

Luke 22:1-23 "A Memorable Meal"

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- [0 : 0 0] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.
- I know some of you get a little nervous about a service planned around a little bit shorter sermon than usual. You don't think I'm capable of that. We'll find out.
- Now, as Luke walks us through this final week of Jesus' life, we've been going through that together in his gospel.
- He's doing it to help us see who Jesus really is, right? And we've come now all the way to Thursday, just one day before Jesus will die.
- The tension is building, and Luke does something we've seen in the TV or movies before. He brings together two different storylines.
- [0 : 5 8] They're going to come together to highlight an important moment, ultimately the crucifixion of Jesus. But in this passage, it's a special meal with his disciples to give added meaning to that coming death.
- Notice those separate storylines as I read the first part of our passage for today, and then I'll pray for us. Luke 22 at verse 1. This is God's holy word.
- Now, the feast of unleavened bread drew near, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people.
- Then Satan entered into Judas, called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them.
- And they were glad and agreed to give him money. So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd. Then came the day of unleavened bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.
- [2 : 0 4] So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, go and prepare the Passover for us that we may eat it. And they said to him, where will you have us prepare it? And he said to them, behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you.
- Follow him into the house that he enters and tell the master of the house. The teacher says to you, where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished.
- Prepare it there. And they went and found it just as he had told them. And they prepared the Passover. Let's pray. Father, thank you for this, your written word, for the word that will be preached, for the visible word that we will see and touch and smell and taste.
- And all of it, show us Jesus. We ask in his name. Amen. So Luke sets the stage for us here, doesn't he?
- We've already seen Jesus for weeks and weeks now, laser focused on going to Jerusalem to suffer and die. And now he's made it to God's city.

- [3 : 23] And here in this passage, we see group one considering death at the Passover. The religious leaders, Judas, and even Satan who enters Judas want the death of Jesus.
- Of course, it's complicated because the Passover crowds are currently loving Jesus. So they have to be careful. They need to find him alone somewhere if they're going to be able to swing the crowd.
- And Judas can help. But while the bad guys are making those preparations, verse 7, group 2, Jesus and his disciples are making preparations for Passover too.
- Also considering death. As we'll see more in just a minute, Passover always had that context, didn't it? All the way back in Egypt, the lamb had to be sacrificed.
- And so we see Jesus has made preparations himself for a really important meal with his closest friends to show them more about himself and more about his death so they'll know and understand.
- [4 : 35] And then they're there. Jesus, his disciples. Judas also from the other storyline. Verse 14, the music builds.
- And when the hour came, here it all is. 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. Do you hear Jesus' passionate heart for this meal?
- How important this moment is for him? The words that he uses are actually, I have desired with a desire. Meaning to accent the passion that he has for this, the emotion he feels in the moment.
- I have longed with deep longing to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. That's what he's saying. And we need to notice that because we know Jesus' heart has been set like that on only one thing, right?
- [5 : 44] Over and over in Luke's gospel, the only thing Jesus has talked about that way is going to the cross, isn't it? And so somehow this meal is connected to that.
- That must be in his mind something that's of utmost importance. That it's a priority to him because we're going to hear him connect its meaning to that primary reason he came to earth.
- To go to the cross. But just in even this opening statement to his disciples, we see Jesus reference the past, the Passover feast.
- The present, this meal now to share before his suffering and the future. Another supper fulfilled in God's kingdom.
- This meal will help them consider all three time frames. Perhaps you have some memorable meals in your family.
- [6 : 44] Traditional dishes that evoke certain memories. Celebrations that you always commemorate in the same way. Maybe things you eat when you celebrate Thanksgiving or Christmas or birthdays or something like that.
- It wouldn't be Christmas without this. I love Thanksgiving dinner, Christmas dinner at Christy's grandparents' home. Ham, turkey, mac and cheese, dressing, all of the green things hidden in casseroles.
- It's just the way you should do it. But the most important thing for me, this won't surprise many of you, is the dessert. Right? Among many other things, Christy's grandmother bakes chocolate chip cookies every time.
- Now I've had a lot of chocolate chip cookies. Really good chocolate chip cookies. But I've been eating these for 15 years and they're just the same way every time.

Just right. And even though there's other really good cookies out there, these cookies are uniquely grandma. It's the way she does it.

[8 : 00] Every year they send a tin of them home with us from South Carolina. And even back in Huntsville, you can eat one of those chocolate chip cookies and you just can feel like you're back there in her kitchen with grandma.

You know that feeling? Is there something like that for you? It's not merely that you can eat one of them and separately think about grandma. I mean, you can do that.

I can go buy Chips Ahoy at the store if I want. And if I try really hard, I can eat one and think about grandma. No, it's a closer connection than that, isn't it? Something that you know and feel in your being.

It's a remembrance of her as we savor that special taste and look forward to being back with her another time. That's what happens for God's people with these suppers.

Past, present, future, all together in this meal they share when they eat this food. Let's look back first.

[9 : 04] The Passover was instituted as God was bringing His people out of their long slavery in Egypt. They made unleavened bread in a hurry to leave.

They put the blood of the Passover lamb on the door frames of their houses so the angel of death would pass over them when He came for the Egyptians, right? And this event was the defining, redemptive moment for Yahweh and His people.

As He would show Himself strong and loving and bring them into a promised land, flowing with milk and honey, into freedom to worship and serve Him.

This is what He was doing in that very moment, that special night. And so every year, they would celebrate this feast as a remembrance. A remembrance of their great redeeming God and the food helped them experience it again.

A significant part of that feast was the explanation of what they were doing. Every year, it was actually written in to the event that they would hold in each home celebrating the Passover.

[10 : 20] Part of that event is the youngest son asking the father to explain, why are we doing this? What's all this mean? What's it for? And the father replies, with what?

By telling the story of the Exodus. Of their deliverance. The story highlighted by a lamb who died so that the Israelites lived.

By the God who promised to continue delivering His people as they hoped and trusted in Him. See, over the years, the Israelites were further and further removed from the Exodus generation.

Further and further from those who'd actually walked out of Egypt and across the Red Sea and felt the dry ground beneath their feet. But this regular remembrance helped them put themselves in the sandals of their ancestors, so to speak.

To taste the bread and the lamb and the wine that their forefathers ate. And to renew their trust in this special relationship where they trust this faithful, redeeming God.

[11 : 35] Now here is Jesus with His beloved friends celebrating this feast yet again. It's Passover. The Feast of Unleavened Bread. There were actually multiple cups shared in this meal.

Luke mentions a couple of them here. Verse 17, Jesus 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.

That's pretty normal in this Passover celebration. But then Jesus gets to the bread and He begins to do the explanation. He's going to tell them why we're doing this.

Listen, kids, this is part of why we have you come down to these tables with us. So that you can learn and understand what's going on. Kids, if you're one of those who's in our communicants class right now, I want you to listen especially closely.

Okay? This is what the Lord's Supper means. Jesus is going to tell us what it's really about. Pay close attention, okay? Maybe in this Last Supper, we don't know.

[12 : 45] Maybe someone played the role of youngest son dutifully. I don't know. Maybe it was Peter or John. Someone. And asked Jesus, why do we do this? Jesus gives answers now that redefine the narrative that they've had for so many years.

Verse 19, He took bread and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them saying, This is my body which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. Not, this is the bread of our suffering in Egypt and here's what happened. No. No. This is my body which is given for you.

Jesus is infusing this meal with new meaning and significance, isn't He? Now it's not merely looking back to a death of a lamb to deliver God's people, but truly celebrating and remembering the death of the Son of God who gives His life to deliver God's people.

Who gives His life for the sake of others? That's not common. And the Passover lamb had no choice in the matter, did He?

[14 : 04] But Jesus finds His people in slavery to sin, facing death as a consequence for rebellion against a holy God, and He willingly dies in their place.

He tells them this is where He's going. He's saying in 24 hours I'll be headed to a cross, and you need to know that my death is not the end. It's not a failure. It's not a defeat.

It's actually for your deliverance. It's for your redemption. It's your new exodus out of slavery into the freedom of the children of God.

That's what's happening. And it's going to look sad to you, and you're going to be distraught, but there's victory happening. So His followers are to do this in remembrance of Him.

Not merely to do something and think about Him, but to actually have our minds shaped by the centrality of His life and death for our lives today.

[15 : 07] To have our hearts overwhelmed by the magnitude of His love for us. As we contemplate our desperate need born in sin, guilty and facing death until He took our place.

To have our lives transformed by the priorities of King Jesus and our confidence that He is with us no matter what. That's what remembrance means. It's not just something you think about.

We don't just stop and think about Him this morning. We taste and smell His sacrifice. We savor His goodness here with us today.

And we look forward to reunion with Him in confident hope. And so the bread was passed. The Passover lamb was shared.

And then after supper, another cup. Verse 20. Likewise, the cup after they had eaten, saying, This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

[16 : 11] Now, you've heard that so many times. Y'all, the disciples had not. They'd never heard that. This is revolutionary. Not blood that's put on doorposts of homes in Egypt.

His blood. The covenant. Their relationship with God. Is established and maintained in His blood. It was other blood they'd look back to as a reminder of God's faithfulness to His covenant promises.

And as they did that, they looked forward in the hope of His continued fulfillment of those promises. There was a Messiah to come. There was deliverance promised. And now Jesus says, Here I am.

It's changing now. I'm here. The sign of God's promises to you of His faithfulness to redeem will be my blood poured out for you.

God has promised a new covenant. Where He's with His people. His law is written on their hearts. His home is their eternal resting place. And Jesus says, Every time you celebrate this meal, it means something new now.

[17 : 18] When you eat the bread and drink the cup. You teach your heart again about the covenant keeping God. The one you can trust. Who loves you enough to send His Son.

Who loves you enough to die in your place. Who loves you enough never to let you go. And never to let any of His promises fail. So you have an eternal hope. And that's the future supper we look forward to, isn't it?

Notice that twice in this brief conversation. Where Jesus is infusing new meaning into the supper. He looks ahead to His eternal kingdom. I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes. He's looking forward, isn't He? And we need to as well. Every time I eat one of Grandma's chocolate chip cookies, I look forward to being back in her kitchen, eating them with her.

Jesus says here, He looks forward to sharing this meal again in His kingdom. Feasting with us at the wedding supper of the Lamb, Revelation 19.

[18 : 32] Where His body and blood cleanses us, His bride. And makes us beautiful. And we enjoy what? Communion. Relationship.

Intimacy. Trust. Forever. That's what He's looking forward to. With you. Blessed are those invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Most of them didn't look worthy or impressive on their own.

But He has made us ready and welcomed us as His bride. When you come to the Lord's table, look back at the sacrifice given for you.

Look now to the present reality of Jesus with you by His Spirit. And look forward to the glory of being with Him forever. Before this poignant scene at the Last Supper ends, though, the other storyline returns.

And there's a stark warning for us. Verse 21. But behold, the hand of Him who betrays Me is with Me on the table. For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined.

[19 : 42] But woe to that man by whom He is betrayed. And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this. Who's at the table with Jesus?

He says there's a betrayer. The disciples are shocked. Is it you? Is it you? Is it me? They start asking.

Now there's an acknowledgement here that Jesus is heading to the cross because He must. And because His Father planned it that way. But that doesn't relieve the one who betrays Him of responsibility, does it?

We know Satan has entered Judas. He's in cahoots with the leaders. The death of Jesus is indeed already in motion. Even as He tells His disciples, more of it will mean for their ultimate deliverance.

But Judas reminds us that being close to Jesus, eating at His table, listening to His very words, does not guarantee our salvation.

[20 : 48] If we persist in rejecting Jesus for whatever other idol, the money, the comfort, whatever was in His heart, we do so at our own peril.

Don't miss the warning to our hearts, especially those who sit in places like this near to Him and His words, that our hearts can betray Jesus even while wanting to look like we're close to Him.

Maybe you feel some of that in your own heart. Maybe you can sense that idolatry. The other loves that seem to get ahead of Jesus in your heart sometimes.

The fact that you'd like to protect your own name more than you want to protect His. And you see that and feel that. I want you to miss who else is at the table.

Because there's a welcome here for you, not just a warning. It's not one betrayer and 11 perfectly faithful disciples, is it?

[21 : 53] In addition to Judas, another of Jesus' closest friends will deny knowing Him tonight. Several will fall asleep on Him.

And by the end of the following day, all of them will have abandoned Him. And listen, Jesus knows that.

Jesus, knowing that, knowing people are conspiring against Him to this end, graciously eats with and instructs His faltering friends, doesn't He?

In fact, do you remember? He earnestly desires to eat this supper with them. This is exactly who He wants to be with for this special moment.

He eagerly welcomes you to come just as you are. He passionately desires to feed your soul. Dear friends, Jesus gives His body and blood for you and pours out all of His life so that you can turn to Him right now from any sin at all and find welcome at His table.

[23 : 18] That's the offer of the gospel to you this morning. Repent and trust Jesus again. Amen. The Lord's table is a table for sinners.

A place Jesus meets not merely with the spiritual successes, but with the spiritual failures. Beggars who cry out for a Savior.

Who see here a forgiving Father. Who taste here a God who will never leave them no matter what. As we come to this table together, I invite you to see Jesus again for the first time.

To remember His love. And to long for eternity with the one who longs for eternity with you.

That's what He says to His followers in that last supper. He's there with them. We just read it. The night He was betrayed, they took that bread, and He broke it, and He gave it to them saying, this is my body given for you.

[24 : 31] Do this in remembrance of me. And then He took the cup and said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Shed for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Drink from it, all of you. If that's the Jesus you see here, come. Come to this table. If you don't know Him, and don't trust Him to be your Savior, don't come to this table.

This is a sign of Jesus. We'd rather talk with you about Jesus Himself. If you don't know Him, and this table doesn't represent those things to you, then we'd still love to pray with you.

You're welcome to come. We'd love to talk with you now or after the service. But don't come to this table. Come to Jesus who offers Himself for you. Who today invites you and says, no matter what your sin, no matter what your past, no matter how you feel, you can turn to me.

Come to me and find rest. Let's pray and we'll celebrate this supper together. Jesus, thank you for your body and blood given for us.

[25 : 43] Would you use these very common elements in our hearts to do things that are really significant? Would it be a remembrance in the fullest sense for us?

Would we taste and know in our hearts that you are good and that you love us? Father, speak to our hearts in ways that my words cannot, by your Spirit, by these elements that we might have our faith in Jesus built.

And we ask in His name. Amen. Amen. For more information, visit us online at southwood.org.

Amen.