

Jesus Shares the Lord's Supper

SESSION IN A SENTENCE: Jesus transformed the Passover meal into the Lord's Supper as a picture of His work on the cross and the new covenant it ushered in.

BACKGROUND PASSAGE: Luke 22:7-23

The Lord's Supper is a sacred meal that churches enjoy together, but there are some variations between churches in how they take the Lord's Supper. The *frequency* can vary. Anywhere from weekly to once every three months are common patterns for partaking of the Lord's Supper. The *means* can vary. Some churches pass plates with the elements. Some utilize tables or even a single table. Others make use of a combo-cup with the bread conveniently placed and sealed on top of the cup. While the *frequency* and the *means* may vary, the **meaning** does not.

Lord's Supper: The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of _____ whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the _____ of the Redeemer and anticipate His second _____.



When have you had a memorable observance of the Lord's Supper, and what made it especially meaningful for you?

Group Time

Point 1: The Lord's Supper anticipates a kingdom in the future (Luke 22:14-18).

¹⁴ When the hour came, he reclined at the table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵ Then he said to them, "I have fervently desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

¹⁶ For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

¹⁷ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he said, "Take this and share it among yourselves. ¹⁸ For I tell you, from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

One of Leonardo da Vinci's most famous paintings depicts this meal. His work of art is titled "The Last Supper" because this was the last meal Jesus shared with His disciples before His death on the cross. But this would not be Jesus' *last* meal ever. At the so-called "Last Supper," Jesus told His disciples that He will eat this meal again in His eternal kingdom. Jesus will share the table with His followers once again. A future meal is coming!

Through the Lord's Supper, we are reminded that Jesus is our Suffering Servant and our conquering King. He will return, and when He does, He will come not to die but as the eternal King over His perfect kingdom. The curse of sin will be reversed. All that is wrong will be made right. Every tear will be wiped from the eyes of His people. As we take the Lord's Supper in the midst of pain today, we can look forward to the day when there will be no more pain and be encouraged that Jesus is coming soon.



How can anticipation of a future with Jesus help believers through present suffering?

Point 2: The Lord's Supper remembers a sacrifice in the past (Luke 22:19).

¹⁹ And he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to them, and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Jesus and His disciples were observing the Passover meal, an annual celebration for the Israelites to remember that God had set their ancestors free from slavery in Egypt. The various foods used in the meal represented aspects of their life in and exodus from Egypt. But when Jesus took the unleavened bread, broke it, gave it to His disciples to eat, and connected the symbol of the bread to His body, which would soon be broken on the cross for their salvation, He substantially transformed the meaning of the Passover meal.



What are some meals that have special meaning for you?

When we observe the Lord's Supper, we remember how Jesus gave Himself for us and saved us from sin. While the Passover reminded the Israelites of their liberation from Egyptian slavery, in the Lord's Supper we remember our liberation from spiritual slavery. While the Passover recalled the Lord's provision through the blood of lambs, in the Lord's Supper we remember the Lord's provision through the Lamb of God. While the Passover reminded the Israelites of their hardship in their exodus from Egypt through the unleavened bread, the Lord's Supper teaches us that Jesus took the hardship of our salvation upon Himself as the bread broken for us.



Why is it important that we remember what Jesus has done for us?

"Communion is a _____-centered festival."¹ –John Stott (1921-2011)

Point 3: The Lord's Supper pictures a new covenant in the present (Luke 22:20-23).

²⁰ In the same way he also took the cup after supper and said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” ²¹ But look, the hand of the one betraying me is at the table with me. ²² For the Son of Man will go away as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!”

²³ So they began to argue among themselves which of them it could be who was going to do it.

After God rescued His people from Egyptian slavery, He led them to Mount Sinai and gave them His law through their leader Moses (see Ex. 20–23). This was followed by a covenant-keeping ceremony in which the people agreed to keep God's law and were sprinkled with “the blood of the covenant,” the blood of sacrificed animals (Ex. 24:1-8). But they did not keep the commandments, so they incurred the law's consequences. The old covenant brought death, showing the Israelites—and us—that we are sinful and deserve separation from God (Rom. 3:19-20).



What are some ways people try to atone for their sins?

The old covenant was pure, but we are impure. The old covenant was righteous, but we are not. The old covenant shows us that we desperately need the One who came to give us a new covenant. In the Lord's Supper, the bread represents the body of Christ sacrificed and broken for sinners, and the cup represents His blood, which was shed to inaugurate the new covenant for the people of God. Only through Jesus can we find forgiveness and reconciliation with God.



Voices from Church History

“She took ... and ate: so simple the act, so hard its undoing. God will taste poverty and death before ‘take and eat’ become verbs of salvation.”²

—Derek Kidner (1913–2008)



How should we respond to God's gift in sending Jesus to die to take away our sins?

Daily Study

Day 1: Read Luke 22:7-13

The providence and the planning behind the first Lord's Supper is given to us in this passage. We see that the Lord orchestrated the very room where they would observe the Passover. He planned the meeting between a man carrying water and Peter and John and even instructed the very words that would be spoken between them. The Lord oversaw all the details leading to this important meal, the meal we celebrate today. Just as the Lord planned all the events that led to the meal, the Lord also planned the death of Jesus for us. At the perfect time in history, God sent Jesus into the world to die for us (Gal. 4:4).

Of that first meal, the Scripture says the Passover lamb “had to be sacrificed” (Luke 22:7). Just as lambs were sacrificed each year to remind the people that they needed their sins forgiven, Jesus, the Lamb of God, had to be sacrificed for our sins to be forgiven. We could not have our sins forgiven without Him. He is “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).



What does the Lord's involvement in the planning of the first Lord's Supper say to you about the importance of this meal for us?



Voices from Church History

“This Lord's supper represents the giving of the whole body of Christ to us, to enter into us for food; surely, if we enter into its true meaning we may expect to be revived and vitalized; for we have here more than a mere touch of the hand, it is the whole Christ that enters into us spiritually, and so comes into contact with our innermost being.”⁴

—Charles Spurgeon
(1834-1892)

Day 2: Read Luke 22:14-18

Jesus told the disciples that He “fervently desired” to eat the Passover with them before He suffered. He knew the cross was before Him. He knew the suffering and shame He was going to endure. In the midst of that horror, He “fervently desired” to eat this sacred meal with His disciples, which would commemorate His blood being spilled, because “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb. 9:22).

He desired to be with His disciples for this memorial meal and to share with them the significance of His coming death. He desires to be with us too, which is why He died—so we could know Him and be known by Him. His blood had to be spilled so we could be forgiven of our sins. Sin had to be condemned in Jesus’ body so there would be “no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1).



What does the phrase “fervently desired” say to you about God’s desire to enjoy a relationship with you?

Day 3: Read John 13:1-20

The Gospel of John is the only Gospel that does not record any of Jesus’ parables. In *Parable of Joy*, Michael Card’s book about the Gospel of John, he commented that this is because all of Jesus’ life was a parable to John—all that Jesus did was a sermon for John. Jesus taught through His life and John recorded all that he learned. The loudest, most impactful parable of this kind is recorded in John 13, when Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. It is a parable for us because the washing of the disciples’ feet illustrates what Jesus has done for us.

When Jesus washed feet, He took off His outer garments, knelt before His disciples, and carried out the lowly task of washing their dirty feet. When Jesus served us, He took off His kingly garments and His royal crown and He stepped into our world. He stooped low and put on human skin. He took on the humiliating death of crucifixion to bring us to Himself. We have been served by Jesus, and we are now to serve others.



Who can you serve this week as you remember how Christ has served you?

Day 4: Read Luke 22:19

When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He took the bread and proclaimed it as His body given for us. When the apostle Paul opened his letter to the church in Galatia, he wrote: "Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who *gave himself* for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (Gal. 1:3-4, emphasis added).

Jesus Christ giving Himself for us is what separates the Christian faith from every world religion. Every other religion is about human beings' attempts to earn their way to the heights of spiritual attainment, giving ourselves to God in such a way that God will approve of us and accept us, for example. The message of the Christian faith is not about our giving or our doing but about Christ having given Himself for us.

 Why is it so hard for people to believe the core message of the Christian faith—that Jesus Christ gave Himself for us?

Day 5: Read Luke 22:20-23

One of Jesus' disciples, Peter, was at the first Lord's Supper when Jesus declared that His blood was going to be poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Peter later wrote: "For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb" (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

Jesus took our sins and the punishment for those sins upon Himself so that we would be redeemed and set free. C. S. Lewis wrote, "It costs God nothing, so far as we know, to create nice things: but to convert rebellious wills cost Him crucifixion."⁵ When God wanted to create the world, He merely had to declare, "Let there be light." When He wanted to make us His sons and daughters, it cost Jesus His life and His blood.

 What are you motivated by gratitude to do because of the cross and death of Jesus for sinners?

UNIT 25

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3. David Wenham, *The Parables of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1989), 101.

SESSION 3

1. Amanda Bible Williams, in *She Reads Truth*, by Raechel Myers and Amanda Bible Williams (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2016), 6–7.
2. G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Gospel of Life: Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 107.
3. Quoted in “Only one life, ‘twil soon be past...” by Thomas and Elizabeth West, *The West London Life*, December 31, 2018, www.thewestlondonlife.com/single-post/2018/12/31/Only-one-life-twil-soon-be-past.
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2. Athanasius, “Homily on the Resurrection of Lazarus,” quoted in *John 11–21*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, vol. IVb in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2007), 13.
3. Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament*, vol. 1 (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 2001), 334.

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3. Louie Giglio, *The Air I Breathe* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2003), 22.

SESSION 2

1. Andrew Wilson, *Unbreakable: What the Son of God Said About the Word of God* (IOPublishing, 2014) [eBook].
2. Kim Huat Tan, *Mark*, in *New Covenant Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015) [Wordsearch].
3. Augustine, *Tractate on John* 40.9.13, quoted in *Mark*, eds. Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall, vol. II in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].

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1. John Stott, quoted in “Between Two Worlds: An Interview with John R. W. Stott,” by R. Albert Mohler Jr., August 8, 2011, albertmohler.com/2011/08/08/between-two-worlds-an-interview-with-john-r-w-stott.
2. Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1967, reprint 2008), 73.
3. Anne Askew, *The Latter Examination of Anne Askew (1547)*, ed. John Bale; quoted in *Luke*, ed. Beth Kreitzer, vol. 3 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015) [Wordsearch].
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5. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Touchstone, 1980), 181.

SESSION 4

1. See “Diamonds Unearthed,” by Cate Lineberry, *Smithsonian Magazine* (December 2006), www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/diamonds-uneearthed-141629226.
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