

# Luke 22:14-30

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let us pray. Father, may the words of my mouth and the many meditations of our hearts be pleasing and acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Maker and our Redeemer. Amen.

! Please be seated. I only want to ask one question tonight, and it's, why is this night different from all others?

It was a question that was asked in the middle of every Jewish Passover meal. The light of oil lamp would be flickering on the dining table, eager faces huddled around roasted lamb.

A cup of wine raised in blessing, and the youngest child in the family would stand up and ask the question, why is this night different from all others? It's the question that we're all invited to ask tonight.

Because tomorrow he will be convicted, tortured, crucified in broad daylight. Tonight he will be betrayed, denied, and mocked in brute darkness. And in just a few hours we will hear him bellow, anguished cries to his heavenly Father, as beads of bloody sweat roll down his brow, and he asks that this cup would be removed from him.

[ 1 : 28 ] But now, in the calm before the storm, the Savior of the world savors one last meal with his disciples. Why is this night different from all others?

And the answer to our question can be found in verses 15 and 16 of Luke chapter 22, which can be found on page 882 of the Pew Bible.

A vast reservoir of grace is distilled into these two verses. Jesus is opening words at his final meal. And when the hour came, he reclined at table and the apostles with him.

Verse 15. And Jesus 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.

So why is this night different? First, we are told that it is the desire of the Savior. I have eagerly desired to eat this meal with you, says Jesus to those huddled around his table.

[ 2 : 48 ] Amidst all the human plotting and politicking surrounding this night, amidst all the human plotting and politicking that surrounds our own lives and our work and our nations and our cities and our world, the Lord's heart is steadfastly fixed on one eager desire.

He wants to share this meal with us tonight. We don't have a reluctant Savior, but one who is eager to save. We don't have a removed Savior, but one who is eager to draw near.

And we do not have a distracted Savior, but one who is eager to serve us this night. And so Jesus takes the central image of his whole entire earthly ministry, the image of a meal, of a feast, of a banquet, and he makes it the culmination of what he has been on about with his disciples.

And interestingly, it's the one thing that he's been criticized for throughout his earthly ministry as well, his penchant for eating with sinners. So why is this night so different from all others?

Well, first, it's the desire of the Savior to eat with us tonight. And second, it is the Passover. I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover, Jesus says.

[ 4 : 03 ] Not a Passover, but this Passover with you. So as Judas and the religious leaders were plotting his death at the beginning of chapter 22, Jesus was planning this meal.

He had Peter and John prepare a table for his apostles in the presence of his enemies. They had to purchase, probably as part of their preparations, an unblemished lamb, sacrifice it in the temple, roast it whole, and then bring it to the table, surrounded by bitter herbs and unleavened bread.

They had to arrange the room, prepare the lamps and lights, and every element was pregnant with spiritual significance that night. And now Jesus presides as host of the grace feast.

He would have had to lead his apostles to rehearse all of the great mighty acts of salvation that God has done throughout his history with Israel. Delivering his people from the death grip of Egypt and leading them triumphantly through the Red Sea, descending in holy fire on Sinai, raining manna from heaven in the wilderness, establishing a kingdom under David, and building a temple under Solomon, sending Israel into exile and judgment, and yet so graciously promising that he would rescue and console them through Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

And so Jesus, that night, would have rehearsed this whole history of God's mighty acts with his people until there were no more mighty acts to rehearse. And that's when Jesus steps forward and says, there is one more mighty act to come, and we're on the cusp of it.

[ 5 : 53 ] So why is this night so different from all others? It's because the Lord desires to share it with us. It's because it was the Passover. And third, it's because it was the night before his passion.

I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you, says Jesus, before I suffer. On this night, the Passover meal is transposed into the Lord's Supper.

It starts like any other Passover meal, but as it progresses, Jesus increasingly draws attention to his passion. And he reveals to them that this meal all along has actually been about the meaning of his death.

Verses 19 and 20 make this clear. And he took the bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and he gave it to them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. And likewise, after the cup, likewise, the cup after they had eaten, saying, This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

[ 7 : 06 ] Do you see how Jesus is putting himself right at the center of salvation history? And saying, The celebration of God's mighty acts all through the centuries have ultimately been about this moment.

Jesus self-offering, His body given, and His blood poured out, now establishes a new covenant, a new relationship with His people.

Where on the cross, the throne of just judgment becomes a fountain of free forgiveness. Where on the cross, His blood replaces all the blood of goats and lambs and bulls.

Where on the cross, His grace cleanses all our sin, and His mercy covers all our shame. His truth displaces all our lies. And His love removes all our guilty fears.

Why is this night different from all others? Because the Lord desires to share it with us. On the Passover, the night before His passion.

[ 8 : 15 ] And finally, because He tells us, surprisingly, that it's a foretaste of heaven. Look at verse 16, or 15, I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

Why? Verse 16, for I tell you, I will not eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And then skip down again to verse 18, where He does the same sort of thing.

He says, take this and divide it among yourselves. Why? For I tell you that from now on, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.

There's something about this meal that points to the future. Not just our Lord's passion, which is on the imminent horizon, but in the whole new creation, which is the ultimate horizon of His salvation.

As Paul says later in one of his letters to the Corinthians, as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until His coming again.

[ 9 : 24 ] There's a sense that when we partake of this meal, we not only remember the greatness of what God has done, but we look forward to the fullness of His redemption. And so what we realize is that what we receive in the Lord's Supper is actually only a foretaste of the glory that's to come.

Just a drop in the bucket of the ocean of God's grace. It's an appetizer, and the main course is still to come. This is why the Passover feast, Jesus tells us, marks the beginning of His fast.

He will not feast again in this exact way until the kingdom has fully come. So deep is His desire for the salvation of the world that He will not raise the cup of blessing until everyone that the Father has given Him is saved.

So even as He sits at the right hand of God Almighty in heaven, His heart still hungers, and His lips still pray, Your kingdom come and Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Now don't get me wrong. The cross changes everything. The empty tomb changes everything. And the world will never be the same because of Holy Week and the amazing grace that's poured out in that moment.

[ 10 : 46 ] And yet we have to admit that the kingdoms of this world have not yet become the kingdom of Christ. not everyone has yet bowed the knee and confessed that He has the name that is above every name.

They still rage. The nations still plot in vain. And they still set themselves against the Lord and His anointed. And so the Savior of the world still fasts, waiting with us for the day when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord.

And while every person that the Father has determined from all eternity past that He would give to Him is gathered into His almighty presence, sees the glory of His beautiful face, and then praises Him for all eternity, worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive glory and honor and power.

For He has purchased by His blood a people from every tribe and tongue and nation. So if this is our Savior's desire and if this is the Passover on the night before His passion, and heaven forbid, this is actually a foretaste of what's to come, then truly this night is different from all others.

And it raises a very simple question for us. How do we respond? Just two things that I think our Savior very simply points us to. He says, do this and don't do this.

[ 12 : 09 ] So verse 19. This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

It's not that complicated. Jesus just says it's a command to partake of the Lord's Supper in an ongoing manner in remembrance of His death and passion.

It's a call to remember and receive. Because our heart receives what the mind remembers. And our heart savors where the mind lingers.

Now this is one of the reasons why in Scripture forgetfulness is one of the most serious of spiritual diseases. And there's this constant call to remember throughout the Scriptures. Take for example Psalm 103.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, that all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all of His benefits.

[ 13 : 08 ] And then goes and lists everything that we have in Christ who forgives all your iniquities, heals all your diseases, redeems your life from the pit, crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, satisfies you with good so your youth is renewed like the eagle.

Jesus first says, do this. Do what we're about to do this evening in remembrance of me. And the second response is, He says, don't do this.

And this is where Luke gives us a nice little example of the disciples not really getting it. After drinking the cup of the new covenant, the disciples started questioning one another and then debating with one another who's going to betray Jesus and then disputing with one another which one of them was the greatest.

Seems like an odd response to the Lord's Supper. So in verse 25, Jesus interjects. He interrupts their confident bickering and gives them a moment of clarifying love.

Verse 25, He says, the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them. And those in authority over them are called benefactors, but not so with you.

[ 14 : 21 ] In other words, don't do this. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest and the leader as the one who serves. For who is the greater?

One who reclines at the table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table at which they're all saying, yes, yes, of course, it's the one who reclines at the table. That's why we want that position.

And Jesus says, but I am among you as the one who serves. So it's a warning against arrogance and pride, and I think against worldly ambition.

But to put it positively, it's a call to repent and serve. So I love this. I love how Jesus tempers our passion for our own little reputations by holding up the example of his great humility.

He's among us as one who serves. He has not come to be the greatest or sit at the places of honor or receive adulation from the crowds.

[ 15 : 28 ] He's come to serve and dine with his disciples, to be the Lord who washes feet and to be the King who gives away his life as a ransom for many. And so as we come to the table, Jesus serves us not only as our generous host, but he offers himself to us as our great example.

So it's one of the reasons why we began our service with these wonderful words from 1 John 3, verse 16. Brothers and sisters, by this we know love that Christ Jesus laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.

My brothers and sisters, I speak this to you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.