

Mark 14:22-26

²² And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." ²³ Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave *it* to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴ And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. ²⁵ Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." ²⁶ And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Remember our setting this morning. Jesus and the 11 have just celebrated the Passover. Judas had left their group to do his hideous work. Now Jesus does a very significant thing. What **He does** could only be done by **Him**. He is moving the church from the old covenant to the new one. He is opening the gates of heaven by faith in the completed work of Christ. He is giving a symbol that represents the **fulfillment of everything that God had said and done previously in Christ Himself**. I doubt the disciples understood just how profound this was. From this day forward God's people would not need to celebrate the Passover and eat the pascal lamb. They could now **worship the Lamb of God**.

²² And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

The phrase "As they were eating" tells us that this happened somewhere in the Passover ceremony. It is most likely when they would have been eating the roasted lamb. At this point in the meal Christ left the prescribed agenda. He reached over to the unleavened bread, which would be more like a cracker than bread. It would be flat and crisp. He took some. Then he prayed over the food and blessed it. That was not unusual at all for Christ to do. That is where we come up with the tradition of praying before we eat. Which is an excellent way of displaying a difference Christ has made in our lives. It often leads to opportunities to testify of Christ. Although in high school it also led to the food disappearing from my tray.

So Jesus took the bread. He prayed over the piece he took. And then he broke the bread. Then he passed it out to the 11 disciples. And Christ said- **Take, eat: this is my body**.

The first thing to note is that this would have been unleavened bread. This would represent the separation from the world's leaven. Leaven was generally a bad corrupting influence in scripture. So the bread that Christ hands out, the bread that represents Christ is without leaven. Christ's body is without leaven.

The second thing to note is that Christ broke the whole into pieces so that everyone who ate of the bread were eating a piece of the whole. They were participating in a unity. They were, in a sense all eating from the same whole.

Luke adds that Jesus also said **This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.**

Now at this point we are looking at words that have ended up being fighting words over most of the history of the church.

The Roman Catholic Church taught what is called transubstantiation. This teaching says that the bread and wine actually turn into the flesh and blood of Christ when eaten and drank. They took what Christ said literally instead of symbolically. I believe it was Luther and Zwingli who fought vigorously over this issue. Luther argued to take it literally. Zwingli argued to take it figuratively or symbolically.

Along with this came the issue of how to understand the Lord's supper. Does it convey grace? Or is it merely a memorial that is intended to reorient us to the reality of who Christ is and what He did.

Both the Roman Catholics, and many Presbyterian churches, as well as many reformed doctrine scholars believe that when a person takes communion, an actual transaction happens whereby the eating of the substance conveys grace. It is like a grace pill that transfers God's grace to us when we eat it. There is a trail of logic that leads them to this conclusion which is pretty much a part of what is called covenant theology. It has holdovers from the Roman Catholic church that I think the reformers didn't have the heart to let go of.

I have a major problem with communion conveying grace in a transactional manner because it is so different from the rest of the Christian life. Our experience of God's grace is largely associated in every other instance with our expressions of faith. We are saved by grace through faith. In other words, we receive that grace as a result of believing, of having faith. We are sanctified by grace through faith. We grow by believing what God says and disbelieving our own impressions or experiences. Everything that happens spiritually in our lives happens in relation to what passes through our minds and solidifies in our hearts. Yet here the reformers would have us believe that another method of receiving grace is available to us. We can essentially get a spiritual shot by taking communion. And then those who oversee the communion have a power to withhold this grace. They wield the power of grace. I just cannot see how any of the passages about communion require such an interpretation.

The Baptist position has been that the Lord's supper is best defined by the word Christ used when He said in Luke- do this **in remembrance** of Me. Communion is the expression of **remembering** who Christ is and what He has done for us. The power comes not from some mystical charge received by eating and drinking but from the mental reorienting and reprioritizing of our lives. This view of communion is completely consistent with the rest of the Christian life. The power resides, **not in the carrying out of a tradition** but **in the faith** that the believer has

in the Lord he is remembering. The importance is not as much in getting the bread and the wine into the stomach, but in getting the thoughts of faith into the mind and the heart.

Also, for those who stress that when Jesus says that this is my body that we cannot do otherwise than to take this literally, I would have to ask how about when Jesus says that He is the door or the Vine. Must we then regard him as an oak plank or a grape vine?

I really like what Warren Wiersbe says here.

What, then, did Jesus accomplish by His death? On the cross, Jesus fulfilled the Old Covenant and established a New Covenant ([Heb. 9-10](#)). The Old Covenant was ratified with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the New Covenant was ratified by the blood of God's Son. The New Covenant in His blood would do what the Old Covenant sacrifices could not do—take away sin and cleanse the heart and conscience of the believer. We are not saved from our sins by participating in a religious ceremony, but by trusting Jesus Christ as our Savior. Our Lord's command was, "This do in remembrance of Me" ([1 Cor. 11:24-25](#)). The word translated "remembrance" means much more than "in memory of," for you can do something in memory of a dead person—yet Jesus is alive! The word carries the idea of a present participation in a past event. Because Jesus is alive, as we celebrate the Lord's Supper, by faith we have communion with Him ([1 Cor. 10:16-17](#)). This is not some "magical" experience produced by the bread and cup. It is a spiritual experience that comes through our discerning of Christ and the meaning of the Supper ([1 Cor. 11:27-34](#)).

Bible Exposition Commentary (BE Series) - New Testament - The Bible Exposition Commentary – New Testament, Volume 1.

Here is another quote by Hendricksen

Our Lord desired

that by means of the supper here instituted, the church should remember his sacrifice and *love* him, should *reflect* on that sacrifice and embrace him by *faith*, and should look forward in living *hope* to his glorious return. Surely, the proper celebration of communion is a loving remembrance. It is, however, more than that. Jesus Christ is most certainly and through his Spirit most actively present at this genuine feast! Cf. [Matt 18:20](#). His followers "take" and "eat." They appropriate Christ by means of living faith, and are strengthened in this faith. (Hendricksen, *Matthew*, p 910; emphasis his)

Expositor's Bible Commentary, The - The Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 8: Matthew, Mark, Luke.

²³ **Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave *it* to them, and they all drank from it.** ²⁴ **And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.**

After breaking the bread and giving it to His disciples, Jesus takes a cup of wine. He then gives thanks for it and he passes it around.

The word for giving thanks is eucharisteo which is where the word Eucharist came from.

They all drank from a single cup. Again it is very clear that there is a unity in this memorial. We all partake from the same. Everyone has the same thing. There is nothing in this memorial to differentiate one's self. We are either all in or all out. There are no degrees.

Then Jesus described what the image means. The wine is **My blood of the new covenant which is shed for many.**

This would have been pregnant with meaning for the disciples.

When Christ said the phrase My blood of the new covenant, the disciples probably would have thought immediately of the old testament passage- **Exodus 24:8**

⁸ **And Moses took the blood, sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words."**

Moses said this after reading the Book of the covenant in the hearing of the people. They all agreed to live by it.

So the old covenant was sealed with blood. Now the new one is too. But this time it is not the blood of sacrificed animals. It is the blood of Jesus Christ.

The disciples would have understood this in terms of a sacrifice. They knew it implied death of something innocent for someone guilty.

The word *diatheke* means "testament" or "will" in classical Greek, but here it translates the Hebrew *berit* ("covenant"). It is "that relationship of lordship and obedience which God establishes between Himself and men, and the 'blood of the covenant' is the sign of its existence and the means by which it is effected" (Taylor, p. 546)

Expositor's Bible Commentary, The - The Expositor's Bible Commentary – Volume 8: Matthew, Mark, Luke.

Bible scholars would have expected this new covenant. They would not have understood all that it meant, but it was predicted in scripture.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

³¹ **"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah--** ³² **not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke,**

though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.³³ But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.³⁴ No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Notice what is predicted with this new covenant. There will be an internal presence of God's word. It will be in them due to a change of heart, a supernatural change, something only God could accomplish. Scripture tells us that believers are made new. I think that is what this is talking about. We now have a proclivity to obey rather than rebel. We have truth revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

And instead of a national existence where people were born through blood lines into an earthly kingdom, now people will be born spiritually into a kingdom where everyone who is in that Kingdom has experienced a change. They are now God's people. Every believer is a true follower of God. God is our God and we are His people.

And every one of those people will have a living breathing relationship with that God. We will not be so reliant upon the **lone prophets** of God who were needed to convey God's words. All believers are in direct relationship with God.

And the wonder of it all is that Christ Himself will truly forgive our sins in a way where they are no longer able to be recalled against us. The forgiveness is given in such a legally binding way that it would be unjust to call those sins against us. This is all new. The sacrifices that were given in the past would only cover sin by faith, waiting for a future forgiveness. This covenant grants the complete forgiveness.

So this new covenant was being looked for by those who knew prophesy. When Jesus mentioned it, the disciples may have known what Jesus was saying was earth shaking. It was the turn of an era. It was the end of religion as they knew it and the beginning of something infinitely better.

There is also something else to notice here.

"This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.

The logical question to ask at this point is why did Jesus not say that the blood of the new covenant is shed for all? Armenian theology says that Christ shed his blood for all but it only counts for those who receive Christ. Sovereign grace theology says that Christ's atonement was only ever for those who would become His children. The theology is called limited atonement. The verse in our text would seem to back the Sovereign Grace view. Certainly Christ's sacrifice is held out to all as the opportunity of all opportunities. But it accomplishes exactly what

it was intended to accomplish. It is perfectly effective in what it was intended to do. It saves every child of God and no others.

One more thing- the disciples would have understood that since Christ was talking about **shedding his own blood** to bring in this new covenant, this blood would be a blood **sacrifice**. He was talking about His death.

²⁵ **Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.**" Now Christ has made it perfectly clear. His normal days of eating and drinking are done. The phrase "the fruit of the vine" is normally understood as wine used at a feast. So Christ is not just saying he will no longer drink any wine. He is saying that the next time he celebrates a feast will be in the kingdom of God.

Matthew 8:11

¹¹ **And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.**

Isaiah 25:6

⁶ **And in this mountain The LORD of hosts will make for all people A feast of choice pieces, A feast of wines on the lees, Of fat things full of marrow, Of well-refined wines on the lees.**

Revelation 19:5-9

⁵ **Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!"** ⁶ **And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"** ⁷ **Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."** ⁸ **And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.** ⁹ **Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."**

You and I are called to believe some astounding things. We are expected to believe by faith what God says. And if we believe it, we cannot help but live accordingly. That is what faith does. It cannot be helped. Faith changes how we live.

Christ said that He was going to drink wine in the kingdom at a celebration. And that was the next time he was going to drink wine at a celebration. Then we are given some details of what celebration this will actually be.

Many are going to come to it. In fact every person saved by grace by faith will be there. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will be there along with many more. So we see there will be many entering into eternity.

The feast will be made up of good food, choice food. So we see that even in eternity we will enjoy good food. Why make mention of the quality of the food if it doesn't matter? We will still have things in eternity that we understand and appreciate. And it is difficult to imagine better chefs than God Himself would have employed for this purpose.

Then in Revelation we are told

"Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!"

This is written to us. This is what we will be commanded to do. It doesn't matter who you are. If you are in Christ, you have a place. And the purpose is to praise God. That is what we are for. It doesn't matter if we won thousands of people to Christ or if we were martyred the day after we came to Christ. We are to praise God.

Why? What is the context?

⁶ And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"

The greatness of God is the context. The Lord God, all powerful, reigns. The Lord almighty rules the universe. That is the context. But what good does that do us? How will that benefit us? We must ask the all prevailing human question- what is in it for me? The writer doesn't leave us in the dark. He tells us very specifically what is in it for us.

⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. ⁹ Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

Every believer, every God fearer whether great or small has been invited to the marriage of the lamb. We are invited to a wedding ceremony where we are the bride and Christ is the groom. This is better than being invited to **watch** a wedding. We are invited to **be in it**. And not only that, we are the second most important part of the wedding. The groom is the most important. It is he who has the power to grant this honor to the bride. It is He who does the choosing. It is He who has honored us by choosing us.

And we cloth ourselves with the evidence of salvation. We clothe ourselves with the good works that God has produced in us. All of our evil works have been

wiped out, to be remembered no more. Now we are only clothed with the good works of faith that we were created for and that were prepared for us to do from the beginning of time.

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Then Revelation says

'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'

Christ is going to be drinking wine with us here at this supper. I think we can assume this is what Christ was talking about when He said He will no longer be drinking celebration wine until a special event in the kingdom of God.

We need to think about this. What weight has Christ given us to carry that will not be found to be a small thing compared to what we are going to get? When we suffer temptation now, or distress or pain or persecution now, it is not pleasant. In fact it can be downright awful. But we have got to keep our perspective at all times.

How does our temporary suffering compare to the permanent state of blessing that God has prepared for us? Consider that we may have 70 years of suffering. Consider it to be a continual life of suffering. That would probably be the worst that could happen to us. Then compare that worst case scenario to an absolute eternity of blessing. Would you not say that the reward is worth the price? Yes, we would all agree that the price can be exceedingly difficult. But no matter how difficult, an eternity of peace and joy and happiness is worth whatever temporary suffering we may face.

This is the reasoning of eternity that we must keep. We need to orient to it. We cannot become fixated on the here and now. Christ promises **what we need** in the here and now. But he promises **what we crave** for eternity.

Every believer has been invited to the marriage supper of the lamb. We are going to party with God. We will have a seat reserved for us. We won't have to fight any lines. There is a seat with our name on it. We have reservations. We need have no stress at all. And not only that, it will be exactly where God wants it to be. I doubt that any of us qualify for the right hand seat to Christ, but we will be somewhere at the table. What more could we ask?

This life really is a passing mist. It is short lived. It is here and then it is gone. That is a truth penned by anyone with any insight at all. But the marriage feast of the lamb is the beginning of an eternal state of blessing.

And that is worth living for. That is worth sacrificing for. That is worth dying for. And Jesus has been waiting for his next drink of wine for it to be with us.

A line in a John Prine comes to mind here. How lucky can one man get? In our case- how blessed can one person get.

²⁶ **And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.**

Christ is about to walk to His death. He knows it. But He stops here and what does He do? He sings a hymn with the disciples. It was probably part of the Hallel traditionally sung at the Passover. It was a praise song to God.

What a wonderful way for Christ to keep His perspective in light of the suffering He is about to face. Here is an excellent example to follow. We do well to sing God's praises, no matter what difficult thing looms in front of us.

Let's close with a song and then prayer.

Song- when I survey the wondrous cross