

1) Sermon Title: The Lord's Supper

2) Scripture Introduction

a) Scripture Announcement

Please turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel of Matthew Chapter 26 verses 17 to 35.

b) Scripture Introduction

In this chapter, we observe three action scenes, which lead into verse 17 and to the Scripture reading today. It is important to highlight that these scenes are guiding us to the suffering and death of Christ. In particular, we see people preparing to take some sort of action. The chapter begins with the chief priests and elders preparing to kill Jesus by plotting his death sometime after the Passover. Then the scene moves to a home in Bethany where a woman anoints Jesus with a very expensive perfume to prepare him for his burial. The third action scene Judas prepares for the opportunity to betray Christ.

This leads us into verse 17 where we observe the disciples preparing to set up to eat the Passover. Then we hear Jesus predict Judas' betrayal during the meal. This is followed by Jesus own preparation of for his death in the institution of the Lord's Supper. And we end our reading with Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial.

c) Scripture Re-Announcement: Again, the passage is from the Gospel of Matthew 26:17-35.

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d) Scripture Reading: “This is what God’s Word says”:

17 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?”

18 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.’” 19 And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover.

20 When it was evening, he reclined at table with the twelve.[b] 21 And as they were eating, he said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” 22 And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?” 23 He answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. 24 The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but 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.” 25 Judas, who would betray him, answered, “Is it I, Rabbi?” He said to him, “You have said so.”

26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” 27 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.”

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*30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.
31 Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' 32 But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." 33 Peter answered him, "Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away." 34 Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." 35 Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!" And all the disciples said the same. (ESV)*

"This is the Word of the Lord. Amen."

e) Prayer for Illumination: Please join me in prayer. Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that we may hear your Word with joy. Amen.

3) Sermon Theme: The Lord's Supper.

4) Homiletical Outline: Matthew 26:17-35

- I. Sermon Introduction
- II. Passover Preparation (vv. 17-19)
- III. Betrayal Prediction (vv. 20-25)
- IV. Communion Instituted (vv. 26-29)
 - A. Come to Christ by faith
 - B. Come to fellowship with Christ

1. Denial Prediction (vv. 30-35)

C. Come to enjoy a new camaraderie

V. Conclusion

5) Sermon Introduction

Firefighters are famous for developing and enjoying a long standing and very proud tradition of preparing and sharing gourmet meals together. This tradition serves to forge a strong bond of camaraderie between them. Indeed, firefighters will spend most of their lives at the firehouse together than with their own families. In one morning news show, a firefighter cooked one of his firehouse recipes and talked about the firehouse culture in this way,

“The person you're sitting next to may be the person who will have your back when you're out on a fire call. You want to know and trust that person because your life depends on it. That time together gives you a strong foundation to build on a group. Traditions develop and grow. The bond that happens around the kitchen table is our strength.”¹

In addition to the bonding that develops from breaking bread together, these meals serve as a source of energy between calls and as a reminder that the meal they have shared may very well be the last meal they will ever enjoy together.

¹ *Firefighters Cook*, http://articles.philly.com/2008-09-04/food/24991286_1_firehouse-firefighters-meals

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And some of these themes of the firehouse experience are found in this passage of Scripture. Matthew provides us the setting, which is a centuries old tradition celebrated by the Jewish people, the feast of Passover. However, this biblical passage also reveals the birth of a new tradition, a tradition that bids us to come to partake in it, the Lord's Supper.

This passage naturally divides itself into four sections; however because it is a rather long passage and we are pressed for time; we will divide the passage into three main sections. We will look into these three sections in the following manner. The first section will focus on verses 17-19, which records the preparation of the Passover. The second will focus on verses 20-25, which records the prediction of Judas' betrayal. The third will focus on verses 26-35, which narrates the institution of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and the prediction of Peter's denial.

In particular, we will take a closer look at the institution and implications of the Lord's Supper, which provides us a threefold invitation. Firstly, it invites us to come to Christ by faith. Secondly, it invites us to fellowship with Christ, and, thirdly, it invites us to enjoy a new camaraderie.

6) Main Body

I. Passover Preparation (vv. 17-19)

First, let us turn our attention to verses 17-19. As I have already mentioned, the background of this biblical passage is the Jewish Passover. Unlike the firehouse tradition, Passover was a feast that was instituted by God himself. Every year the Passover celebrated God's mighty and gracious act of deliverance of the Jewish people who suffered under the brutality of slavery at the hands of a merciless tyrant.

And Jesus sends his disciples to prepare this feast by sending them to an apparent safe house because previously in the beginning of this chapter Jesus had revealed to them that he would soon "be handed over to be crucified" (Mt. 26:2) and Judas was seeking for that opportune moment to precisely hand him over to the religious authorities.

But Jesus' intent was to celebrate the feast of Passover before his death. Recorded for us in the Old Testament in the twelfth chapter of the book of Exodus is the institution of the Passover. This feast excluded all uncircumcised foreigners, the participants had to receive the sign and seal of the covenant of Abraham and be fully dressed for God was to deliver them in haste, and it involved the selection per household of an unblemished one year old male lamb, which was to be slaughtered in the evening to be completely roasted, head, legs and all, and eaten if possible in its entirety with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, which

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symbolized the bitter affliction the Israelites experienced in Egypt. If there was any leftover it was to be burned in the morning. And it is God himself who explains how He was going to deliver the Jews from Egyptian bondage. In Exodus 12:11-13, starting with the last sentence in verse 11, it says,

“It is the Lord's Passover. ¹² For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. ¹³ The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.” (ESV)

And what are particularly striking about this passage are the themes of sacrifice and substitution, and the theme of the firstborn. At that time, as the hope of the family, the firstborn enjoyed certain privileges such as receiving a double portion of the inheritance. And after God delivered Israel He instructed the Jews to sacrifice all firstborn male animals and to redeem all firstborn male child as a sign of their deliverance. “This act symbolized the Passover, when God passed over the firstborn males of Israel as He passed through Egypt and struck down all firstborn males of the Egyptians.”²

² Chad Chambers, "Firstborn" In , in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry and Lazarus Wentz (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2012).

And Luke records for us that at the beginning of this feast Jesus tells his disciples how eager he was to eat this Passover with them before he was to suffer. (Luke 22:14)

II. Betrayal Prediction (vv. 20-25)

But at this time I would like to turn your attention to verses 20-25. The disciples are stricken with sorrow at Jesus' announcement that one of them was going to betray him. Most of us can identify with being rejected or betrayed by someone who was dear and close to us. But in the first century culture it was particularly egregious to be betrayed by someone who was sharing a meal around the kitchen table where bonding and fellowship occurred especially as practiced in those days where everyone sat in close proximity to one another by having the feet facing away from the table, resting the left side of the body on the floor, and stretching the right hand towards the table to eat and drink. So Judas' act was considered to be the height of treachery. As it says in Psalm 41:9 "Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me." (ESV)

And all the disciples began to say "Surely not I, Lord." But notice Judas' response in verse 25, "Surely not I, Rabbi." One writer points out that in the book of Matthew the other disciples never call Jesus *Rabbi* but people outside the disciple group use this title when referring to Jesus.³ This speaks to whether Judas was a true disciple of Christ. But Christ erases any doubt concerning this by

³ France, R.T., *The Gospel Of Matthew* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing: Grand Rapids, 2007), 990.

speaking the words found in verse 24 “But woe to the man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.” (NIV)

III. Communion Instituted (vv. 26-29) & Denial Prediction (vv. 30-29)

A. Come to Christ by faith

At this moment, let us turn our focus to the institution of Communion in verses 26-29. I would like to return to what I had previously mentioned regarding the threefold invitation of the Lord's Supper. Let us turn to the first call to **come to Christ by faith**. In the upper room of that safe house, Jesus does something utterly astonishing. He transforms a centuries long tradition commemorating God's mighty and gracious act of deliverance in Egypt by instituting a new tradition by the taking and breaking of the unleavened bread and saying in verse 26, “Take and eat, this is my body.” As some commentators have noticed, absent in this passage is the traditional Passover liturgy and the mention of the lamb. And instead Jesus continues on to introduce this new liturgy by taking the cup and saying in verses 27-28, “Drink of it all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant.”

Indeed, this was a bold renovation of the Passover. Undoubtedly, Jesus is identifying himself as that slaughtered lamb. We know this as he uses the language of sacrificial death in verse 28, “for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.” One writer says the phrase poured out for many “recalls the “many” who are

repeatedly referred to in Isa. 53:11-12 as the beneficiaries of the suffering and death of the servant of God...here Isa. 53 allusion is further suggested by the verb “poured out,” which is used in Isa. 53:12 of the servant “pouring out his life to death.” So Jesus is referring to his own death as the new deliverance that God was about to accomplish in Him. This new deliverance is accomplished by the slaughtering of his life on the cross. The purpose of which is found in verse 28, “for the forgiveness of sins.” And the Lord's Supper is an invitation to come to Him by faith to partake of the provision He provides by His death. It is by His death God passes over our sins and spares us of the plague of eternal death. “Take and eat, this is my body...Drink from it, all of you” and by faith accept His death for the forgiveness of all of your sins.

B. Come to fellowship with Christ (includes vv. 31-35)

Furthermore, the second of the threefold invitation of the Lord's Supper calls us **to fellowship with Christ by feasting in faith** on His body and blood. And this call to fellowship with Christ serves as a way of **strengthening our faith** in Him. Notice that Jesus makes a promise to His disciples in verse 29 of this passage in Matthew. This verse apparently has future implications. Jesus states that He will not drink this wine again “until that day.” This phrase is commonly used in the New Testament to refer to judgment day. In fact, Paul in 1 Cor. 11:26 refers to the continuing celebration of the Lord's Supper by these words, “you proclaim the death

of the Lord until he comes.” This is to say that the Lord's Supper has future implications for God's people as it indeed had for Christ's disciples.

After Christ established this sacrament he told the disciples that they would abandon Him before His death. Matthew records this in verses 31-35. And if you take a look at these verses all of the disciples to a man adamantly claim that they will never disown Jesus even if they had to die with Him. But Matthew records Jesus as saying, in verse 31, “You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’” (ESV) And effectively Jesus words come to pass and is recorded by Matthew later in this chapter and the following chapter 27. Now, place yourselves in the disciples' shoes for a moment. After witnessing Jesus' arrest, they all abandon him during his trial and crucifixion. They are dejected to see this occur. How can God let this happen to the promised Messiah? How can He allow the Messiah to suffer a shameful death? And how did we, after being so bold as to boast that “we will never disown you”, succumb to our own cowardice in the face of His impending death?

But take a look at verse 31; Matthew cites the prophet Zechariah chapter 13 verse 7. One writer explains this passage in this manner, “We are shocked by what Yahweh actually does: he commands his sword to strike his own close companion, the good Shepherd.”⁴ So we see

⁴ Chamblin, Knox, *Matthew, Volume 2 (14-28)* (Christian Focus Publications: Great Britain, 2010), 1307.

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this is God's doing. Just as Passover was instituted by God similarly God institutes the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It is God who strikes Jesus with the plague of the cross. It is there that Jesus takes upon Himself God's wrath. And in light of this Jesus anticipates His own deliverance, His resurrection from the dead. He did not keep His disciples in the dark as we notice in verse 32, "After I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee."

And from the disciples' perspective, this future promise was already embedded in the Lord's Supper. By instituting this new sacrament, Christ was going to remind His disciples of the fact that He was not to remain dead but to remind them not to forget the meaning of His death. This in turn would serve the purpose of calling them to a restored and new fellowship with Himself by the feasting in faith on His crucified body and blood. This call to fellowship with Christ serves as a way of strengthening their faith in Him after having disowned Him. In the Lord's Supper, the promise is to forgive all of their sins, including their renouncement of Christ.

In this way, Jesus also calls us to fellowship with Him in the Lord's Supper by feasting in faith on His sacrificial death. This is an encouragement to us all to have our own daily sins forgiven and our faith nurtured, reinforced, and renewed in our daily struggles and sufferings in our Christian journey. The Lord's Supper helps us to focus our faith in Him for our ultimate future deliverance and fellowship when He returns to give to us what He has promised in the sacrament, eternal life.

C. Come to enjoy a new camaraderie

And this brings us to the third invitation. The third call of the Lord's Supper is a summons to come to enjoy a new camaraderie, a new fellowship with a newly redeemed group of people. Take a look with me at verse 27-28,

“27 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.” (ESV)

He offers to all of his disciples to drink from one cup. “Drink of it, all of you.” In other words, this is to be a meal to be enjoyed and shared by His disciples corporately. However, this is not limited to the disciples in the upper room but it is also offered to the many. And who are the many?

Well, the many are all who are to come to faith in the sacrificial and substitutionary death of Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. And it is God who bids us all to come to this grand feast to fellowship together. One writer has described it in this fashion,

“God has his being-in-communion. This triune God has in grace created us as male and female in his image, that we might find our true being in intimate communion with him and with one another. He created us for communion to be “co-lovers” as John Duns Scotus

expressed it in the thirteenth century. We should find the fulfillment of our humanity in a life of community in the kingdom of God—our true being-in-communion with God and one another, sharing in God's love for the world as “co-lovers.”⁵

In the Lord's Supper, God forges a new bond of friendship. He invites us to share in a new camaraderie to enjoy a life of new community with Him and one another. “Drink of it, all of you.”

7) Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter begins with several action scenes. And as we move along from one scene to the next we find groups of people busy in the preparing for essentially one event: the suffering and death of Christ. And Christ himself prepares his disciples to witness his impending death on the cross. By the slaughtering of this perfect and sinless Lamb, a great announcement to come freely to feast on this meal is provided for our salvation! And now we can say come to the Lord's Supper and partake of the forgiveness of sins present in the body and blood of Christ. God bids all of you to meet Christ by faith in this mighty and gracious sacrament. Christ is present to deliver you from eternal death.

⁵ Torrance, James B., *Worship, Community, and the Triune God* (InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, IL, 1996), 72-73.

PT510- Preaching Lab IB Sermon Assignment- Matthew 26:17-35

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Come freely to this grand feast! Come to the Lord's Supper all of you whose faith is shaky and feeble. Come to have your faith fortified in Christ!

Come freely to this grand feast! Come to the Lord's Supper all of you who feel abandoned and feel like strangers to find loving and enduring fellowship with Christ and His people.

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever (1 Timothy 1:17). Amen. Let us pray.