

Sunday September 4th sermon: "With Jesus in Our Midst -- Christ Meets with His People"

Preached at the Lord's Table at Grace Bible Church in Greenwood, MS, by John Pittman Hey

Matthew 26:26-30; Luke 22:24-30

The Lord Jesus instituted His Supper that we might celebrate His sacrifice to save us, so that we might proclaim His dying for us, and His delivering up His body and blood to redeem us.

In partaking of His feast, we declare that all our life and hope and joy and glory are found only in His literal, physical body that was mutilated at Calvary, and in His literal, physical blood that He shed to make propitiation for His people's crimes unto God.

We partake symbolically and spiritually of His body and blood by the eating of the bread and wine at the Lord's Table.

Jesus declared that He would drink no more of the celebratory cup, until He can drink it new with His people in His Father's kingdom.

The next time Christ partakes of that delightful cup of rejoicing will be when He can do so physically in the presence of His people, finally all gathered in glory unto Himself!

In Luke's gospel, Christ expands upon this theme. His disciples are squabbling about who will be greatest in the kingdom.

Think of it: at such a solemn occasion, where Jesus is speaking of His soon suffering and death, His disciples cannot grasp the significance of the Lord's Table!

Instead, they are selfishly thinking of themselves, rather than upon Christ's death to save them.

Jesus warns them again against seeking the preeminence, and He points out that He is, right then, among them, serving them.

At the same time, He promises them that they will all eat and drink at His table, in His kingdom one day!

This reminds us that Jesus had already taught them, that He came to minister unto His people, and give His life a ransom for many.

The Lord Jesus sacrifices Himself for us! Our Savior thereby provides us rich spiritual food, upon which we feast unto life eternal!

He serves up Himself at the cross, and we obtain all our life and hope from His dying body and blood.

And at His Table, He provides us symbolic bread and wine, to celebrate how He gives us life by His physical body and blood given for us.

Recall that Jesus is a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. When Abraham and his cohorts greeted Melchizedek, he fed them with bread and wine.

So too Christ serves up the same feast to His people - bread and wine - as symbols of His body and blood by which we are saved.

The promise of Jesus, that one day He will partake of that wine with His people, bespeaks great celebrations in glory with our Redeemer. There will be the greatest joy in His presence - His joy and ours - for our final salvation accomplished!

We will forever be physically in His presence, and for all eternity, we will rejoice in the sacrifice that He made to cleanse us and save us.

One such feast described explicitly in Scripture is the Marriage Feast of the Lamb, where He takes His bride, His church, to Heaven unto Himself forever.

There His bride will be adorned with righteousness - Christ's righteousness, given to His people! He will bring us before Him without any spot or wrinkle or blemish, and He can do so only because of the sacrifice He made in our place at the cross.

These will be those "robes of righteousness" and "garments of salvation" that the prophet Isaiah proclaimed God clothes His elect, beloved people with.

For indeed, at the cross, Jesus was made sin for us, He who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him!

But we not only look forward to feasting with Jesus forever in glory - Jesus tells us that He meets with us whenever we meet together in His name!

He beholds us every time we celebrate His dying to save us!

This fact ought to regulate our behavior at His Table! It should strip away all the foolishness and flippancy and selfishness and distractions in our hearts and minds.

The poor disciples hardly knew what was the meaning of the Lord's Supper - but we have no such excuse!

It is heartrending to partake of a feast celebrating the death of the giver of that feast.

But such is His love for us, that what He did to save us **MUST BE CELEBRATED, MUST BE REJOICED OVER!**

Had Jesus never risen from the dead, it would be almost impossible for us to do so, because of our grief.

But praise God, the Lord's people have never, ever had to celebrate Christ's death without the risen Savior being in attendance with us!

He is the One Who lives, and was dead, and behold, He is alive forevermore, AMEN!

The poet Robert C. Chapman put it this way:

"With Jesus in our midst  
We gather round the board;  
Though many, we are one in Christ,  
One body in the Lord.

"Our sins were laid on him  
When bruised on Calvary;  
With Christ we died, and rose again,  
And sit with Him on high!

"Faith eats the bread of life,  
And drinks the living wine;  
Thus we, in love together knit,  
On Jesus' breast recline.

"Soon shall the night be o'er,  
And we with Jesus reign;  
The marriage supper of the Lamb  
Shall banish all our pain!"

Or, to put it the way of a modern hymn writer:

"Soon and very soon,  
We're going to see the King!"