

## Maundy Thursday 2018

### “On the night he was betrayed”

#### Luke 22:1-65

*“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”*

Of all the meals you’ll have this Easter, the meal we share together tonight (and whenever else you may share the Lord’s supper over the course of this weekend), will be the most significant, substantial, nourishing and satisfying.

It is this meal which will sustain you, strengthen you...

...this meal which will soften your heart, stir your emotions, humble you, set your love for God on fire...

But it’s a meal which is much misunderstood... misused... and in fact as early as 65AD became so confused as to its purpose that the Christians in Corinth received a very clear rebuke!

So here’s what I want to look at with you tonight:

1. What **happened** at the supper? (ie, at the first Lord’s Supper)
2. What **is** happening at the supper? (when we share the supper)
3. What is **not** happening at the supper

### 1. WHAT HAPPENED AT THE SUPPER?

You know the story and the setting well, I’m sure.

On this very night, Jesus and his disciples were celebrating the Passover – that great annual meal which recalled God’s great rescue of Israel from the cruel slavery of the Egyptians.

The point of that meal – that they may never forget what God had done for them... that it was all **his** work and none of **theirs** – all of his **grace**, all of his **power**; so that **free** from bondage, they were free to serve and worship him. //

Jesus took what was a significant **memorial** of that most profound and powerful redemption of Israel from Egypt and turned it into a memorial of an even more **wonderful** redemption.

The bread which *was* a symbol in the Passover of the bread they had to make without leaven as they left Egypt in haste, was **now** to be a **symbol** of his body which would be broken and given to them.

The **wine** of the Passover, was transformed by Jesus to become a **symbol** of his blood poured out for many – poured out as a sign and seal of the **new** covenant for the **forgiveness** of **sins**... note that **that** is how Jesus understood his impending death – it was going to be the giving of his body and the shedding of his blood – for the forgiveness of sins!

**Old** symbols... for the purpose of **remembering** – transformed into **new** symbols for the purpose of **remembering** - remembering God's amazing **rescue** from **slavery to sin and death** through the **sacrifice** of the **Lord Jesus**.

...made crystal clear by Luke and Paul (1 Cor 11), when they quote Jesus as saying at the supper: "**Do this in remembrance of me**". ///

So then:

## **2. WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THE SUPPER?**

...as we share it tonight?

It's about three things... Remembering, revelling, and realising... (RPT)

**Remembering** – as we share the bread... *Take and eat this **in remembrance** that Christ died for you, and **feed on him** in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.*

*Drink this **in remembrance** that Christ's blood was shed for you, and be **thankful***

It's about **remembering**. **Remembering** Jesus' sacrifice for your sin – the **ONLY** means by which you are you **forgiven**, declared **righteous** (to be in right-standing with God) and have the **free gift** of **eternal life**. //

Because to **forget** – would be to pour **contempt** on Jesus' death!

To **forget** would mean **ignoring** our former **plight**; it would mean taking **God** lightly; it would mean taking **sin** lightly...

To **forget** would be to shift the emphasis back to **ourselves!**

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It's all about remembering //

But it's not a **simple** memorial.

Because we '**feed on Christ** in our **hearts**'... that is – the remembering **feeds** us **spiritually**... it **nurtures** our **souls**, **stirs** our **hearts**, **deepens** our **loves**, draws us **closer**... we are **spiritually nurtured** and **fed**...

It's not even the **physical** bread and wine that nurtures our souls... it is the **remembering**...

So we remember and we give thanks... humble, heartfelt, genuine thanks...

**We revel** – we revel in what God has done for us in Christ – as we take bread and wine – we are so thankful that we're **loved**, we're **free**, we're **forgiven**, we're **reconciled**, we're **adopted**, we **heirs**, we are **made clean**, we're **holy**, we have **eternal life**... that we will appear without **spot and blemish** on the last **day**...

and it's a revelling we do **together** as the body of Christ...

We **remember**, we **revel** and:

**We realise...**

...we realise that this meal is a **foretaste** of all that is to come...

it's a foretaste of the banqueting we'll enjoy in the end time feast of eternity...

so the meal also points us to all that it yet to come for us as the people of God... points us forward to that **final** redemption at the end – when we'll be free from **sin** and **evil**... from **death** and **sickness** and **pain**... and we will be with the Lord **forever**... //

We **remember**, we **revel**, and we **realise**...

**That's** what we are doing whenever we share the supper... and as we do, our **souls** are **nurtured**, our **trust** in **Jesus** is **strengthened**, and our love grows **deeper**.

So that leads me to our third and final point...

### **3. WHAT IS NOT HAPPENING IN THE SUPPER**

No **change** – there is no change to the substance of the elements...

...they **remain** bread and wine... they are **symbols** of Jesus body broken and given and his blood poured out...

there is no indication from the Bible either in the Gospels or when Paul talks about the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians, that the early church was **ever** of the view they were eating and drinking Jesus' literal body...

you might say – 'does it matter Mark?'

Yes it does.

When it is argued that you eat the actual body and drink the blood of Jesus, then the whole nature of the communion changes.

Then you are seen to benefit not from remembering Jesus' sacrifice for you... but from physically consuming him... it's an entirely different thing!

...the state of your **heart** won't matter – as long as you get the bread and wine!

Brothers and sisters... please understand, **there is no change to the elements**... we eat **real bread** and drink **real wine** and we feed on Christ **in our hearts**.

But the **second** thing I want to make clear that is NOT happening in the Lord's Supper is that it is:

No **sacrifice** – the letter to the Hebrews makes it absolutely clear that there is only one true sacrifice for sin – that which Jesus made on the cross 2,000 years ago!

Hebrews 7:27 – talking about Jesus as our High Priest - *Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.*

There is no other sacrifice. And to claim that what we offer in the communion is a sacrifice for sin, is to take away from the significance of what Jesus did on the cross.

It's to suggest that somehow his sacrifice was **deficient**, and we have to **continue** to make sacrifice in the communion for our sin.

This was fought for in the Reformation and **people lost their lives because of it!**

And thirdly, there is **no benefit** from merely taking (or gazing upon) the elements...

**No benefit**

We need to put aside any superstitions about communion.

Jesus is **present** because when two or three gather in his name he is **there**

He's **present** because he dwells in each one of us by his **holy Spirit**

He's **present** because corporately, we are his **temple**...

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let's wrap up....

In the Passover, they paused to remember God's amazing rescue from Egypt – all by his power, his grace, because of his love.

In the Lord's Supper, **we** now pause to remember God's amazing rescue of us from sin and death – all by his power, his grace and because of his love.

We **remember** what Jesus did, we **revel** in all that it means, we **realise** this is but a glimpse of the meal we will one day share with Jesus....

And by so doing, we **feed on Christ** in our **hearts**, by **faith**, with **thanksgiving!**

**Come share with me tonight**, this most substantial, nourishing and satisfying of meals.

**Come share with me tonight** this meal with me which will sustain you and strengthen you... as you serve, love and follow Jesus

**Come share with me tonight** this meal which will soften your heart, stir your emotions, humble you, set your love for God on fire...