

The Last Supper

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[0 : 0 0] I want to look this evening at the same passage that we've just read together in Luke's Gospel chapter 22 and I want to split it into two and have a singing in between and then during that singing encourage those who are not sitting at the table who are going to participate to come forward during the singing of that Psalm but split it into two looking first at the supremacy of Jesus and then looking at our own fragile discipleship and hopefully from that being greatly encouraged by how the Lord responds as we see it in this amazing account here of the Institution of the Lord's Supper which has been given for all the church through all of time until Jesus comes back So it's obviously very relevant for us because Jesus our Lord our Master our Savior He instituted the Supper for us and and we were obeying that command this evening by celebrating together

So it's very appropriate I have to say it's going to be very selective because there's so much in a passage like this that we can't possibly deal with the whole passage But really in the first place if you take a sweeping look over this chapter it really does speak to us about how supreme and How divine Jesus is and it's good. I hope for us to be encouraged by that here was Jesus facing the most outstanding darkness and the greatest challenge as it were to his divinity on the cross and We see him facing that with tremendous self assurance and self knowledge with sovereignty with clear divinity and In a very intentional way everything about this chapter is very intentional

It's not he's not stumbling through this this Passover meal and thinking a lot be good to have some kind of memorial service for the Cross based on this and nothing's kind of just stumbling through it and he's not reacting simply to The disciples and what they're saying and what they're doing. It's very intentional and it's very Strong and I hope that we will be encouraged by that When we think of our own lives and we think of our Savior There's two things I want to look at Jesus knowledge and Jesus provision here Jesus knowledge and comes across very clearly is For knowledge even comes across very clearly and it's knowledge of people's hearts comes across very clearly both in the preparations for the feast and also in the conversations that he has and Right from the beginning. We know that Jesus has set apart this feast and he's done it in

Kind of unusual way, which maybe say something about before but he he already knows what it's going to be He knows the room. It's going to be in Whether it's miraculous or whether he's he's prepared to by speaking to people beforehand they are expecting this meal and there's a little bit of mystery about the way he does it but nonetheless he has this meal that's prepared and it's based on it's the Passover meal and There's a tremendously clear link So go on to look at briefly between the Passover meal Which they're celebrating and the Lord supper which they're going to celebrate and there's a fantastic sense in which the whole of God Comes together in these two meals, which you know, we're instituted hundreds of thousands of years apart but There's such a clear message That comes from even the events of the Passover that links into our own salvation And so we have that kind of link of his knowledge of what he's doing and it's clearly set out and he's been

Preparing for hundreds of years. God has been preparing this event and all the events leading up to it I've been preparing For Jesus coming in the cross and then of course we have the prophecy that he gives of the denial that he knows about Judas denial or Judas betrayal rather and He addresses that he's not surprised by it. It's not something that's going to Phase him at one level, but he knows about it and he lets Judas know that he knows about it when he speaks about The one whose hand is with his will Deny or will betray him of course they all question themselves about that and then he goes on to speak about Peter's denial Peter so strong So courageous such a brave believer and yet Jesus here kind of knocks the the wind out of his sails by saying You know before the cock grows three times you're going to deny me

[5 : 1 9] And he knows about these things and then he goes on to speak to the disciples about the certainty of their suffering that you know things have been provided for them and They've been

looked after in a very protective and special way But he goes on to speak about the sufferings that they were going to face and the difficulties that they're going to face and it's all clear for him It's all absolutely not known to him And within all of this within this supper that he's instituting He is clearly aware of future Unparalleled celebrations in heaven of which the Lord's table is only a foretaste You know he speaks about not drinking again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes And I tell you I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God And he's pointing forward to a great feast and a great celebration that we cannot look forward to as well

So that not only are we going back to pass over and ultimately before pass over but we're going forward to the end of time and Within this Jesus is standing firm and strong with this great knowledge Not just of the events around him You know we we at best know a little bit about the events around us and maybe some of the things that have happened in our past But here's Jesus with great solidity standing at this moment with tremendous knowledge of how the past links into what's happening here And what is happening in a microkin of Cosm with the individual disciples the people and then looking again at the big picture of heaven And what he is going to achieve will mean for the people so there's great knowledge In Jesus and I hope that injects hope into our Christianity The for our Savior there isn't darkness and We can put our hands in him He doesn't need faith in the way that we need faith we struggle on a day-to-day basis And we need faith and we find it difficult sometimes But he doesn't need faith because he knows our faith is in him because he knows and he Has this great purpose and plan for his people This decree and not only does he know this great decree and this great work and this great end from the beginning But he knows our own needs and he knows our own fragility and our own propensity to struggle and Find the Christian way difficult And it's great and encouraging To remember that and to know that our future has been prepared by him And it's a brilliant future that we have in him not just in this life But also eternally at a feast where midnight never comes something that sure and certain and absolute As we think of

What lies ahead and that's good in a uncertain and insecure Generation but also sometimes in our individual lives We feel that great insecurity and that great doubt and that great struggle when we trust in Jesus We can know his provision is Unparalleled and here is a Savior facing death and facing the cross with great strength And with great courage with great knowledge and great foresight and a great plan So we see that In his his knowledge as it's kind of unfolded here, but we also see it of course in his provision And what he's providing here or in what that provision is pointing to the Lord supper, of course Not an end in itself, but pointing to The cross and the crucifixion So we have this supper that Jesus Institutes as part of the Passover And there's great links, isn't there? And I'm sure you've you've read lots about these links and heard lots of sermons about these links between the Passover And between the Lord's supper And the Passover would be a meal that Jewish people would celebrate once a year to remember their release from slavery in Egypt Through God's intervening hand through his grace and through his redemption And they would recall that slavery And they would think about that slavery and they would remember that slavery And the Passover is so evocative of that and so at the Lord's supper We need to recall and remember the slavery in which sin keeps us the blindness that it Brings into our lives and the fact that our unbelief In the past separated us from God And enslaved us to a worldview that didn't encompass Jesus

[10 : 31] And his lordship and his salvation So we remember that at the Lord's table We remember what it was like to not be Christians I hope we do because it's a good thing to do because sometimes we just take for granted Yeah, so what am I Christian? But it's good to remember But it's like not To be touched by God's love and God's grace and be redeemed and have moved out of that place But also the Passover meal the senses were stimulated. It was a great Sensual meal in the sense that people's senses were stimulated There was four cups of wine that were taken at different periods of the meal Remembering the four promises of deliverance that God gave his people There was bitter herbs That were dipped in salt water Salt water is a reminder of their tears and slavery and the bitter herbs

A reminder of the bitter experiences that they had under slavery Where they were beaten and oppressed and they weren't allowed to worship There was a lamb slain of course the kind of centerpiece of the meal Which reminded them of the shedding of blood bringing forgiveness And hope and deliverance and freedom There was the Unleavened bread which reminded them of putting aside what was passed and dealing with the leaven And making a fresh start without having

any connection to their past life And then the stories were retold. It was a great storytelling event Where the stories of the exodus were recalled and they were recalled You know primarily they were recalled for the children The Bible often speaks about the children being there in the story What will happen next?

And the children being very much part of that Passover And just as we looked at this morning in Nehemiah The children of any age you could understand were very much part of that great sweeping Encounter with God that they had The children were involved in that And so it was a very sensory meal And so the Lord's supper not in maybe quite such a dramatic way But also God appeals to our senses by giving us the Lord's supper And he reminds us of his body in the bread And of his poured out blood, his blood shed in the wine And we taste that because it's very sensory and it's very personal And it's very real and we're to take it for ourselves And Jesus wants us to recognize and know and experience that in the Lord's supper And he wants that to help us The physical senses being stimulated to remind us of spiritual truth Amazing really that he would do so But yet it's good for us to remember that in his provision That he has given us that as a reminder of the centrality of Jesus body And his body hanging on the cross and his blood being shed for our salvation You know the Lord's supper being central to these things But of course in the Lord's supper that he instituted As probably about three quarters of the way through the Passover meal I would imagine it's about that point The sacrificial lamb is missing from what Jesus does in the Lord's supper And of course that's significant also There's no longer a sacrificial lamb It's a new meal, it's a different meal There is bread and there is wine But there's no lamb There's no sacrificial lamb because Jesus is the Passover lamb Jesus is the Lamb of God And it's through his shed blood

Not the shed blood of a perfect one year old lamb That they remembered But it's through his shed blood that we find freedom And forgiveness and hope and life So it was a very meaningful personal experience But one that was a corporate experience of the people And so we have that still in our celebration of the Lord's supper So we find in the Lord's supper his provision But also we see his provision just through his astonishing love His great love And that comes across in this passage in verse 14 And verse 15 we're told that When the hour came Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table and he said to them I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer The word kind of speaks about just being overwhelmed

[15 : 37] With desire to share this Passover with them He really wanted to do this and he didn't want anyone to mess it up Which takes us back to what I said at the beginning about the kind of rather Almost clandestine way that he set up the supper Where he sent some of his disciples to this room And didn't disclose where the room was And I think there's a very practical reason for that Is that he knew that Judas was to betray him And was going to hand him over And you know it says that in verse 6 that Judas consented and watched for an opportunity to hand over Jesus When there was no crowd present And what would have been a better place than in the upper room And if Judas had known about the preparations And would have known where the upper room was going to be And what was going to happen You could imagine how the whole event would have just been Hijacked by the High Priest and Jesus would have been arrested But Jesus wanted and it was absolutely imperative

He was overwhelmed with his desire to set the Lord's supper in place For his disciples and for us And so he goes to these great lengths to make sure that that is exactly what happens And then throughout the meal itself We see that Jesus isn't doing this for the good of his own health That he's doing it for the disciples Because he has a great love for them In verse 19 This is my body given for you It's given for you And this is the cup is the new covenant in my blood Poured out for you And in verse 29 he speaks about a kingdom being conferred on you So that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom And sit on thrones And it's all for them It's all for his people And here is his great love being outworked Before the cross in preparation for the cross

Which of course is the greatest outworking The greatest revelation of his love But we can see here that he's setting it all out for us That he's preparing the way for us That he is giving us this That he loves us I am doing this for you And so this evening he's still as given as these same words This is done for you And so you sit with great privilege tonight at his table And he says I'm doing this and I have done this for you And the provision is for you The past provision is for you The future provision will be for you Your, the life that courses through your veins this evening It's for you That Christ has this great commitment And this great love that drives him on And maybe you sit this evening with a

great doubt About whether Christ is really interested in your life The minutiae of your life, the struggles of your life The difficulties of your life And he says well look this is for you And the love that I have is for you And we look forward to experiencing that more and more As we trust in him and as we rely on him in our lives So we have this provision in love And in the supper or what the supper points forward to particularly And we are encouraged I hope by his tremendous knowledge and dignity And sense of control over all of these events This isn't a Christ who is fumbling and stumbling his way through difficult days He has all these events in the palm of his hand Now I would like us to sing together Before looking at the second section and during the singing of this Psalm I would encourage any who are sitting at the table Who love the Lord Jesus Christ as their own saviour

To join with us and sit at the table Because I want to speak to us together at the table Just for the second little section that we are looking at this evening And if you remember this is the table of the Lord Jesus Christ We don't claim any exclusivity for our own church In any way it's the table of the Lord Jesus And we invite you to join with us if you love the Lord as your own And you are vesting with us this evening at this table So we are going to sing together in Psalm 118 verses 1 and 2 And then verses 15 to 20 of the Psalm Thank the Lord for he is good His steadfast love endures always Now let the house of Israel say His love will last through endless days So we'll sing that verse and then move on to verse 15 Triumphant shouts of joy resound In places where the righteous dwell [20 : 47] The Lord's right hand is lifted high His mighty hand does all things well We'll stand together to sing it Oh, thank the Lord for he is good His steadfast love endures always Now let the house of Israel say His love will last through endless days Triumphant shouts of joy resound In places where the righteous dwell The Lord's right hand is lifted high

His mighty hand does all things well I shall not die but I shall live The Lord's great works I will proclaim The Lord severely chastened me But rescued me from death, oh pain Throw wide the gates of righteousness I'll enter and give thanks to God This is the gates of God Through which the righteous come before the home I thought I'd switched on Jesus provisioning that kind of aspect of this chapter And I just want to spend a few moments while we're together at the table and the kind of intimacy that that allows to remind ourselves of, not in a, I hope, not in a destructive or negative way, but in an encouraging way, our fragile discipleship. Because it's only when we recognize in many ways our fragility that we turn to the Lord afresh. We're strong and independent and self-confident, then we will often just not turn to the Lord. [24 : 40] And the characters that we have in this chapter are clearly given to us by God Himself, and their lives are recorded for our instruction.

And so often I think you will, as I'm sure I do, as I know I do, find them to be a mirror into my own soul. And they challenge me afresh to repent.

It's a very old fashioned and in many ways a rather unpopular and outdated word for many people today, which is a shame, because it is bang up to date the kind of concept of turning back to God, which is all it means.

And the first section that we looked at, we kind of looked at Jesus' knowledge, didn't we, how strong and knowledgeable He was in Himself and of Himself and of what He had come to do.

And I want to contrast that really with the disciples' lack of knowledge about themselves, which is so often what we're like too, so different from Jesus, utterly and completely straight and self-confident and God.

[25 : 53] But we often don't know ourselves and spend our entire lives, in many ways, learning about ourselves. And what is it that is in these few words that would make us consider that?

Well, I think in the institution of the separate self, where Jesus says, remember, do this in remembrance of me, because He says that here, and of course in our reading, or the institution in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, we have that as well, do this in remembrance of me.

And that is clear that we are so prone to forget, and that's what God knows. He knows that we are so prone to forget.

So remember, He says, remember me. And He gives us this often as we do it, to remember Him. It's easy to be thankless in our lives and blasé and complacent about our salvation.

And so He encourages us to remember. It's really a great quality, isn't it? It's a fantastic quality. It's amazing when someone is good at remembering other people, whether it's remembering they've got a hospital appointment, remembering their birthday or their anniversary, anniversary of a birth,

even anniversary of a death, or difficult times or good times.

[27 : 20] It's an amazing gift to have somebody who is able to channel their love for someone in this way of remembering them and remembering them at significant times in their lives.

And Jesus has remembered us in the most amazing way and remembered our condition. And so He wants us in return to remember Him. It's a great thing.

Returning thanks as it were to Him. It's such a good thing to do to return thanks to Him for what He's done in the cross to remember. And He wants us to remember the cross.

It's the lens through which we see everything in our lives, every aspect of our lives we can channel through that, see through the lens of the cross.

So we remember, and we remember the cross this evening and the Christ who died for our sins there. But we also see the fragility in their argument.

[28 : 21] I'm the greatest. It's just an astonishing argument really. At this time, the pathos of the moment, the spiritual tension of the moment, the amazing self-sacrifice that Jesus is about to undergo and He's providing them with this meal.

And He's predicted His death and He's told them to remember His blood and His blood. And then they have an argument about who's the greatest. I mean, it's unbelievable in many ways.

In verse 24, you know, we're told that a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered the greatest. It seems so holly, crude, it's sort of a jackboot that comes into the whole thing.

But it seems so crazy that they would be arguing like that, who's the greatest? What triggered that? Well, maybe it was because Judas by this stage had left.

And if we have got our geography of the event right, Judas was very probably in that most honored of places next to the host, you know, whoever dips his hand in the dish with me.

[29 : 31] And that would probably have meant it had to be Judas who was right beside him so that Jesus, knowing that Judas would betray him, still takes him to that most honored place which was at the right hand of the host.

So Judas is this amazing place of honor and yet he still, he finds out that Jesus knows he's going to betray him but he still goes ahead with it and leaves. And so there's an empty place at the right hand of Jesus, most honored place.

I wonder if that's what triggered. I'm going to sit there, no you're not, I'm going to sit there, I'm more important than you. What do you mean? Well, I was the one who, maybe an argument started because that place had been vacated and one of them wanted to go there and sit where Judas had left.

So they started this argument about being the greatest. Self-absorption right in the midst of this most tender and powerful spiritual moment.

How frustrating that must have been for Jesus. And yet Jesus so patiently and so calmly deals with him, doesn't reject him, doesn't say, you're absolutely hopeless.

[30 : 35] I'm going to start with a whole lot of new disciples. He tells them a different way, look, to be a Christian, isn't to strive after being the greatest. It's to be a servant.

And you know, in the John 9 account, the account of John, we have him washing the disciples' feet showing a different way. If you're going to be a leader, then you're going to be one who serves.

You're not like that, he says. You're not like people in the leaders in the world that call themselves benefactors but are actually dictators. He says, no, you have to be servants.

And you're not to be like that. You're to be like one who's the youngest and the one who rules like the one who serves. So he's telling them, even in this, teaching them and teaching us a different way, a sacrificial way of service and of giving and of humble following after Jesus Christ.

And he even speaks to them, even in the midst of their kind of, what we would think, is crass insensitivity. He reminds them of the hope and the future that they have and tells them that they've got a great future in heaven and a great privileged position in heaven with him.

[31 : 49] I confer on you a kingdom, verse 29, just as my father conferred one on me so that you may eat and drink at my table, my kingdom, and sit on throne judging the twelve tribes of Israel. What a reward for these guys who had been arguing about who was the greatest among them.

And he doesn't want our Christianity to be self-indulgent or rude or blind to him but to be self-denying and suffering and recognizing the glory that lies ahead.

And then the last thing is just Peter's own bravado, even after this, where Jesus says that he's going to deny him Peter's, I'll never deny you, there's no way I'll deny you.

You know, I'm ready to go to prison and to death. That kind of great, cheap promises that Peter gives at this point and yet within a matter of minutes, a matter of moments, fear and ignorance prevail over him.

And I think there's just a great reminder to us of where our confidence lies, not in ourselves, not in the table, not in our church membership, not in our, even our fellowship, but in Jesus Christ.

[33 : 10] Maybe hear about Peter here and you can say, well, I'm not like Peter, I'll not deny him, I'll not let him down. But you know, it's not easy for us to be confident at the table, just like Peter was.

We're confident in the security and safety of the table or of what it represents and what we are here. But what about our lifestyles and who we are?

You know, one of our prayers for St. Columbus is that we will send out missionaries as a congregation. It will be a mission sending congregation. Now that's to this extent, maybe already happening.

There's maybe people in different places that are serving Christ from this congregation. But not just India and not just China and not just America and not just full time servants going out, working for the Lord with missionary organizations.

But what about tomorrow in Dalrai and in Gorgia and in Marchman and in Leith, whatever God has placed us, we want all of us to be missionaries where we are, not afraid to serve Jesus Christ among our friends and our colleagues and our fellow students.

[34 : 27] That we are those who will not deny Him when the opportunity comes up. Okay at the table, but tomorrow, when we have an opportunity, have we prayed?

Will we pray for an opportunity tomorrow or today for tomorrow? And when that opportunity comes, will we stand up for Christ? Will we tell of Christ?

Or will we deny Him and not use the opportunity rather when we bury it? You know it might not be a dramatic as Peter, I'm sure it wouldn't be, but are we ashamed of Him?

Do we really only believe within the confines of these four walls? Or will we go from here with all our fragility and be warned by Peter to act differently ourselves?

Because in our lack of knowledge of ourselves, you know if we're overconfident and we lose something great, we lose Christ confidence, which is our reliance on Him and that closeness to Him that will give us the courage way beyond what we are and what we can be.

[35 : 39] Because the great thing about, and I don't want to focus on the fragility of the people here as if there's no hope, because the fantastic thing is the way Jesus deals with them and the way Jesus deals with Peter and by extension to all of us, He says, Peter, I have prayed for you that your faith wouldn't fail.

Isn't that a tremendous thing? And not only that, that He would strengthen the other disciples by His return. But I have prayed for you, Simon, verse 32, that your faith may not fail when you have turned back strength in your brothers.

I have prayed for you. So tonight in all our sense and feeling of our own fragility, this great confidence, the same Jesus Christ is praying for us, He's our great High Priest and our Saviour, He prayed for us.

Our faith will not fail as we rely on Him, our great High Priest, and we trust in Him and we look to Him not only for tonight and for, I hope, tomorrow, but also for the celebration in that great throne room when we will be at His table forever and enjoy His company.

So we rejoice and give thanks that our fragility isn't a barrier to His salvation and to His provision. Indeed, it's an open door that allows His glory to shine in the broken vessels that He chooses to be His brothers and sisters.

[37 : 08] So let's bow our heads and give thanks and participate together. For God, we thank you for this opportunity today to celebrate the Lord's Supper and to enjoy unity and fellowship together, but above all to think of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, and to remember the bread that symbolizes and reminds us of His body that is given for us and the wine reminding us of His shed blood that He died on the cross and took the punishment of our sins in the wrath of God and the forces of darkness and evil and defeated these things and paid the price and satisfied divine justice so that we might be redeemed and forgiven and bought back and made whole and given a peace that passes all understanding, that the world cannot give and definitely can't take away.

So Lord, we thank you for that this evening. We thank you for the bread and the wine that we have here and this table spread. We ask that you would bless it to us as we set it apart for this holy use today and we rejoice in the love of Christ and also the love for each other and for the unique characters that are brought together today at the Lord's table.

So we ask all these things in Jesus' name for His sake. Amen. So we repeat these words that Jesus instituted in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and they received from the Lord.

I also passed on to you the Lord Jesus on the night He was betrayed, took bread and when He had given thanks as we have done, He broke it and said, this is my body which is for you to do this in remembrance of me.

And in the same way after supper He took the cup and said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood, do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

[39 : 38] As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do proclaim the Lord's death until it comes.