

Matthew 22-10-09a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the ninth day of October 2022. We're in the Gospel of Matthew and we have come to a very signal chapter, chapter 26.

The subtitles in my Bible I think are mislabeled but we are going to pick up at the point where my Bible says Jesus celebrates Passover with his disciples. This is Matthew 26, 17. This is where we'll pick up this morning.

Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study of his word and we'll begin. Father, we're so grateful for our fellowship, for the support and encouragement and the prayers of believers of like mind. We rest in your grace.

We are motivated by the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, the presence and power of your Holy Spirit, the wonderful promises of provision and protection and guidance that you have granted to us, sustaining us in the present and giving us a wonderful hope for the future. We pray that as we look at your word together this morning that the Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts in a meaningful and effective way, that we will find ourselves more focused on the identity that you have granted to us, the opportunity and the potential that we have as members of the body of Christ to represent him in this life and to prepare for service and function in the next. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Let's read our passage. Matthew 26, 17.

Now on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus saying to him, where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover? And he said, go into the city to a certain man and say to him, the teacher says, my time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples. So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and they prepared the Passover.

When evening had come, he sat down with the 12. Now, as they were eating, he said, assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful.

And each of them began to say to him, Lord, is it I? He answered and said, he who dipped his hand with me in the dish will betray me. The son of man indeed goes just as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the son of man is betrayed. It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.

Then Judas, who was betraying him, answered and said, Rabbi, is it I? He said to him, you have said it. Verse 26. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, take, eat, this is my body.

Then he took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them saying, drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of

sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until the day when I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

The sequence of events in Passover week has been studied and gone over. There is a rather easy to spot difference in the way these events are presented in the Synoptic Gospels and in the Gospel of John. And various solutions to this apparent contradiction have been suggested.

We've gone over this a number of times in the run up to Resurrection Sunday, in our previous Gospel studies and so on. We're going to do sort of a summary review of the witness of Scripture. And the reason is this, you can say, well, I would really like to solve this puzzle and find out, you know, what day was the Lord crucified? Was there a silent Wednesday? How can you count the days and nights in the tomb and how closely does it fulfill Jesus words? And so on.

There are absolute points of agreement. And there are a couple of things that all four Gospels affirm without any contradiction. And the two events that are indisputable, that all four Gospels are completely harmonious on are these.

A, the betrayal by Judas. All four Gospels attest that this is the night on which he was betrayed by Judas. Secondly, that there was a supper.

There was a supper and during and after that evening meal, Judas, who had been present, left and subsequently Jesus is arrested by a party led by Judas to his location. So the supper and the betrayal, no dispute about those two things. All four Gospels, anytime all four Gospels witness something, we expect to find great significance in it.

This is what we find in the passage we just read. Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover? And the disciples prepare. And when evening had come, he sat down with the 12 and they were eating.

That's fact number one. Fact number two, Judas, who was betraying him said, is it I? Jesus says, you have said it. Jesus tells them, I surely I say to you, one of you will betray me.

And it is Judas. So if we only had those two observations, those two facts from the fourfold gospel witness, what would you look for in terms of interpretation and application? This is always my question to myself and question on all of our behalf is it is one thing to ascertain what scripture says, but why is it saying it specifically? What is the meaning and purpose and application for me personally, for us as believers? So we think about Judas. We think about the Lord choosing him.

Jesus says in another place, have I not chosen you? And one of you is a devil. I have chosen you and one of you is a devil. This is curious.

Why would Jesus intentionally include someone in the group who is going to make this choice? Could Jesus have been arrested some other way? Could he have just allowed himself to be found at the time that the religious leadership was looking for him with an arresting party? Why does it involve a betrayal? All four gospels tell us he was betrayed by someone close at hand. So I ask myself the question, why is this an seemingly essential part of God's plan for bringing the Lord Jesus to the cross? And as we reflect on that, a couple of things become evident. The recent reconstruction of Christianity wants to try to make the cross simply an expression of man's evil and that it wasn't God's desire that he be sacrificed.

That it was entirely Jesus allowing himself to be the victim of man's fallenness and man's evil. And it was a human initiative. They dismissed the atoning portion of it and focus on the expression of fallenness and evil that it represents.

As we've seen in other points of difference with the progressive movement, many things that are espoused and embraced by postmodern Christianity are true. The difficulty being that it is a partial truth. And the inclusion of Judas among the 12, even though he was a thief, even though he raided the money box, even though he is ultimately going to lead the arresting party to Jesus and the result will be his trial, conviction, and crucifixion.

This is in fact a representation of our responsibility that we corporately, if you will, are as guilty as Judas in the sense that we can and do a completely opposite effort to God's perfect will, his desire. If it is not the will of God that any should perish, any of us, you can imagine that it wouldn't be God's first choice for his own son to perish. But sometimes things that are not desirable are needful.

Things that are not desirable are nevertheless needful. It is not desirable to be betrayed. It is not desirable to have your familiar friend who shares your bread lift up his heel against you and for a man's enemies to be the members of his own household and so on.

It's not desirable. But sometimes in the larger scheme of things, it is necessary. Again, in God's ideal will, no one would perish.

Everyone would come to repentance. But it is inevitable that that does not take place. So in God's plan, we can observe as a principle, there are any number of things that are not ideal.

They are not the perfect expression of God's righteousness and justice. They are violations of righteousness. They are violations of God's word and God's ideal will.

And yet God allows for them and weaves them into his plan and produces good. This to me is one of the most amazing things about God. I find it to be truly awe-inspiring.

It's one thing to have a God that creates a perfect universe and it runs like a perfect

machine, keeps perfect time, never fails, never quits. That would be an extraordinary feat. But to allow free wills to run around like scared cats, to allow direct opposition, direct violation, the expression of sin and evil, and to nevertheless bring all things to a perfect conclusion and a long-term blessing and good, to me, takes an infinitely greater God.

If you preordain everything, you can say, well, that was a wonderful spell of thinking to create it all, but to allow a bunch of free thinkers to act as free agents and to nevertheless accomplish your purpose and bring out of evil something good. You think of the parable that Samson told the Philistines, out of the eater came something sweet. And out of a dead lion's carcass comes honey that sustained him in a time of hunger.

And out of death comes life. Out of something bitter comes something sweet. And in a way, this is a metaphor for the much larger scheme of things.

So A, why the betrayal? It is a reminder that no matter how close we are to the Lord, how close we think we are, both Judas and Peter remind us that we moment by moment, hour by hour, day by day, make decisions that either keep us close and keep us in harmony and keep us focused on the word and the will of God, or we either impulsively or as a slow and building pattern over time, depart from God and from his will and from his fellowship and from his purpose, from his cleansing grace and his enabling power. And it can happen very quickly. You can be Simon Peter saying, you are the Christ, the son of the living God, less than five minutes later, Jesus can be saying, depart from me, get behind me, Satan.

Your thoughts are not the thoughts of God. They're the thoughts of man in the space of five minutes, approval, a new name. I no longer call you Shimon, I call you Peter.

And on this rock, I will build my church. And before a leaf falls from a tree, he's being rebuked and called Satan. He's called the rock upon which the church will be built, his confession.

And a couple of minutes later, he's called Satan. That's how fast it can happen through inattention, through failure to reflect, to digest and search out the meaning of what God says. If Jesus says, the son of man is going to be delivered into the hands of men and crucified, Peter says, no, no, Lord, that's not right.

Our Bible says many things that a lot of Christians in the world today say, no, no, that's not right. It takes care, caution, attention. And this is what our study on the fear of the Lord in Proverbs is all about.

So betrayal, that's the first thing. The second one is the supper. This is a supper.

And I've never seen this addressed anywhere, but it occurred to me as I was kind of working through this over the past week. This is the Passover season. When it says now

on the first, you can translate that at the beginning.

Now at the beginning of unleavened bread, at the beginning, what normally happens at the Feast of Unleavened Bread? What is the first event for the Feast of Unleavened Bread? There is the day of preparation where you get everything ready, but what are you getting ready for? What is the first big thing that happens in the Feast of Unleavened Bread? It's the Passover, right? The Passover. What are the regulations for the Passover? Keep your finger here. Turn back to Exodus chapter 11.

We're not going to read the whole thing, but there is one particular portion I want to point out. There is going to be a final plague. I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt.

Afterward, he will let you go from here. And so then in chapter 12, the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land saying, this month shall be the beginning of months. Speak to the congregation of Israel.

On the 10th of this month, every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. Not a lamb for an individual. It is a lamb for a household.

Now, who's in danger in this final work of God? It's the firstborn. But who is the lamb for? The household. So you have the firstborn and you have the household.

You could say, well, if the lamb's blood is not on the doorpost, who's going to die? Just the firstborn. There could be nine people in there. Only those who are firstborn are going to perish.

But this doesn't say that each firstborn shall take a lamb for himself, does it? Every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. The lamb is for the household. There is a collective idea here.

And this is what we're looking at this morning. The non-individuality of these events. If the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to him take it.

According to the number of persons, according to each man's need, you shall make your count for the lamb. The rabbis ultimately refined this understanding to ten people. A lamb for up to ten people.

If you have more than ten, you need another lamb, another gathering. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.

Isn't that interesting, after Jesus has given the judgment on the sheep and goats? But the sacrifice can be a sheep or a goat. Keep it until the 14th day of the same month.

Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.

This means that the whole congregation of Israel, they're not going to kill a single lamb. They all kill their household lambs at the same time. It's just a peculiarity of Hebrew that it says kill it instead of kill them.

But the whole assembly of Israel shall take the lamb that they selected four days earlier and kill it at twilight. This is between the evenings. This is at 3 p.m. in the afternoon.

They shall take some of the blood, put it on the two doorposts on the lintel of the house. Then they shall eat the flesh on that night, roasted in fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs shall they eat it. Do not eat it raw nor boiled at all with water.

Put a little asterisk next to that phrase, not boiled at all with water. It is roasted in fire. What is fire a picture of in scripture? Judgment, roasted in fire, its head with its legs and its entrails.

Remember some sacrifices, these things were removed and meat was placed on the altar. This is an *olah*. This is an entire sacrifice, the whole thing, unseparated, no bones broken, no parts removed, the head, the entrails, the legs, and by extension, of course, the rest of the animal.

You shall let none of it remain until morning and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. What is not consumed by people is consumed by fire. I say again, what is not consumed by people is consumed by fire.

Thus you shall eat it. 1211 of Exodus. You might want to make that reference note in the margin of the four gospels that talk about this upper room meal.

Thus you shall eat it with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand, sandals on your feet, a staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover.

And then it goes on to describe the significance of the blood, what God is going to do. Verse 14, this day shall be to you a memorial and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day, you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

You shall remove leaven from your houses on the first day. On the first day, verse 16, there shall be a holy convocation. And on the seventh day, there shall be a holy convocation.

No manner of work shall be done on them. But with that which everyone must eat, that

only may be prepared by you. So you shall observe unleavened bread for on this same day, I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt.

Therefore, you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. First month, 14th day of the month. In the evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the 21st day of month at evening.

For seven days, no leaven. Verse 20, you shall eat nothing leavened. So that's the ordinance.

Back to our passage, because the two facts that we have are the betrayal and the meal. So what is this meal? Is it the Passover or not? There are a number of observations that we can make from the Gospels about this. So I am going to begin by assuming my premise.

This is not the Passover meal. You know, this is my belief. I say, go be born, be fed.

Anybody who thinks it is the Passover, here are the reasons why I do not believe this is the Passover meal. Number one, John chapter 13, verse one. John chapter 13, verse one.

Now, before the feast of Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come, that he should depart from this world to the father, having loved his own who were with him in the world, he loved them to the end. And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus rose from the supper, laid aside his garments, took a towel, girded himself. And this is the washing of the disciples' feet.

The washing of the disciples' feet takes place at the occasion of the upper room meal, does it not? And John says it is before the feast of Passover, supper being ended, verse two, right? So John says it's not after the feast or during the feast, it is before the feast. So that's number one, John 13, one. Jesus arose from the supper before the feast of Passover.

Number two, Mark chapter 14, verse 17. And once again, we're not just observing this so that we can be technically correct. There is applicational value in getting this right.

So we want to get it right, and then we'll figure out how that rightness makes a difference. So Mark 14, 17. In the evening, he came with the twelve.

Now, as they sat and ate, notice sat and ate. If you've got a staff in your hand and sandals on your feet, this generally suggests that you're eating standing up. But they sat and ate.

This evening is the beginning of the day of preparation. The day of preparation is the preceding day. And in my calculation, of course, this is Wednesday.

I will make the arguments for a Wednesday crucifixion and that this was Tuesday night. And I'll also explain why, although it's a very viable view, I personally find the Thursday crucifixion a bit more persuasive, and only a bit more. You can make Wednesday work.

And I'll explain the difference between Wednesday and Thursday. You can't make a Friday crucifixion work. I'm sorry.

We've gone over that many times. Wednesday can work. Thursday can work.

I'm a Thursday guy, but I'm in 100% fellowship with Wednesday people. I understand why they believe it. And it's possible.

I'll tell you why I think it is less likely. So Mark 14, 17. In the evening, he came with the twelve.

They sat and ate. And he says, one of you will betray me. And it says in the preceding verse, when his disciples came to the city and found the room, just as Jesus had predicted, they prepared the Passover.

If this is Passover, then the day of preparation has been entirely skipped. And there is quite a bit of preparation required for the Passover meal. You've got to have the lamb.

You've got to have the bitter spices. You have to have already sacrificed the lamb. Where did the lamb come from? Jesus and his disciples did not kill the lamb at 3 p.m. on this day.

There's no mention of it made here. So how is this the Passover when there's no mention of the killing of the lamb? How can they be eating a lamb they haven't killed? How can they be eating a meal they've not prepared? Did the other guy kill it on their behalf? That's not what Exodus 11 says. Every household is responsible to kill the lamb at the same time at 3 p.m., just before sundown, when this Passover meal will then be eaten.

14 Esau. There's no mention of that made here. And that's extremely peculiar if they are eating the Passover lamb at this time.

That's number two. Number three, Luke 22, 14 through 16. There is a text problem here.

Some of the texts read one way and some read another. 22, 14, when the hour had come, he sat down and the 12 apostles with him. No mention of a belt, no mention of a staff, no mention of eating in haste.

He sat down and then he said to them with fervent desire, I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I say to you, and your text says, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. But there is a persuasive group of ancient Greek texts that do not read *uketi* here.

They read ume. Uketi is O-U-K-E-T-I, and that's the word in Greek for no longer. Ume is the strongest negative you can express in Greek.

Absolutely not. When Paul says, God forbid, it's ume, the strong negative. For I say to you, I will absolutely not eat of it is what this set of texts says.

Now, ask yourself the question. This is one of the canons of textual criticism, one of the ways we figure out which text is right. Which change is more easy to explain? Is it easier to explain someone changing no longer to I will absolutely not eat, or is it easier for those who believe that this is the Passover meal to say, well, this is confusing.

I'm going to say that he's eating the Passover. He just won't eat of it again until the kingdom. Which change is easier to explain? On this basis, Bruce Metzger, who is the godfather of Greek textual criticism and has a verse by verse commentary on which reading is to be preferred.

Bruce Metzger says the original is ume. I will absolutely not eat of this Passover. As much as I want to, I won't.

I fervently desire to eat it with you, but I won't until the kingdom. Of course, he can't because in this view, he will be on the cross, right? So I personally find Luke 22 16 persuasive. It is also, as a side note, strange that what elements of this meal are mentioned in all of the gospels.

What are the three things you know are on the table? Little pop quiz. I know you know two of them. What's the third? Three things that scripture says are a part of this meal.

Absolutely, incontestably, without question, there are three things we know are there. You know the bread is there. You know the cup is there.

And what else? Well, when they say, Lord, is it I? What is Jesus' response? He who is doing what? He who has done what? Dipped his hand with me in the dish. Dipped his hand with me in the dish. The King James in some of the things says the sop.

He takes the sop and hands it to Judas. Remember, what is sop? It is the product of boiled flesh. Sop is boiled flesh.

It's kind of like saying, where did you get that gravy if you didn't broil the meat? The sop is a product of boiling the food. What kind of lamb is supposed to be eaten and not boiled? Roasted in fire. It is roasted in fire.

You're not catching the grease. You're not making a gravy or a sop. When it is roasted in fire, it's like the chicken you take off the grill or the steaks you take off the grill.

When you grill steaks, do you make gravy? You can't. You grilled it, right? There is sop on the table. There's no mention of sop in Exodus chapter 12, verse 11.

It is roasted in fire. You eat it standing up with a belt around your waist and a staff in your hand. And the other detail is you remain in the house all night.

Do you really think that this Passover is one where Jesus would violate all of those prerequisites and lead his disciples to do the same? Seems unlikely to me. All four Gospels indicate that Jesus was reclining at the table. Remember that John has his head in Jesus' breast.

You can't do that unless you're reclining. The whole thing of Da Vinci with the Last Supper painting with a big table and a tablecloth, that is now they did it. They reclined on the floor or they stood up and Passover is eaten standing up.

So all four Gospels mention that they were reclining. That's why it says Jesus got up to gird himself and wash their feet. He got up.

He wasn't standing up. He got up. That's my fourth.

All four Gospels indicate that this was a reclining meal, not in accord with Exodus 12.11, and that there was sop there. There was a dish in which they were dipping. That's not a part of Passover meal.

The meat is roasted in fire and that's 12.8 and 12.9 of Exodus. Number five is one that we will pick up after the break, but application wise, it is important to be observant. If we want to stay on the narrow road, headed through the gate, partial truth is our enemy.

Getting part of the text, part of the truth, part of the witness, and drawing conclusions from that is the way to error. We search the scriptures to see if these things are so. All scripture is given by inspiration of God.

Jesus opened all the law and the prophets and demonstrated how they testified of him to the men on the road to Emmaus. Jesus said to the Pharisees, you search the scriptures because you believe in them. You have eternal life.

It is they, the Old Testament scriptures, that testify of me. The sign of Jonah is Old Testament. Passover is Old Testament.

The suffering servant and the conquering king are Old Testament. We need the entire witness of scripture. People have a notion of what they want to do and then they'll go to the Bible looking for support.

Our goal is to go to the Bible and canvas the scriptures for pertinent references, pertinent allusions, pertinent examples, pertinent teaching, and then synthesize that so that what we do is pleasing in God's sight and a part of his will. Anything less than the full witness of scripture is trouble. I mentioned it last time.

What did Jesus say to Satan when he was being tempted in the wilderness? Man shall not

live by bread alone, but by some of the scriptures that proceed out of the mouth of God. No. Every word, Genesis to Revelation, Index to the Maps, all scripture is profitable.

Partial scripture needs to be understood in its context, immediate context, larger context, entire biblical context. Without that, we're sunk. Well, we'll pick up with the fifth reason why I believe this is the preparation meal and not the Passover when we come back from the break.