

The First Lord's Supper

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Bible Text: Matthew 26:26-30

Preached on: Sunday, November 9, 2014

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Let's go to Matthew 26. Our time does not allow me to deal with the next part of Luke as the next time we're together, Lord willing, we will look at Luke 16 and talk about divorce and remarriage. By the way, I just want to make it clear to you as I make it clear to my own soul, Grace Life Church is not punting the ball on the sanctity of marriage. It's an ordinance of God. Now look, there is grace, amen? If you've been through a failed marriage, in a failed marriage you've humbled yourself, you sought the word of God and you've sought the church elders to make the mess as best you can now, I'm going to tell you what's going to happen, we're going to love you unconditionally. We're going to help you and pray with you and encourage you and get you through it. But you listen to me, you're not going to be a member of this church and throw a marriage away. I don't care if it's a difficult. What was for better or worse? What does that mean? It's always difficult. We counseled with a lady some years ago who said that she, her husband was just not nice to her and he argued with her and he raised his voice. Of course, she did a lot of that too and she called that abuse and wanted out of the marriage. I said, "Heavens to Betsy, if that's grounds for divorce, 80% of our marriages would be over in this church." We can always say, "Hey, I haven't been right and I want to humble myself and I want to do the best I can from here on out." We're not throwing away the sanctity of marriage here. There is grace and compassion and long suffering and patience for anybody who is willing to try, no matter where they are. If that's where you are, we're for you but when you pastor a church that is trying to be biblical, folks, every day we fight something else. I'm just saying that because I'm preaching on that next Sunday. By the way, the Bible gives some concessions for divorce and remarriage and we're going to be as liberal as the Bible is liberal. Amen? As gracious as the Bible is gracious. By the way, some of our best members have been through a broken marriage but they were humble about it and got right with God where they needed to and went on for the glory of God. Amen?

That's not my message but it's coming. You know, it's not easy to pastor a church. One of our men told me this morning he'd been visiting some churches while he was visiting relatives and he said, "I guess I'm spoiled. It's just amazing the nonsense I've sat through in churches." I said, "No, I'm spoiled. I have a congregation that really loves me for leading them biblically." Do you know how rare that is? I've worked with pastors the last couple of weeks that are just dying, trying to get started to be biblical. They are just getting attacked right and left and here I am, if I didn't do that, you would fire me and you

should fire me if I didn't do that. I'm a blessed man and I thank you for letting me serve as your pastor.

Matthew 26. The Lord has gone to Jerusalem. He's having the Passover meal with his disciples. You know, God has this magnanimous plan. That's really not the best way to say that, he has this stupendous plan. He had decided before the foundation of the world that by his own means, through his own merit, he would save for himself a people out of all sinners. He would save for himself a people that through saving them he might demonstrate the great wisdom and beauty and power that he alone, God, has. Nobody else can save the way that God can save. Nobody else has loved the way God can love. No one else has grace the way God has grace. No one else has mercy the way God has mercy. But God needed some wretched, offensive, depraved, wrath-deserving subjects that he might point his love toward to demonstrate how wonderful, wise and powerful he is and all of us qualify. So God predetermined before the world was that he would save for himself a people, that he would so work in their hearts by the power of the Spirit under the preaching of his Gospel, that their hearts would be transformed and they would begin a pilgrimage where they would begin to treasure and love God more than anything and everything else. Then one day, he would bring that great stupendous plan of God to culmination and he would have his bride, his people there with him and there his people would be perfected in glory with him and they would love him and enjoy him and worship him and bring him glory for ever and ever and ever.

Matthew 26, look at verse 26,

26 While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."
27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. 29 "But [notice this, church] I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." 30 After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

First of all, we're talking about the first Lord's supper because that's what this is. This is the institution of the first Lord's table or the first Lord's supper. Notice first of all, the consummation of the Jewish Passover. That's what this is. It's bringing to its fulfilled conclusion the purposes God had in giving the Jews this Passover meal or this Passover celebration. The Passover meal was not intended to be a perpetual statute. The Passover meal was established that it might point to, lead up to and be culminated in another supper and that's what the Lord's supper is. It brought the old Jewish Passover to its final culmination and end.

The Bible says, "While they were eating," there in verse 26. Of course, the Jewish Passover meal was a commemorative meal whereby the Jews would think back on what God did in Egypt as they were enslaved there and God sent a series of plagues against the Egyptians and each plague would demonstrate that God's power was superior to the

false powers of the false gods of Egypt. For example, God sent a plague of frogs. You know why? Because many of the Egyptians worshiped frogs. He said, "You like frogs?" And God sent them everywhere. Every time the king would dip his spoon down into the soup, a little green frog would be looking up at him. God sent a plague of gnats. God sent a plague of boils. God sent all these plagues and then in the final plague, was the death of the firstborn. God told his children, Israel, they are enslaved in Egypt, "I'm going to send the death angel to every household in Egypt and every firstborn child, firstborn son in that household, will be killed." But he told the Israelites, "Find you a spotless lamb and slay that lamb. Take a hyssop branch and dip it in the blood of that spotless lamb and apply the blood to the doorpost and to the mantle of your house and every house in Egypt where the blood is applied, the death angel will not visit but pass over." Thus God established this statute in Israel that every Passover, you'll have a feast. You are to take a spotless lamb to commemorate the great redemption, the great salvation I brought to you when I sent the death angel into every household in Egypt. They did that.

While they are there, Jesus is here in Jerusalem, of course. It's just a little bit before he's going to be betrayed and arrested and then crucified. He's taken this Jewish Passover and there he takes some bread. Now, that bread we know in the old Jewish Passover is unleavened bread and you'll know that the Bible teaches that leaven like a yeast, always represents evil. It's the idea that if you put just a little leaven in something, it multiplies and it infuses its energy into the whole lump. A little leaven, the Bible says, leaven's the whole lump of dough. So leaven is the infusion, it's the power of evil. It's the power of the flesh but God said, "Every year when you take the Passover meal, listen, you must use unleavened bread. No yeast in it." What was his point? Three ideas there I think that he's teaching. First of all, when Egypt is also a representation of evil and Egypt was everything that was anti-God. It was the antithesis of godliness and so by bringing them out of Egypt through that last plague, he brought on the Egyptians, he's saying, "You were brought out to be separate from the world and from evil." And that's the way we are as the children of God when Jesus Christ saves us and changes our lives. We begin to be set apart from the world, the world's priorities and the world's values and the world's viewpoints of things. You men who run your own businesses, be the best businessman in town, make millions but look, your priorities and your values are different from the other guys in town. You ladies, you keep your homes and take care of your husbands and your children like all the other ladies but listen, your purpose is for the glory of God. You say, "Well, he's not worth it. He's never been worth it." But God is. You husbands, you love your wife like Christ loves the church but your purpose is higher than the purpose of other men in the community who are loving their wives. We are separate out of Egypt with a new kingdom we're a part of and new principles and new authorities and new values that God is infusing into our hearts from the word of God by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen?

So first of all, unleavened bread meant you're separated from the leaven of Egypt. You're into something new. Not only is it separation from Egypt but also a consecration unto the Lord. He brought them out of Egypt and there are a lot of people that miss this part. They try to clean up and straighten up their lives, get rid of some bad habits, get rid of

the immoralities and cleanup. That never does any good. The Bible says that if you do self-cleansing, the demon you cast out will get seven more worse than that one demon and come back seven times worse. Self-cleansing never, never, never works. You must have a Christ-cleansing. A Christ-cleansing or there is no true cleansing.

They went out from Egypt but they went unto God. They went out there in the wilderness. You know what the first thing they did was? Worshiped. Worship. The moment you are saved, you begin to worship. You begin to adore. You begin to love. You begin to be grateful for Christ and all he has done for you. Sometimes I have pastors that ask, "How did you get a congregation that works the way they work? We come to the True Church Conference and they just love us and they care for us. They love you. They love the staff." I say, "We're just so wonderful, they can't help it." No, that's a lie straight out of hell. Now, you know that, amen? That's just the truth. Look, here's what it is: they are grateful God saved them. They are humble and they are grateful and they just want to get in on doing something for the kingdom of God. The best thing we can do for the kingdom of God is preach the Gospel, plant new churches and revitalize existing churches to be true churches. That's the only thing we can do. "Well Pastor, why don't we start this ministry and this ministry and this ministry?" God didn't have but one primary ministry and that's local churches. Local churches. So we leave the evil of Egypt and we consecrate ourselves to be honorable in service unto our God through his local churches.

Well, separation from Egypt was symbolized in the unleavened bread. Consecration unto the Lord was symbolized but thirdly, an authentication of saving power. An authentication of saving power. Here's what I mean by that: God said, "You are to take that unleavened bread and it should remind you as you eat that flatbread, flat, hard bread that no arm of the flesh aided in your salvation. Your redemption was wrought not by the leaven of man but by the power of God." Child of God, you glory on this very precious and important day in the life of Grace Life Church: your salvation rests not on man but on God. God sent the plagues in Egypt. God's mighty arm delivered them. They sat down. They had the Passover meal. They were grateful and said, "God, we didn't do this. We would still be there eating leeks and onions by the Nile River but you came in and you set us free. We eat the unleavened bread reminding us that no leaven of man redeemed us from Egypt."

Of course, the Jewish nation held vigorously to this annual celebration. It was a great, great, powerful deliverance by God but 2,000 years ago, Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt. He had prearranged a place where he could partake of the Jewish Passover and there on this occasion, revealed by this narrative in Matthew 26, the Lord Jesus Christ consummated, brought to its final end, it's final conclusion, the Jewish Passover. It's now been swallowed up in the surpassing greatness of Jesus Christ. The Passover, you see, now is absolutely unnecessary. It is completely obsolete. The Passover celebration is no longer authorized by God nor recognized by God. The Passover meal is like an old black velvet that you might put the diamond of Jesus on so that he shines more brightly and more beautifully. The Passover served its purpose. It pointed to Christ. Christ has come. He takes the Passover and he takes it and then point 2 in our

outline: he transforms it to the Lord's supper. There is a transformation from the Jewish Passover. It's been changed in its nature and now it's called the Lord's table or the Lord's supper. So today we have a far greater and more glorious celebration that we partake of than the Jewish Passover. The bread now, verse 26, is symbolic of his body. He says at the end of verse 26, "Take, eat; this is My body." No longer do we take a meal and think about how it symbolizes the separation and deliverance from a country, Egypt, but we take the bread and we think of his body that became the guilt offering and therefore he was separated on the cross from the Father because he became our sin that we might be united unto the Father and begin to learn to be separated from our sin. That's what he's accomplished.

Also, he says the juice now is symbolic of his blood. Now, his blood is not the literal blood of some four-legged lamb, it's not a blood that is applied to a mantle or a doorpost, it's not a blood that saves from physical death, we're not hoping to save ourselves from a death angel visiting our house, that was a temporal redemption because look, all of those Jews that were saved that night when the death angel visited Egypt, every one of them eventually died. They were saved from that death angel but that was a temporal salvation. No, no, no, the blood that we celebrate when we take of the juice during the Lord's supper now reflects on the bloodshed at Calvary, the world's altar.

I got into a little bit of a discussion in the church that I minister to lately. They're asking us to mentor them, to revitalize their ministry and they talk about the steps being an altar at their church. I looked at them and I said, "It looks like steps to me." Do you know why this is not an altar? Because our altar was settled 2,000 years ago and it's called Calvary so we don't go to a place looking for an altar. That altar was done there. The blood was shed and applied by the high priest of our souls, Jesus Christ, on Calvary's altar 2,000 years ago and now anywhere and everywhere at any time anyone would genuinely feel their sin and look to Christ, they are saved because the altar and the sacrifice has been settled. Now, if you want to come and make these steps into an altar to renew your life, recommit, that's fine but you could also do it there. You could do it out in the foyer. You can find the Sunday school classroom. You can sit in your truck. You can do 1001...look, aren't you glad we're not stuck with a human priest and a human built altar? It's bigger than that. It's greater than that. That was under the old Jewish system. You were locked into a physical priest and a physical area. That's what the Muslims do today. They take these holy pilgrimages to Mecca and they put all their faith in the external motions of that pilgrimage. Praise God we have a greater thing we celebrate, Christ's blood shed on the altar of the world, Calvary, 2000 years ago. By the way, you don't have the pilgrimage there, it didn't go back and didn't go back and didn't go back. Sometimes well meaning Baptists get into that trap. Every revival, they come down to the altar and they get fixed again. We might as well just make you a Catholic and let you go visit the priest and have confession. Now, don't misunderstand me, some of that can be very genuine and I understand that but we all know a lot of it is a false premise whereby the motions of doing something during an exciting revival meeting somehow help us get closer to God.

So there is a balance in that. There is a time to move at the end of the service and seek God. Don't misunderstand me. You've got that word "balance" in your mind? But we do not want our children growing up thinking, "If I get to the holy place and come down to the holy spot, somehow I get closer to God." That's superstitious external religion. The truth is, we come to God, listen, by faith. Can you name one place on planet earth where you can't reach God by faith? I don't care where you are. I said planet earth. They used to have astronauts that went into heaven and read the Scriptures. Remember that? "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Our first astronauts would read from the Bible. Do you know why? Because God is there to. You don't have to pilgrimage to Grace Life Church or anywhere else. You come to God by faith because the salvation and the redemption has been applied by the blood of Jesus on the altar of the world, Calvary, once and for all and that's what we're celebrating.

We remind ourselves today that the old Jewish Passover was a weak shadow pointing us to the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Listen to Hebrews 8:12-13, he's talking to Jewish believers and he's pointing back to their forefathers how they were stuck in their sins and their iniquities but through Jesus who's coming and now has come, they can be forgiven. He says, "For I will be merciful to their iniquities and I will remember their sins no more. When He said, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete." All the goings on, the ritual of the Old Covenant is obsolete. "But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear."

Here's a quick thought: the Jews celebrated that first Passover meal there 35, 100 or so years ago in Egypt as they were slaves but there was one devastating problem when they left Egypt, unfortunately they took a lot of Egypt with them in their hearts. We call it a mixed multitude. Some were genuine and humble and probably believers by faith in the coming of the promised Savior but so many of them were just going through external motions. In Exodus 16, for example, I'm going to jump down to verse 2, "The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness." Here they are delivered from Egypt, they're out in the wilderness following Moses and Aaron and they're grumbling about it. Verse 3 of Exodus 16, "The sons of Israel said to them, 'Would that we had died by the LORD'S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full.'" They said, "Dear God, it was better back there in Egypt. At least we had lots of meat to eat and you, Moses and Aaron, have brought us out into this wilderness. You're going to kill us all out here with hunger." Since Jesus saved you, haven't you had a moment or two when you said, "Lord, this is harder than I thought it would be"? This has caused some of the members of my own family to not like me or even hate me. That's your test. Are you going to side with Jesus or your family? Is it going to be Lordship or friendship? Haven't you grumbled, "This carrying the cross thing, this standing for truth, this striving for truth, it's not as much fun as it was down at the other church." That's your test. What does it mean to you? Jesus said that if your love and devotion to me which includes his true assembly of believers, you can never separate Christ and serving Christ from Christ's local church family body. You can't do that. Don't try. You can't do that. Biblically you can't do that. What does it mean to you? Now, thank God it's not that way every day, amen? But there are times

when it's tough. "Dear God, I should have stayed back in Egypt with sin and lostness." We've had those moments, haven't we?

All the ceremonies and the rituals and the outer cleansings and the motions of religions of all the ages cannot cleanse the Egypt out of our hearts, only Christ can do that. Only Christ can bring me to that point that says, "If I perish, I perish. I'm going on with God. It doesn't matter what the rest of my family says or thinks. It doesn't matter what my buddies do. It doesn't matter. I'm committed to Christ. Period. And I blow it a lot and I have to repent myself but I'm not knowingly, pre-meditatively going headlong back to Egypt." The only thing that can give you that kind of heart is Jesus Christ. Dr. Roy Beaman was already an old man when I took his Greek class at graduate school. Dr. Beaman was a brilliant man, a certified genius. He was a country boy from Kentucky but he was a genius. He worked in 32 languages. For his off time, he'd go to the museums around the world and study in those museums. Dr. Beaman said, "Everywhere I go, I share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It doesn't matter if it's Muslim or Hindu or a follower of Confucius or what it may be. Everywhere I go, I ask men one simple question: has your sin burden been lifted? Has your sin burden been lifted?" He said, no one can ever say an emphatic yes except those who know Christ. Only Christ can cleanse the sin. Only Christ can give you a new heart. Only Christ can give you a love for God that reigns supreme above all other things. Now, we come to this Lord's supper that Jesus transformed from the Passover into his supper and the only ones who can partake of this meal are those who are in Christ, those who have been transformed by his power and are one with him and, therefore, one with each other in the family of God.

One final word and I'll try to be quick. III. It's the anticipation of the marriage supper of the Lamb. You see, just as the Jewish Passover was not a perpetual statute, it was temporary until it was transformed into the Lord's supper, so the Lord's supper that we will partake of today is temporary. It will only last until it's transformed into the marriage supper of the Lamb. You won't take the Lord's supper in heaven. We will celebrate the marriage supper of the Lamb when we get to heaven. The Lord's supper will not continue into the eternal age but there we will celebrate with Jesus Christ in what's called the marriage supper. Revelation 19:7, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." And Jesus said in our text, how does he word it, verse 29 of Matthew 26, "But I say to you," it's like he says, "Listen, let's get something clear. I'm going to make an important point here, But I say to you," verse 29, "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day," that day, that day, the marriage supper of the Lamb, "when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." The way he says that is as if our Lord is saying, "I refuse to drink again of this special cup," this was the third cup in the Passover, "until we share it together as Savior and bride together glorified in heaven one day."

It's as if in heaven Jesus sits there in joyous, restful contemplation of all the perfections of our salvation he has performed for us. He foreknew us before the foundation of the world. He predestined us before the foundation of the world. He elected us before the foundation of the world. He called us before the foundation of the world. He regenerated

us before the salvation of the world. He quickened us and instilled us with the Spirit of God and that was planned before the foundation of the world. Then in this life we prove we're one of his by living a sanctifying type of lifestyle, a progressive sanctification, including devotion to his true church until one day he will glorify us all in heaven. Then finally, will be home with him all in attendance at the marriage supper of the Lamb, every eye lovingly and honorably focused on Christ. There we are in glorified perfection, all a radiant reflection of the merit and the wisdom and the beauty of our Savior and he looks over at an angel and says, "Well, I've come and I've rescued all these. I've brought them to myself. I've completed their salvation. It's time. Bring me the cup. It's time." And they will bring him the cup that he said, "I'll not drink again." It could be the actual literal cup Jesus used in the last Jewish Passover that has been translated into glory in some form and the holy angel will bring it out very carefully, "Lord, here it is. They are all home. Of all that the Father gave you, you lost not one. They are all here." Jesus said, "It's time. Bring me the cup," and there we will celebrate in feasting glorious rapture the marriage supper of the Lamb. It began 3,500 years ago as a foreshadow called the Jewish Passover. It was transformed 2,000 years ago from the old Jewish Passover to the Lord's table and one more time it will be transformed to glory to the marriage supper of the Lamb.