

Guest Preacher - Rev. Paul Murray

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Preacher: Rev. Paul Murray

[0 : 0 0] Well, now we'll have you to God's blessing if you would turn back with me to that portion of Scripture which we read together in the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 26. We can take our text this evening from verses 26 and 27.

Matthew 26, reading from verse 26. Now, as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it, broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat, this is my body.

And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you. Well, in two weeks' time, I believe that you have your communion weekend as we do ourselves in Kinloch.

And I want us this evening to consider together the institution of the Lord's Supper, the origin of this great feast that we call communion or the Lord's Table.

And we do so as we have it in Matthew's account in verses 26 to 30 of this chapter. Now, as you know, most religions have their own feasts.

[1 : 2 1] Many of them can be quite grand. They can be showy. They can be excessive. They can be very ornate. Indeed, some Christian churches or apparent Christian churches have taken some of the feasts of Scripture and tried to make them showy and ornate.

And yet, when we come to consider the Lord's Supper, which is really the only feast of the New Testament church, we find that it's a very simple feast.

We find that to the eyes it's not really a feast at all. If we were to tell people, if you were to tell your friends that in two weeks' time, you were going to have a great feast in the church, and I trust that you will have a great feast in the church.

But if they came to see this great feast, and if they saw you take a little bit of bread and a little gulp of wine, then I think that they would be surprised, perhaps shocked, and maybe they would feel that they had been tricked.

They would think that it was no feast at all, because to the eye and compared to other feasts, indeed compared to our own dinner, it doesn't see much of a feast at all. And yet, to the believing heart, it is the greatest feast.

[2 : 4 2] The symbols of this feast, which is really what we're going to consider this evening, they're not ornate or showy or expensive in any way, but they are rich.

And the symbols of this feast are important as well. We live in a day which denies symbolism, the relevance of symbolism. We live in a church, and I say a church, I speak really of the Western church, I'm not speaking about any congregations or denominations, where symbolism has largely been thrown out the door.

We forget that symbolism was greatly important to our own fathers. You walk into a Roman Catholic church, a Roman Catholic cathedral, it's full of its own symbolism, and that symbolism speaks of the beliefs and the traditions of that church.

You walk into a traditional Protestant church, you walk into this church this evening, it's a lot plainer, but it's full of its own symbolism, isn't it?

Full of its own symbolism. The symbolism of the pulpit, the symbolism of the simplicity of the building, so as not to take away of the Word, the exaltation of the Scripture, full of symbolism.

- [3 : 58] Symbolism is important, and symbolism is important in Scripture too. Yes, it's true that the Old Testament was full of symbolism, symbolism that was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ, but the New Testament has its own symbolism as well.

Symbols that are important, symbols that the church should respect, and the symbols of the Lord's table, the Lord's Supper, are an example of just that.

So I want us to consider some aspects of this, not every aspect, but some aspects of this supper this evening. And the first thing that I want us to consider is the context of the supper.

And the context of the supper is the Passover. We read that in verse 17, for example, and onwards, that the Passover was going to be prepared so that they could eat it.

And then in verse 20, When it was evening, he reclined at a table with the twelve. And then in verse 26, Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread.

- [5 : 12] As they were eating, as they were enjoying the Passover, that Old Testament feast, Jesus took bread. Now what did the Passover feast look like? And it's difficult to know exactly what it looked like 2,000 years ago.

You can go onto the internet or look in books today, and you can see what the Jewish Passover feast looks like today. The Jews call it seder.

And it contains many of the same... It's not what it was in Jesus' day. There is no lamb in the middle of the table. But it does contain many of the same symbols that the Jews would have had in Jesus' day.

There are Jewish writings which give us a good idea of what the Passover feast looked like, as well as the Old Testament scriptures themselves. We know that at Passover, as well as the food, that there would have been four cups in the middle of the table, four cups of wine.

And these four cups are based on the promises that we find in Exodus 6, verses 6 to 7. I'm not going to read it, but you can maybe take a note of it, and you can look up these verses yourselves perhaps later.

- [6 : 27] But in these verses, which spoke about the promises of God towards the children of Israel in bondage, and how He was going to take them out of bondage, the Jews and the scribes and the Pharisees and so on, they found four promises.

And at their Passover supper, they had four cups of wine which represented these promises. And interestingly, today, the Jews, when they have their own, or most of the Jews, there are varying practices within Judaism as there are varying practices within Christianity.

Most of the Jews will have four cups of wine in the middle of their table as well, and they all have their own meaning. Interestingly, and I'll come to this, they do have a fifth cup as well.

But in Jesus' day, it seemed that there were just four cups of wine. And they've been named variously, but generally, there's broad agreement that the first cup was known as the cup of consecration, or sometimes sanctification.

The second cup was known as the cup of showing forth, sometimes the cup of release. The third cup was known as the cup of blessing, sometimes called the cup of redemption.

- [7 : 46] And the fourth cup was known as the cup of joy, again, sometimes known as the cup of the Messiah. So you have these four cups in the middle of the table.

And as the family are gathered around, and as the case is here, as Jesus and His disciples are reclining, lying back at this table, you've got a table in the middle, and you've got around three sides of that table, you have the disciples round about.

Probably, although we're not sure about this, probably with Jesus in the center. That's where the host would sit, and almost the horseshoe round about Him. And it was the custom that the host, normally the father of the house, in this case, Jesus is the host, would pray over, to begin the feast, He would pray over the first cup, the cup of consecration.

He would pray over it, and then the first course of food would be brought out. And this first course, probably included something like greens, maybe with a bit of nuts, and fruit mixed up in it, and possibly some bitter herbs in there as well.

That's what the lamb was cooked with, but possibly with some herbs in there as well. And this would be often salted, or mixed with vinegar. And with that, they would have bread.

[9 : 07] It was unleavened bread that they used. You can see the symbolism of that in the Old Testament, and explained in the New Testament as well.

All leaven had to be put out of the house at the feast of unleavened bread. So it was hard bread. And it seems, and I found this in Edersheim, the Jewish minister.

He was actually a minister of the free church in the 19th century for a time. He wrote a very famous book called The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah. He says that the bread would be taken at the Passover, and it would be snapped in half, and part of it would be used for eating, and the rest of it would be put away, and it wouldn't be eaten at all.

It is interesting that in current, in modern Jewish Passover ritual, that they do the same thing, that they take the bread, the hard bread, and they cut it in half, and part of it, what they do is they hide it somewhere in the house, and then at the end of the feast, the children are told to go and find it.

And when they find it, whoever finds it gets a prize. That didn't happen, obviously, in Jesus' day, but it seems that the practice that they have today probably goes back 2,000 years, if not longer.

[10 : 27] It seems also that when we read of Jesus here at the beginning of the portion that we read, eating with the disciples, and when He's dipping His hand in the dish in verse 23, when He's dipping the sop, as it's called, and He's mixing the bread with these vegetables and the fruit, that this is what's being spoken of, the first course of the Passover.

When this was passed, they had what they called, and they still call, the Haggadah. Now, the Haggadah was basically the youngest person in the family, normally a child, in this case, one of the disciples, would ask the host, ask the father, what does all of this mean?

What do these symbols mean? And the host would then explain the symbols. He would talk about the Buddha herbs, what it meant. He would talk about the lamb. He would talk about the unleavened bread.

He would talk about the Passover, why they're here, why they've been called to do what they're doing. And it's interesting that Jesus, in all likelihood, did the same thing as well.

He would have been asked, what does all of this mean? And, ought to have been a fly on the wall, or even better, to have sat there, and to hear his explanation.

[11 : 49] You know, it's interesting, when Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration, and Moses and Elijah came to speak with him there, you remember what they spoke to him about. They spoke to him about his decease, that he would accomplish in Jerusalem.

And the word decease there, in the original, in the Greek, is his exodus. They came to speak about his exodus, that he would accomplish. And as he came here to speak about the great exodus, of the children of Israel, out of the bondage of Egypt, of God's redeeming purposes, in making them his own people, surely he would have applied this, to his own exodus, to his own redeeming death, whereby he redeemed us, not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with his own precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot.

After this was done, the first part of the halal would be sung. So Psalm 113, which we sang together at the beginning of this service, that would have been sung, probably Psalm 114 as well.

And then the second cup would have been taken by the host, the cup of release, or the cup of the showing forth, and the main course would be taken out, which is the lamb.

And they would begin then to eat that lamb. And then when that was done, a third cup, the cup of blessing, would be prayed over, and that would be drunk.

[13 : 22] And then at the very end of the service, or the supper, as it was, the second part of the halal would be sung.

So Psalms 115 to Psalm 118. Now, I think that Jesus, in fact, we can be quite sure, that Jesus stopped short from singing Psalms 115 to 118.

Certainly, he didn't sing Psalm 118. And we'll see why shortly. I also think that there are some who believe that the fourth cup, the cup of joy, or the cup of Messiah, was drunk.

There are others who think that it was left and that it wasn't drunk at all. Interestingly, did I say it? I'm not entirely sure, that the Jews today have a fifth cup, which they call the cup of Elijah.

And they leave that cup undrunk because they wait for the return of Elijah. Not knowing, as Jesus tells us, that Elijah is here, that Elijah has come, they also leave the door open for him.

[14 : 30] But anyway, at the end of this Passover feast, or towards the end of it, he stops short of closing with the singing. And at the end of this feast of the Old Covenant, the feast of the Old Testament, at the end of this sacrament of the Old Testament, which is basically what it was.

It was a sign and seal of God's covenant promises to his people. At the end of it, Jesus does something new. And he introduces a new sacrament, a sacrament of the New Testament.

And I want us to see how he did that and the elements that he used. The first element, of course, is bread. We read here in verse 26, that as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it, he broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat, this is my body.

Now, I think it's Edersheim again who says that after the lamb was eaten, that nothing else was to be eaten at the Passover meal. That was it.

It was closed with the lamb. No more food was allowed. But at this point, where no more food was to be eaten, Jesus took bread, and he broke it.

[15 : 52] Whether he took the broken half that was left to the side or not, we can't be entirely sure. But he took bread. The bread would have been unleavened bread.

People make a big thing of this. The Roman church, for example, have for a long time, for centuries, insisted upon using unleavened bread, which, to be honest, they don't really do.

A wafer isn't bread. But they've insisted on this, as has, I think, although it could be corrected, the Lutheran church. Whereas the Greek church, from the beginning, insisted on normal bread and not unleavened bread.

The fact is that, although Jesus would have used unleavened bread, the symbolism of the leaven that was so much a part of the Passover meal doesn't really seem to be part of the New Testament meal.

And it seems that after this time, when the Lord's Supper began to be kept by the church, that it was just normal bread that they used.

[16 : 55] And that's what we find, it seems that we find, in the first few centuries of the church. Normal bread, certainly we're not commanded to use, or the word unleavened isn't even used here in this passage.

So, although some people, I think even in their own culture, want us to use unleavened bread, and Jesus probably did, and we can understand that when the bread is broken, when the unleavened bread is broken, it makes a crack, it is more of a breaking.

We can understand these things. But I don't think we can say for certain that Jesus commands us to use unleavened bread. I don't think that he does. He commands us to use bread.

I did hear once of somebody telling me she was in some sort of Christian college, that at their break time, they had the Lord's Supper with crisps and ribena.

That's not the Lord's Supper. That's not the Lord's Supper. It is bread that was used, not potato crisps. So, he takes this bread, he breaks it, and then he gives thanks, or he says a blessing over it.

[18 : 05] The blessing that was used at the Passover meal has been passed down to us, or words to this extent, that the host would say, blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

And it's not unlikely that Jesus said something like that. And then he says concerning this bread, that this bread, this is my body.

This is my take, eat, this is my body. I'm not going to go into the heresy of transubstantiation, which says that Jesus is, that the bread and the wine is literally turned into the body and the blood of Jesus.

What they say is the accidents, what you see of the bread and the wine remain the same, but the substance of it is literally changed into the bread and the body of Jesus, which is tied to why they view it as a sacrifice, which is also tied to why they have it at what they call an altar, rather than a table.

An altar is for sacrifice, a table is for a meal. And it's very clear that there is no sacrifice taking place here. A once for all sacrifice is going to take place, but what Jesus is instituting here isn't a perpetual sacrifice to be done as often as we do it in remembrance of him, but rather a family meal, a sacrament.

[19 : 36] So he's not, we shouldn't really even have to say it, but he's not speaking literally, but metaphorically. He's not speaking literally any more than he is when he says, I am the door, or I am the vine.

He is not a door. We don't have to say that. He's not a tree with grapes growing on him. We don't have to say that either. Neither should we have to say that Jesus is not literally bread, or his blood is not literally wine.

It's a symbol. It's a metaphor for his body. It's interesting, and it's R.A. Finlayson, the late Free Church professor who says in his book, *The Cross and the Experience of Our Lord*, he says that there was a Jewish tradition that would call the lamb in the middle of the table the body of the feast, the body of the feast.

And if that is the case, as Finlayson seems to assert that it was, when he takes the bread and says, this is my body, well, he's saying, as it were, that lamb speaks of me.

And this is what, as that lamb has been saying, this is what must be done to my body. That lamb is the body, as it were, or what pictured my body in the Old Testament system, but this bread will symbolize my body in the New Testament system.

[21 : 09] But of course, the figure, or the message of the bread, isn't so much in the bread itself as in what is done to the bread. He took it, he blessed it, and he broke it.

He broke it. And he says, this broken bread, this broken bread, is my body. This is my broken body. This is what's going to become of me.

This is what's going to happen to me. My body is going to be wounded, and it's going to be bruised. It's going to be lacerated. My image is going to be marred beyond resemblance.

The broken bread speaks of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. The sufferings of the body. I don't think we can leave out the sufferings of the soul either, being the soul of his sufferings.

As there will be breakages, breaches in his body, so there will be a breach in the soul. And he will be made to call out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? This is my body, and it is broken.

[22 : 14] Why is it broken? Well, in 1 Corinthians 11, Paul records that he says that it is broken for you.

It is broken for you. We read in Isaiah 53, the poem concerning the suffering servant, that he will be wounded for your transgressions.

He is bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace is upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. Why is he wounded? Why is he bruised?

Why is he chastised, and why are stripes laid upon him? Well, for your iniquities, for your transgressions, if you are truly a believer.

If you're not, then we have no warrant to say that he died for you at all. But if you are, or if you will, for you, for your peace, for your healing, because you broke the law, he's saying, my body must be broken like this.

[23 : 27] I must, in my own body on the tree, bear your sins, to take them away from you. I must, though I knew no sin in myself, though I know no sin, neither is there guile in my mouth, yet I must be made sin for you, that you might become the righteousness of God in me.

And friends, as you, God willing, if you are a member of this church, or if you hope to become one, as you take bread in the Lord's supper, in remembrance of him, this do in remembrance of me, this is what you remember.

You remember that Christ has suffered, and that he has suffered for sinners like you. You remember that his body has been broken, and it's been broken because of your iniquity, your shortcomings, your wickedness, that you might have peace with God, that you might be healed.

And so we have the bread, and the second element that we have is, of course, the wine. Verse 27, And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you.

Paul tells us that it was after the same manner also that he took the cup. And you cannot but wonder about the manner of Jesus as he took the bread, and as he took the wine, his reverence, his holy joy, his, was he trembling, as he would tremble in the Garden of Gethsemane, as he saw these symbols of what would become of him, as in a few hours' time, he would look into that cup, and see what he would have to drink.

[25 : 16] We don't know. But after the same manner also, he took the cup. What is this cup? And the cup is normally, let me, here it says he took a cup in the ESV.

There is a textual variant. Some texts, I don't like going into texts. I don't think it's particularly helpful, but sometimes, sometimes you have to.

In other texts, it says the cup. In a sense, it doesn't really matter, because in other way, in other places, where the Lord's Supper is mentioned, it is, even in the ESV, it is the cup that is mentioned.

That, that is the case in 1 Corinthians. I think it's also the case in Luke. Normally, it speaks of the cup. The cup with a definite article. It's talking about a specific cup.

What is that cup? Now, some of you will know, if you've read *The Cross and the Experience of Our Lord*, R.A. Finlayson says that it is the fourth cup.

[26 : 19] Or he, with a measure of reticence, he suggests that that's what it is, the fourth cup. You might be thinking, well, I don't see all of these cups in Scripture.

And we don't see all of these cups in Scripture. But if you look, if you read the Gospel according to Luke, if you read his account very carefully, you will see two cups. You will see there that there was more than one cup, that there were at least two cups.

But Finlayson suggests that this fourth cup was a cup that was not usually drunk, the cup that was left in the table until the return of the Messiah.

It was the Messiah's cup, the cup of joy. And it's this cup that Jesus takes. And he gives thanks over this cup, something along the lines of, Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, King of the universe, and Creator of the fruit of the vine.

And he takes this cup and he passes it to his disciples, as if to say, the time has come. The cup no longer needs to be left undrunk.

[27 : 24] The cup has now been fulfilled in me because the Messiah is here. The Son of Man has now come to seek and to save the lost, to do the Father's will, and to bring in all of his own sheep.

The time has come. And he passes this round and he says, Drink ye all of it. That's how it is in the authorized version. Here it is, drink of it all of you, which is actually better.

In the authorized version, it almost sounds as if it is saying, Drink everything that's in the cup. That's not what it's saying. It's saying, Drink of it all of you, which is important as well.

Because again, I don't mean to put down in other churches, but it's important for us to know why we do what we do and why we don't do certain things. And as you know, the Roman Catholic Church doesn't give the cup to the congregation.

The priests have it, but the congregation doesn't get it. It is withheld from them. And there is no warrant for it at all. It is a travesty of the Lord's Supper for some to take the cup, but not all to take the cup.

[28 : 36] Drink of it, all of you. Everyone is to take, all the Lord's people are to take of the bread, and they are all to take of the wine. So he passes it round his disciples.

He passes it round the church and the share of it. Now, before we move on to the wine, the cup itself is important as well. The cup speaks of the unity that we have together as a church in Jesus Christ.

And we can read in 1 Corinthians chapter 10, and it might be helpful if you have your Bibles to turn to this, because it's a very important passage. 1 Corinthians chapter 10, and reading together in verse 16.

We have the great chapter about the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11, but in 1 Corinthians 10, we read here a reference to the supper. Verse 16, the cup of blessing that we bless, which is a picture of, or a reference to the cup of the Lord's Supper.

Is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? That word participation is, in the authorized version, the word communion. And I think in the New King James version as well.

[29 : 54] Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And it's from that word participation there that we have taken the term communion for our, for the Lord's Supper.

That's why we call it, we speak of the communions. And it's a very helpful phrase. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a, is it not the communion in the blood of Christ?

The bread that we break, is it not a participation or communion in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, that's speaking of one loaf, one loaf, and we who are many are one body, for we all take of the one bread, or as I think it should be, the one loaf.

And you see what he's saying there. When he speaks of communion, you often think about communion with the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what you're doing at the supper. You have, another word for communion is fellowship.

You have fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. You meet with Him there. We will come to that. And that's a very important part of the supper. But the way that the word communion is used here, it's not talking about communion with Christ directly, but rather communion in Christ with your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

[31 : 10] That's what he's saying. At the Lord's supper, you have communion one with another so that you shouldn't just be thinking about yourself and the Lord, although we might say that that is primary. But you should be remembering as well the Lord's people round about you.

That's what you ought to be doing. And that's why, friends, we have a common table that we sit at. Now, we don't have a literal table in many of our churches locally, but you are separated away from those who are not at the table.

And we use tablecloths and so on. There is a common table. We sit together. We don't believe in just sitting where you are and passing it on if you don't want it and taking it if you do.

There is a table that we are to come to. And you don't sit at a table with somebody without having some sort of fellowship with that person. There is a common loaf. There is one loaf and we eat of that loaf.

And there is, in the institution of the supper, a common cup as well. And these symbols, friends, are important.

[32 : 18] And if we lose these symbols, then we will come in time to lose some of their substance as well. That's what happens when you lose a symbol.

You think, well, it doesn't matter if we keep the symbol because we've got the thing, we've got the real thing, we've got the substance. But in time, what happens is that when the symbol goes, people forget about the substance and the substance goes as well.

Jesus has given us symbols. And he's given symbols to our weak and frail flesh because we need them. What about what was in the cup?

In verse 28, we read, For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

What is in the cup? Well, he describes it in verse 29 as the fruit of the vine. It is wine. It is, we can almost certainly say red wine.

[33 : 21] It was red wine that was drunk in Palestine in the first century. That's what, these are the grapes that were grown. That's what would have been drunk. We also know because that's what they drank at the Passover.

It was wine, normally, probably, a weaker wine than what we have. We tend to have port. There are practical reasons for that. There are perhaps other reasons as well.

But port tends to be quite strong. What is it? It's about 18% or 20% or something like that. The wine that they would probably have had, well, they did have at the Passover and that Jesus would probably have taken would have been mixed with water, perhaps two parts water, one part wine.

But it was wine and it was alcoholic wine. It wasn't grape juice. Grape juice is the fruit of the vine, but it's not wine. It is not that which makes the heart glad.

We read in 1 Corinthians 11 that some people drank so much of it that they became drunk. Now, you can drink as much grape juice as you want. It's not going to make you drunk.

[34 : 27] But if you drink a lot of wine, then that will make you drunk. What we have here, what was instituted was wine. And I know that many churches have decided, well, we're not going to do that anymore because we're afraid that will cause alcoholics to stumble.

And we should be afraid to cause alcoholics to stumble. If meat causes my brother to stumble, then I will eat no meat. If alcohol causes my brother to stumble, I should drink no alcohol, certainly in the presence of that person.

But having said that, Jesus instituted wine in his supper for a reason, not grape juice. He knew the weaknesses and the vulnerabilities of the alcoholic as he knows all of our weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

And yet he still decided to use wine. And if we're going to say, well, we want to be careful and we want to be concerned and loving towards our alcoholic or former alcoholic brothers, are we more loving?

Are we more careful? Are we more moral? Are we more wise than Jesus himself? Because when we change aspects of the Lord's supper that he has instituted, then that's essentially what we're saying.

[35 : 41] And I'm sure that none of us want to have that said about us. It's also the case that what this wine symbolized was blood.

And that's why we know that it was red wine as well. White wine isn't a particularly good picture of blood, whereas red wine is. And so he says concerning it that this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

This is my shed blood or my poured out blood and the shedding of blood when we read of it in Scripture invariably speaks not of getting a cut or even a bad cut and losing a lot of blood, but it speaks of death.

When somebody's blood is shed, whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall this blood be shed. That is your institution of capital punishment through Noah.

It's not talking about cutting somebody, even cutting somebody badly. It's talking about killing somebody. So what he's talking about here isn't losing a lot of blood. He's talking about death. Now, in the Old Testament, we read that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission.

[36 : 58] Or without death, without blood being shed, there is no forgiveness of sins. That God never forgave anybody without the shedding of blood.

Blood was central. Death was central to the system of atonement that God instituted in the Old Testament. Blood is central to the covenant of God.

In God's covenant, He takes people to be His people. And He becomes their God and they become His people. He forgives them their sins. He lives in fellowship with them.

But in order for that to happen, there needs to be sacrifice. There needs to be the shedding of blood. And the Old Testament is full of that. Now, again, I didn't notice.

We use a different translation. But there is a textual variant here as well. This is my blood of the covenant. Or, as it is, and certainly in the authorized version, this is the New Testament in my blood.

[37 : 57] Or this is my blood of the new covenant. I don't want to enter into the textual variant. But, it's important for us to understand that when He's talking about the two different covenants, the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, as we speak of Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures, the way that God dealt with His people through Moses, and the way that God deals with His people through Christ, we're not talking about two different covenants as we speak of the covenant of works, with which, I know this is a wee bit complicated, but, the covenant of works which God made with Adam before the fall, and then the covenant of grace that He made through Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and David and so on, Moses and David and so on afterwards.

He's not talking about two different covenants. He's talking about the same covenant, but different stages of that covenant.

When God dealt with Moses through all this system of sacrifices, He was dealing with them graciously. That covenant was a covenant of grace.

And as God deals with His people in Christ, He deals with us graciously as well. That covenant is a covenant of grace. And yet, there are differences and there are developments.

And that's why, if we accept the older text of the old covenant and the new covenant, it's not two different covenants. It's not two different ways of dealing with people in Christ.

[39 : 34] It is the same covenant and different dispensations of that covenant. In the Old Testament, the blood of the old covenant was the blood of beasts, the blood of animals.

We read in Exodus 24 and verse 8 that Moses took the blood and he threw it on the people, which was a very rare thing. And he said, Behold the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.

But all of that blood, the blood of that covenant, it anticipated a new covenant. It anticipated new blood. It anticipated and spoke of and prefigured the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

It looked for a new day. And Jeremiah 31, it speaks of that day. It speaks of this new covenant. Jeremiah 31 and from verse 31, we read, we read there that, Behold the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant I made with the fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke and so on.

And he goes on to say that the day will come when they will no longer say to one another, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more.

[41 : 09] And most people agree that what Jesus is referring to here in, when he refers to the new covenant, and I think the word new should be there, for what it's worth, that he's referring to Jeremiah's covenant.

This is, this is my blood shed for the remission, for the forgiveness of sins. That's exactly what Jeremiah's new covenant spoke of, the forgiveness of sins.

But how, how are sins to be forgiven? Well, in that blood. Because in the blood of Christ, mercy and truth meet one with another. Peace and righteousness, they kiss one another.

And it is through the blood of Christ alone that, that we can be forgiven. It was through the blood of Christ alone that Moses could be forgiven, and the Old Testament sins could be forgiven. And it is that blood which is shed for many.

Not for a few, not for a fortunate few, but for many. It is that blood that we must look to, and it's that blood that we remember, friends, as we take that cup to our mouths, we remember that Christ has died for sinners.

[42 : 21] That he loved me and gave himself for me. So the Old Testament had a bloody sacrament in the Passover without the historical fulfillment of it because it was waiting for Jesus to come and to fulfill it.

But the New Testament has the historical fulfillment, which is Jesus Christ coming to die as that Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. But it has it because he has died, our sacrament is an unbloody sacrament because the blood has been shed.

There are a few things to tie up. In verse 29, he goes on to say, I tell you, I will not drink again of the fruit of this vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

Now this speaks of his death. He will not drink of this again because he's going to die. But it also speaks of his resurrection and of his future glory. That death is not the end for him.

He's going to rise. He's going to go to his Father. A new day is going to dawn when all of his sheep shall be gathered in, when all of the jewels shall be made up, when sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

[43 : 46] And his prayer, O Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, that that prayer will be fulfilled.

I will drink it anew with you. And that's a precious word for the disciples and it's a precious word for you, even as you sit at the table, that you remember that another feast is to come.

That as the Passover was superseded by the Lord's Supper, that the Lord's Supper itself will be superseded by the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Because of the broken body and the shed blood of Christ, there will be a feast in heaven. And that's why, as we read in 1 Corinthians 11, as often as we do this, we do show the Lord's death until He comes.

He is coming again to gather His people in to that feast. What a blessing, what a privilege, friends, to be one of that number who will not only sit at the Lord's Supper, but who will sit at the marriage supper.

[44 : 49] Then in verse 30, we read that when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Why is this hymn mentioned? Did Jesus sing hymns?

Well, not hymns as we know hymns. Almost every commentator that I read on this, and those from all sorts of different traditions, they accepted that the hymn was one of the Psalms between Psalm 115 and Psalm 118.

This is what was sung at the end of the Passover. But you see, the Passover had been continued because it was being superseded by the Lord's Supper, which is why Jesus didn't sing these psalms at the end of the Passover because it wasn't over.

Something new was going to be done. But now, in order to close this new feast, he sings these psalms. This is why we sing Psalm 118.

Normally, I know, I did, I'm not sure this is right, but I did hear it said once that in the island on the Church of Scotland, they often had Psalm 116 when they rose from the supper, whereas in the free church, they had Psalm 118.

[46 : 04] I know in the free church we have Psalm 118. Whether the Church of Scotland used to have Psalm 116, I don't know. But the reality is that both of these psalms were sung at the end of the Passover, and that's why they were sung in our tradition.

We have many traditions. People today don't like traditions. But traditions are there for a reason. And our fathers were not fools, and they had scriptural reasons for many of the things that they did.

And so, as they sang together these words, I love salvation, take the cup, on God's name will I call. In dwellings, Psalm 118, in dwellings of the righteous is heard the melody of joy and health, the Lord's right hand doth ever valiantly, I shall not die, but live.

With what new understanding, with what new light, they would have sung these words. As he came to the end of Psalm 118, which we will sing at the end, God is the Lord who unto us hath made light to arise.

Bind ye unto the altar's horns with cords as sacrifice. The sacrifice that prefigured Christ and the disciples coming to know that no longer would they have to do that because Jesus himself has bound himself as our great high priest.

[47 : 26] He has bound himself to the horns of the altar as our sacrifice. These Psalms are not superseded. Rather, they are filled with new meaning, filled with new life, filled with Christ, which is, friends, why we continue to sing them and why I hope we long continue to sing them.

Let me conclude with our partaking of the supper. Just quickly, because Jesus says, he says, take it, this is my body, and drink.

Drink from it, all of you. What's he calling us to do? Well, he's literally calling us to eat the bread and drink the wine. He's calling us to do that. But clearly, he's calling us to do more than that.

If all that was required of you and me was to eat and to drink, then there would be no such thing as eating and drinking unworthily, eating and drinking without discerning the Lord's body. What he's calling us to do is to discern Christ within the bread and within the wine and to partake of what the bread and the wine symbolizes, himself.

Himself. You find similar really the same imagery in John chapter 6. I'm just going to read a few verses here. John chapter 6 and from verse, say, verse 51.

[48 : 50] He says, I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give him, that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.

And then he goes on to say, Truly I say to you, unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day.

For my flesh is, as it is, known to many, my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. What's he saying?

Well, what's he not saying? He's not saying that his flesh is literally to be eaten. Neither is he making reference here to the Lord's Supper.

But you have the same sort of figure, the same sort of picture of eating and drinking Christ. It's not talking literally, it's talking spiritually, metaphorically, figuratively.

[49 : 51] And that's what we do when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. We partake of him. We are united. Just as you put food in your mouth and drink it, it becomes part of your body, basically.

Then, so we are told to take Christ to ourselves, not only to know what he has done, not only to believe in what he has done, but to receive him, to receive him to ourselves, to make him ours.

And when we do that, well, as bread nourishes the body, and as wine makes glad the heart, so the body of Christ will nourish our body, and our soul particularly, sorry.

And the blood of Christ, the bread of Christ, of his body, will nourish our body, our soul, and his blood will gladden our heart.

That's what the Lord's suburb, that's what the gospel does for us. That's also what the Lord's suburb does for us. The Lord's suburb doesn't give you anything that you don't get right here in the preaching of the word, but often you'll find that it'll give you more of the same thing.

[50 : 56] They'll give you more of the same thing. Rome teaches the physical presence of Jesus Christ in the suburb.

The Bible teaches the spiritual presence, that by faith we feed upon him, and he meets with us, and he strengthens us, and he gives us grace, and he gives us nourishment, and he gives us gladness.

That's what we do. We partake by faith. We receive by faith. Finally, and I do apologize, the time is gone. Who was there, or who should be there?

Well, I'm not going to read it because of the time, but you can read verses 31 to 35 yourselves, where Jesus says, you will all fall away because of me this night. That's what was going to happen.

Jesus says, though they all fall away, I will never fall away. Peter says, and Jesus says to him, before the cock crow twice, he will deny me three times.

[52 : 02] What kind of people were at the supper then? Well, it's easy to be negative about the disciples here because they fell away and they had a false confidence, but we do see devotion, dedication, seal, I think we see love as well, and if we can't say with these disciples, it wasn't just Peter who said it, it was all of them, if we can't say with the disciples that we hope that we will never be offended in the Lord Jesus Christ, then we have no place at the supper if we don't have that love and that devotion.

But if you can say that you hope that you will never be offended in he who is the great lover of your soul, if you can say that Jesus Christ does everything to you, you never want to offend him or be offended in him, you never want to cause him offense, you never want to bring shame upon him or his cause, if you believe in him, if you have repented of your sins, if you love him and if you love his church, then yes, you ought to be there.

So they were a devoted people, but they were also a sinful people, weren't they? You will all fall away because of me this night. They were offended in him.

They were imperfect. They were sinners. And knowing that they were imperfect, knowing that they would sin, knowing that before the end of the night they were going to deny him and forsake him and flee, yet he calls him to partake of the supper.

you could take that and you could mangle it and corrupt it in order to justify your own sin. You've got no right to do that and I don't have time to basically disprove that way of thinking.

[53 : 47] But I will say this, that our sin does not disqualify us from the table. Our imperfection does not qualify us from the table. If you are living in deliberate sin and refusing to repent of that sin, then you shouldn't be at the table.

But if you are somebody who is mindful of your sin, who mourns over your sin, who seeks to repent over your sin, then you should be at the table. And you should remember, too, that what you have here is a command.

The language is a language of imperative. Take it. Eat it. Take it. Drink it. This do in remembrance of me. And all the commands of Jesus have to be taken seriously, friends.

If you're not a believer in Jesus Christ, then whatever you do, don't come to the Lord's table. Continue to come here. Continue to seek the Lord while he may be found.

And then when you find him, then come to the table. But if you're not a believer, don't come. It won't help you. But if you are a believer, know that it's your privilege to come and it's your duty to come.

[54 : 52] And if you haven't come yet and you think you are a believer, I'm not going to plead with you to come. I'm not going to plead with you at all. Any more than I would plead with you not to lie or not to commit a daughtery or not to commit a murder or to fulfill any of the other commands of God.

Because I know that if you are truly a believer, if you love the Lord Jesus Christ, then you will want to keep his commandments. If you need emotional blackmail from the pulpit, which let's face it, it often happens.

And I don't think it should happen. But if you need emotional blackmail from the pulpit to make you feel bad in order to profess faith, then I don't think you're ready. Or if you're so afraid of men, so afraid to sit before a session for five minutes and tell them why you love the Lord Jesus Christ and want to be a member of his church and want to sit at the Lord's table, if you're so afraid of men that you're unable to do that for the Lord who died for you on Calvary's cross, then you need to deal with your fear of man first of all and take that to a throne of grace and say, Lord, why am I more afraid of men than I am of thee?

But if you love the Lord and if you're seeking to walk with him, I know that you will take this duty very seriously and that you will seek to be where the Lord's people are, sitting, eating, and drinking and showing forth the Lord's death till he come.

Amen. Let us pray. Gracious Lord, bless thy truth to us. Make us thankful for it. Encourage us in the word and forgive us for sin.

[56 : 30] For Christ's sake. Amen. Let us conclude in Psalm 118 and we're reading from verse 24, page 399.

I do apologize for the time. Reading verse 24 down to the end, I'm just going to read the first and the last verse. This is the day God made.

In it will joy triumphantly. Save now, I pray thee, Lord, I pray. Send now prosperity. Thou art my God, I'll thee exalt. My God, I will thee praise. Give thanks to God for he is good.

His mercy lasts always. Four verses from verse 24 to the end of the psalm. This is the day God made. In it will joy triumphantly. This is the day God made.

Will joy triumphantly. Will joy triumphantly. Will joy triumphantly. Save now, I pray thee, Lord, I pray.

[57 : 43] Send now prosperity. God bless you. Blessed is he in God's great name.

God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

And thank you. God bless you.

unto the altar shores with course the sacrifice thou art my God I'll thee exalt my Lord I will be praised give thanks to God for he is good his mercy has always now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all
Amen