

Sermon Series: If Jesus Came To Dinner

#6 Food for the Soul pt.2 – Luke 22:7-20

Intro

No doubt you saw this amusing video that went viral a couple of weeks ago. An Italian priest attempted to deliver his **first live mass** via smartphone. But, alas, the phone outsmarted the priest!



To his great misfortune, while he **earnestly** read the prayers and Scriptures, the filters and effects he had inadvertently turned on in his phone gave the virtual congregation a **greater experience** than he intended.

This coming Easter Sunday will be **our first foray** into livestreaming a celebration of The Lord's Supper, or **Holy Communion**. So today, I want to make very careful preparations ahead of that event.

Last Sunday, in Part 1 of "Food for the Soul" we looked at Luke chapter 22 and studied the significance of Jesus' Last Supper being set amidst the symbolic Passover meal-table.

Today, this Good Friday, we focus in **Part 2 of "Food for the Soul"** on new meal of remembrance Jesus' instituted that very night - **The Lord's Supper** – ahead of sharing in that celebration on Easter Day. Let's get **familiar with hardware and the software** of The Lord's Supper as told in Luke's account ahead of participating in the benefits Jesus promises.

The central meal of the Christian faith, The Lord's Supper, finds its origins in The Last Supper of Jesus referred to in **all four Gospels** on the night before Jesus went to the cross at Calvary to die for sins.¹

In Luke's portrayal of this Last Supper of Jesus, we zoom in to see how Jesus transformed several significant elements of the ancient Passover ritual of the Hebrew people, to become a new **commemoration** and **participation** of the **greater salvation** he would make possible through his sacrifice of himself for the world.

During the meal Jesus **elevates** bread and wine **above** the Passover table, just as he himself would be **elevated** upon a cross to die as a sign of the costly love and grace of God; just as the salvation he brings **stands over and above** all others ever offered.

In verses 19-20 of Luke chapter 22 we read:

¹ John does not mention the words and actions that institute The Lord's Supper, but many conversations at the same Passover meal we know as The Last Supper (e.g. John 13)

19 He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

20 After supper he took another cup of wine and said, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you."

This is number 5 of 7 meal table scenes in the Gospel of Luke – some of which we've been studying in this series called "If Jesus came to dinner".

To 1st Century Jewish readers, this meal is a **farewell scene**; a last testament (see John 14:1-7 for confirmation).

Importantly, Jesus wants to **leave his disciples with insight** into his actions in the days that follow and a **readiness for future meals** when they would commemorate his death and to help them to **participate in the benefits** his salvation promises.

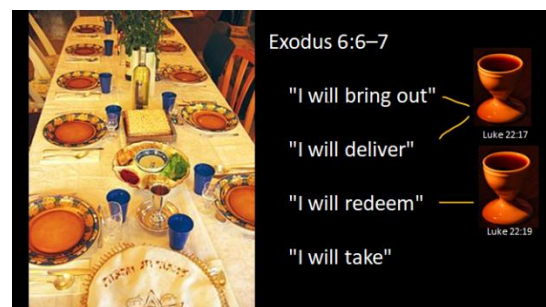
Luke is the only Gospel writer who mentions **two cups** – one in verse 17 and the other in verse 20.

Some of our members celebrated **Christian Seder meals** via Zoom in their small groups last night. You will have **re-enacted parts of the Passover meal**, like The Last Supper would have included. You will have reflected on the fulfilment Christ brings to **each part of this ancient ceremony**.

You will remember that there are **four cups throughout that banquet**. They help everyone reflect on ancient times when God saved Israel from centuries of hard labour slavery under ancient Egypt.

The four cups of the meal represent **four phases of that great deliverance** promised by God as expressed in The Book of **Exodus 6:6–7**:

"I will bring out," "I will deliver," "I will redeem," and "I will take."



In Luke chapter 22, the cup mentioned in verse 17 at The Last Supper of Jesus is most likely either **cup 1 or cup 2** of the Passover meal.

The **cup** mentioned in verse 20 (the cup we are most interested in because Jesus elevates it) is most likely **cup 3** of the Passover meal – the **cup of redemption** or salvation. We know this because of the remarks Jesus makes **about sacrifice** as he raises this cup – a theme of the **third course of the Passover**.

Luke sees Jesus' death on the cross through the eyes of **redemption**. In the 1st Century world, a redeeming payment could purchase the freedom of a slave. In this case, it's the

shed blood of the Son of God as means of freeing those enslaved to sin and death that Luke is highlighting for us.

Luke highlights this again in his other New Testament book, The Book of Acts, in Acts 20:28 when **Paul charges the Ephesian church leaders** to “Keep watch” over their “flock” which God “obtained (or **purchased**) **with the blood of His own Son**”.

The **bread** Jesus took and shared is also part of the third course of the Passover meal. Those who shared in the Seder meal last night for Maundy Thursday will recall **the bitter herbs and the lamb** that is accompanied by the unleavened bread, or matzoh. In the action of **blessing, breaking** and **sharing**, Jesus symbolized his own body which **would be broken** so that others **could be made whole** through faith in his death for sin.



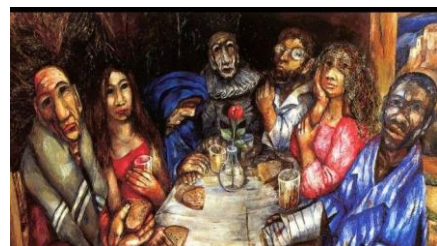
By elevating and sharing **this** particular cup and **this** bread within the Passover, and then associating them with **His** body and **His** blood, Jesus transformed this ritual of remembrance into new tradition of **commemorating** and **participating** in all the benefits of His **greater salvation**.²

As he shared the bread and the cup with all, he said “Do this in remembrance of me.” That is, not to merely remember what his salvation means to us, but to **actively share in all the benefits** this new meal points to as we eat and drink in His name.

The Lord’s Supper, says Peter Leithart, is “our model of the eschatological order, a microcosm of the way things really ought to be.”

In other words, he says, the Lord’s Supper **forecasts the world as God will make it**.

It’s good to recall that this was **not a meal attended by the religious elite** or the self-made “righteous” or the wealthy or powerful. The gathering around **this** table was rag-tag bunch of **nobodies** - a posse of **peasants** - who had responded to Jesus’ invitation to follow him.³



I remember in one of the churches I worked in long ago, a woman asked me to christen her baby. She was a fashion model, married to an infamous Australian rock and roll recording artist. When the day came to baptize the child in church, Gloria mentioned that her husband

² Paul looked back at the Last Supper and understood every re-enactment with Jesus’ words and significance as a “proclamation of His death until He comes again”. In his instructions to Christians in 1 Corinthians 11, Paul understood the “doing this” in “Jesus’ name” as a profound spiritual centre of Christian community and wholeness.

³ Though the focus on the gathering here in Luke 22 features the “twelve” who are males, the wider group of “disciples” (verses 11-13) including women are likely to have been present as in the upper room after Jesus’ death (Luke 24:9-10)

Graham **was nervous about whether he and his best buddies would be welcome in a church** [by his own admission he and his friends weren't exactly Rock and Roll royalty, but like the underbelly of the industry.]

Anyway, after I led a few Bible studies on baptism in their home, Graham and Gloria and all their mates came to church for the big day in leopard-skin tights, leather jackets and fur stoles (and that was just the guys!). After the baptism we welcomed them all to participate in The Lord's Supper – to take the bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus' death.

After the service, Graham approached me and thanked me, saying, "I didn't ever think I'd be welcome at that table." I said to him, "You welcomed *me* into your home." God does the same thing to anyone who wishes to eat and drink at His table."

Every future meal beyond the Last Supper when bread is broken the cup shared in remembrance of all Christ has done offers to those at the table **assurance of God's forgiveness, spiritual nourishment** to address our true hunger and thirst, and refreshment of spirit to live under God's blessing to be a blessing to others – **no matter who we are or what we've done** in life in the past.



There is, in The Lord's Supper, an intimate **oneness with Jesus** and with **all His followers** that affirms our **oneness with God** through faith.

I look forward to celebrating The Lord's Supper as a church this Easter Sunday, albeit via livestream, and without fancy filters and effects (!) that we might know these benefits of Christ's death and resurrection all the more.

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