

[ 6 : 14 ] But the disciples did not search out their extended family in Jerusalem here. They ate the Passover meal with Jesus, their Lord.

They belonged, in a sense, to his household. And Judas is going to betray him for the price of a maimed and disabled slave.

And throughout church history, Christian writers have poured their creativity into describing this treachery. Treachery, right? One says, the traitor perseveres here in his wickedness.

Judas, while the rest were sorrowful and withdrew their hands and did away the food from their mouths, with the same hard of hood and recklessness, which led him to betray his Lord, reached forth his hand into the dish with his master, passing off his audacity as a good conscience.

Another writer said, such is the want of men of exceeding wickedness to plot against those of whose bread and salt they have partaken.

[ 7 : 24 ] Here we see the most abundant and overflowing measure of this man's wickedness. And we got to ask, why is this here? Matthew is about to get us to the great heights of the Lord's Supper.

Or why does he preface it with this to set the stage, this treachery? Why does highest faithfulness sit with lowest betrayal?

I hope it brings sorrow to us. How is it that ultimate treason can stand next to ultimate fidelity? Well, I think there are a few reasons for it.

First, it's simply the truth of the matter. The book of Matthew is certainly more than a history book, but it is not less. He shows us how the Lord brought about the salvation of the world.

And it's through this, this betrayal. Second, it leads us to see and appreciate our Lord's sacrifice all the more.

[ 8 : 25 ] What our Lord suffered in his passion was more than simply the physical pain of crucifixion. Certainly it was that.

But in his atoning work, Christ tasted a comprehensive pain. Spanning every sphere that sin touches in our lives.

He experienced abandonment as his disciples ran away. He bore the shame of public humiliation.

He felt the loss of loved ones as he said goodbye to his family. For three hours, as darkness covered the skies, he bore the full force of divine wrath for sin.

And all of this was set up by an additional pain. The abundant and overflowing measure of wickedness, that one writer put, right?

[ 9 : 23 ] Of Judas' betrayal. And so we can look to the cross and see and behold the magnitude of our Savior's love for us. That he went there experiencing the grief and the sorrow over the sin of betrayal.

Third, we have, we see in this a savior of compassion.

No one perhaps has put it better than Ligon Duncan, who incidentally, I thought I was, I wanted to go study under Ligon Duncan. And I told my wife this, and she started crying, because that would have meant that we would have had to move to Mississippi.

I'm sorry if you're from Mississippi for you, not I'm sorry that I, sorry. Here's what he had to say about this.

It's possible that there is someone here who's been betrayed by a professing Christian. And I don't mean just disappointed, I mean betrayed.

[ 10 : 33 ] And it's broken your heart. And you don't know quite what to do, and you don't know where to turn. And I want you to tell you, my friends, your Savior knows what that is like.

He will not be betrayed by chief priests who hate him. He will be betrayed by one of his own disciples. We shouldn't be surprised by our own betrayals, and we certainly shouldn't be cynical about them.

But when you experience that kind of betrayal, you not only turn to a Savior who can sympathize with you. You turn to a Savior who understands your experience better than you understand it. And who has experienced a betrayal that you will never understand. We appreciate our Lord's suffering.

We see that he is a Savior of compassion who can sympathize with our hurts. And we also see the measure of Christ's grace even to his enemies.

[ 11 : 44 ] Because here he offers two gifts of grace to Judas, his betrayer. A warning and a meal. First, the warning.

He calls Judas out, but he also does it without giving him away. The other disciples still don't understand who it is. He doesn't blow his cover, so to speak.

And so what he is doing here is offering him, even now, one last opportunity to repent and turn away from the evil that he intends to do.

Right? So warnings, even if they don't feel like it, friends, warnings are a grace, aren't they? And so he offers that grace and he offers the grace of the meal.

Which we've already talked about how the family nature of the Passover and how that's a grace to Judas. And soon we're going to see the importance of the new meal that he is about to establish.

[ 12 : 43 ] Which is another grace to Judas. And so what we see here is that Jesus is offering grace to his very betrayer. I think it's fitting that today, the song we're going to sing in closing is going to say, we will sing these words, right?

Man of sorrows, Lamb of God, by his own betrayed. The line we're going to sing is, sent of heaven, God's own son, to purchase and redeem and reconcile the very ones who nailed him to that tree.

Our Lord came to give grace to his enemies. So friends, if you feel for some reason that you are too far away, you are not too far away for his reach to embrace you.

You're not. If you feel that you have betrayed God, well, actually, you're right. Every one of us has. And he loves you.

And extends grace and mercy to you. He died on the cross for your sins, even the sin of betrayal.

You are not too far away for him to offer you his grace.

[ 14 : 21 ] And no one you meet is too far away. So let's not think that this person that we meet, any person that we meet, oh, they're too sinful.

No. Oh, they're too intellectual. No. Or proud. Or even too successful. That's quite a barrier. To receive God's grace.

No. To respond to the gospel. No. They're not too far away. Let's not write off anyone for any reason.

God's grace may come to all. And so, friends, let's offer the gift, the good news of Christ, crucified, buried, and risen for sinners like you and like me.

To every man and woman and child. Because no one is too far away. To be extended the offer of God's grace.

[ 15 : 26 ] That's what we see is Jesus shares the Lord's Supper with his betrayer. We deepen our appreciation for what the Lord suffered on our behalf.

We see that we have a Savior who can sympathize with our betrayals. And we see that no one is too far gone. Now let's look at the meal itself.

In it, Jesus explains that he is instituting a new covenant.

And friends, this is the story of the Bible. And by that I don't mean this is the biggest story or the greatest story or the most memorable story. This is the actual full story of the Bible.

The point of it. The Lord relates to his people through grace. What he gives. God could demand anything, everything of us.

[ 16 : 30 ] More than we could give. He could extract from us payment. He could place on us burdens. But instead, all of his covenants, he moves towards his people in unmerited favor.

Giving them gifts that they cannot earn ever for themselves. They are overwhelmingly saturated with his promise.

Not his demand. Right? He gave Noah protection. In the covenant he made with Noah. He gave Abraham descendants.

In the covenant he made with Abraham. He gave Israel deliverance and a home. He gave David a throne. And it culminates in Christ.

Where God so loved the world. That he gave his only son. That whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

[ 17 : 29 ] Right? So the covenants of God are overwhelmingly filled with his giving. And second, the covenants that God makes with his people, they are all related.

They're not disconnected covenants with this person and then with this person. Like as if God's just going around passing out blessings left and right to disparate people. Instead, what we see is that God's covenants are all connected to one another.

For instance, if you look at the covenant that he's about to make with Israel in Exodus. The one that sets up the Passover meal that they're celebrating in Matthew chapter 26.

It is not some unique thing disconnected from the rest of redemptive history. In Exodus chapter 2, as he's setting in motion his plan to rescue his people.

We read, During those many days, the king of Egypt died and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God and God heard their groaning and God remembered his covenant with Abraham.

[ 18 : 49 ] With Isaac and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel and God knew. The rescue that brings us to the covenant of Sinai and the Passover feast that Jesus is celebrating here in Matthew 26 was not something new.

It was God remaining faithful to his covenant with Abraham. And that's just one example. All of the covenants share this shared identity.

This kind of connection. They are all an expression of God's grace to his one people. And so what distinguishes the covenants from one another is that as time progresses, they become more and more clear about what the Lord is doing and more specific about how he is doing.

When our first parents sins and disqualify themselves from God's presence, even in their curse, God promised grace and redemption. That's Genesis 3.15, the first preaching of the gospel.

And then in making a covenant with Abraham, he specified which lineage that that seed would come from. And so he specified the promise.

[ 20 : 09 ] Even as he promised a worldwide blessing. Here we go. Right. And so he was expanding the promise to the whole world.

And then he also connected that covenant. This is the how, right? To faith. Abraham believed God and he credited to him as righteousness. And then as we get to Sinai and the Mosaic covenant, the one that institutes the Passover feast that Jesus is celebrating, we see that Abraham's line awaited the seed.

The Lord continued to show grace and protection, liberating them from slavery, establishing a system of worship that's communion with God, and giving a visual demonstration in the sacrifices of what that seed Christ would one day do to accomplish this promise.

And in the Davidic covenant, we see one family within Abraham's line, getting that royal role that Christ would one day fill forever.

And so all in all of his covenants, God is pointing to this one central promise to redeem the world and giving greater and greater detail each time.

[ 21 : 22 ] Third, all these covenants are culminating here in Matthew 26. That one central promise in which he is going to establish a new covenant.

I tend to, as I've described, I like how John Calvin puts it when he says, basically he calls them brighter and brighter covenants.

And it's important that we see here that Jesus is the one making the covenant. Because, who made all of the covenants before him?

Moses didn't make the covenant at Sinai. He was just a mediator. God did, right? The Lord made a covenant with Noah. The Lord in heaven made a covenant with Abraham.

The Lord made the covenant with Israel through a mediator, Moses. The Lord made the covenant with David through the prophet Nathan. The Lord promised a new covenant, that he was going to make a new covenant.

[ 22 : 37 ] The Lord made all the covenants and Jesus. Establishes the new covenant. Not as a mediator.

Not as a representative. He's not facilitating. He makes it. What does that mean?

It tells us who he is. This means that the most high God, right? We're all sitting here baking under the sun. He made that. With words.

The most high God. Immortal. Invisible.

God only wise. In light. Inaccessible. Hid from our eyes. Most blessed. Most glorious. The ancient of days. Assumed to himself.

[ 23 : 35 ] A human nature. And was born in Bethlehem. He did that. So that he. The author of life. Might be able.

To taste death. To establish. This covenant. That we might have life. Some of you will be familiar with the covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15.

In the ancient Near East. The way you established the oaths of covenants. Was by cutting an animal in two. And walking between the parts. As if to say.

Let this be done to me. If this covenant is broken. God makes the covenant with Abraham. But Abraham. Doesn't walk through the pieces.

God walks through a lot. God. We've all broken faith with God. The covenant is broken. Which means that he planned. Even the day that he established the covenant with Abraham.

[ 24 : 39 ] To honor that covenant. That promise. With his own. Body and blood. And we. See here.

That. God making good. On that. Covenant. The one with Abraham. When Jesus says. Drink of it. All of you. This is my. Blood. Of the covenant.

He is faithful. To his promises. Even at greatest cost. And what does he achieve in this? The covenant sign.

The Lord's Supper. It shows us. Right. The covenant signs. Whether they're circumcision. Or the Passover meal. Or. This one here.

In the Lord's Supper. They are not reminders for us to do stuff. Right. It's not like. All right. I've got to do this ritual. So that I stay on God's good side. No.

[ 25 : 37 ] It's a reminder that God has already put you. On his good side. Right. They're reminders. Of what God has already done. And the promises that he has made. To us. The reminders.

For us to rest. In God's promises. And in his work. And so. The covenant signs. Communicate to us. Right. Noah. The covenant.

Promise. Right. Was. I will. I establish my covenant with you. This is Genesis 9. That never again. Shall flesh be cut off. By the waters of the flood. And never again.

Shall there be a flood. To destroy the earth. That sign is not arbitrary. Right. The sign of the rainbow. That's the sign of that covenant. It's connected specifically. To that promise. It shows God's protection.

That he is relenting. From using the rain clouds. Once again. As agents of judgment. And then in Abraham. The covenant promise. It was. Genesis 17.

[ 26 : 32 ] Behold. A covenant is with you. And you. Shall be the father. Of a multitude of nations. And again. The covenant signs. Circumcision. Is an arbitrary. I think you can figure out.

How that. Circumcision points. Towards. Reproduction. An offspring. What does this one show? What does.

The covenant sign. Of the Lord's table. Show. In that same way. How is it. What is it connected to? First. It clearly.

He says. This is my blood. The covenant. For the forgiveness. Of sins. Friends. If. You've never. I don't know everyone here. Today. Right. But I. So I don't know.

If you have. Had your sins forgiven. By the blood of Christ. He shed his blood. So that you might be. Forgiven of your sins. And this is.

[ 27 : 29 ] It's not an act. That you can. Help yourself into. That you can help him. Along with. He had to die. Because we can't. Pay for our sins. So I invite anyone.

Who has not. Yet availed themselves. Of Christ's. Sacrifice. To repent. And believe. And to find in him. Forgiveness.

But it is not. Simply. Right. If you. If you look at. Circumcision. It looks forward. Right. To. To. Offspring. If you look. At. The covenant.

With Noah. It looks. Forward. To a future. Where a flood. Will never be used again. This one. Also. Looks. Forward. And.

This forward looking. Promise. It looks. Right. At God's heart. Right. Because. Why do all this? Why bother. Making covenants. Right.

[ 28 : 30 ] Why make a covenant. With man. We are so. Far beneath. Why. Make. A covenant. Of grace. Why offer. People. Gifts. At all. Why do.

Any. Of this. At the center. Of. Covenants. Is this. Mentality. From our Lord. God said. To Abraham. About his descendants. I will. Be. Their. God. God said. To Israel. In Exodus. I will. Take you. To be.

My. My. People. And I. Will. Be your. God. And you. Shall. Know. That I. Am. The Lord. Your. God. And God. Said. That the new. Covenant. The covenant.

That Jesus. Is here. Establishing. By his. Blood. He was. Foreshadowing. It. In. Jeremiah. 31. He said. I will. Put my. Law. Within them. I will. Write it. On their. Hearts.

[ 29 : 23 ] I will. Be their. God. And they. Will. Be. My. Made. You. To.

Know. Him. That's the point of the covenant. All of them. God. Made you. To be drawn. In. To his. Family. To know. And be. Known. By. The alpha. The omega. The beginning. And the end. He made you. To be adopted.

As his own. To dine. At. His. Table. That's what this point. Stealing. Right.

That's why he calls this sign. His. Table. He calls it the Lord's. Supper. He calls it the Lord's. Table. First. Friends. Right. This meal.

[ 30 : 22 ] Is not just a look. Back. At the cross. It is a look. Forward. To the wedding feast. Of the land. When we come.

To the Lord's. Table together. We're doing. Two things. We're looking. At the blood. Of the covenant. Which forgave. Our sins. And we're looking. Forward. To that day.

When we will. Eat. At his table. As he says. New. In his father's. Game. And so. When we look. To the cross. We see it is finished. But it's not. Concluded.

It is. Because. Jesus death. Is not. The final. Word. Not the only. Thing. That the Lord's. Table. Signifies.

Because he. Rose. On the third. Day. And he. Ascended. Into heaven. And he. Sat down. At the right. Hand. Of the father. And he. Rules. And reigns. And he. Is coming.

[ 31 : 19 ] Again. He is coming. For his own. And he. Will. Take us. To himself. On that day. And then.

What no eye. Has seen. Nor ear. Heard. Nor the heart. Of man. Imagine. What God. Has prepared. For those. Who love him.

He died. On the cross. So that you. Could be forgiven. So that. We might be reconciled. So that. We.

Might. Sit. At. His. Table. Which is why. The apostle. Paul says. As often.

As we. Eat this. Bread. And drink. This cup. We proclaim. The Lord's. Death. Until. He. Comes. Again. Friends.

[ 32 : 17 ] Let's pray. Lord. We are so grateful. That you have made us your own.

By the blood of your cross. That you have made a covenant. We don't deserve it at all. Not one bit. But Lord. You delight. To make us your own. Lord. Might we celebrate that. Might we celebrate the cross. Where you did it. Might we eagerly anticipate.

The day. When we sit at your table. To know. And be known. By the most high God. Pray this in the name of Jesus Christ.

Our kid. Amen. Amen. And so now we have these. Individually packaged.

[ 33 : 14 ] Covent compliant. Communion. Let us do. Exactly. What Christ said. Let us remember him. Together. Apostle Paul reflecting on what we just read.

It said, For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you. That the Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread.

He broke it and said, This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. And let's remember him together. In the same way, he also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. Friends, let's remember that he has bound himself to us by the oath of his covenant that he is coming for us.

Which is why Paul says, For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Let's remember him. And proclaim his death for our life.

[ 35 : 17 ] Together. Lord, there is no way that we can even comprehend the breath of your love.

Father, we thank you that you testify to it in these symbols as we proclaim the grace of your covenant to us, your people.

Father, we thank you that you have done this. All of grace. You intend to make us, that you have made us your own.

And that you intend to bring us home. To you. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.