

## **Matthew 22-10-16a**

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 16th of October 2022. We're in Matthew chapter 26 in the upper room with the Lord Jesus and his disciples partaking of the meal just prior to Passover.

This is the preceding evening. It is the day of preparation which began at sundown and will continue through the following Thursday, at least in my counting of days. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our time of review of these very significant words and actions of the Lord Jesus during and after this meal, and then we'll begin.

Father, we are so grateful for another opportunity to spend time together improving our understanding of your plan and purpose as it is distilled, as it culminates, as it is reflected in the life and the words of the Lord Jesus. It is such a privilege for us to have these things revealed to us and to be ministered to us by your Holy Spirit in a way that is effectual and enables and empowers us to live a life that would be impossible without your grace, your faithful fulfillment of promise to us. We ask that as we look at this portion of your word together that the Holy Spirit will help us to understand it and to see its pertinence and its application in our lives and the time that remains to us until the return of the Lord Jesus who will gather us to himself and present us before your throne.

We ask these things in amen. Let's read our passage. We are at verse 26, 26-26 of Matthew.

Judas has just asked the same question as the disciples because in verse 21, as they were eating, the meal is underway, and Jesus reveals a new piece of information not previously shared with his disciples. We've reviewed the occasions in the past where Jesus told his disciples that he would be delivered into the hands of men, suffer, be executed, die, and then rise again the third day. The most memorable of these is the occasion on which Peter, just a few minutes earlier, had made the great confession and then Jesus said those words and he has to tell Peter, get thee behind me, Satan.

But this has been shared numerous times and that is not a fresh revelation on this night. What is a fresh piece of information for the disciples is that he is going to be betrayed and that the betrayer is one of the twelve. Jesus has never mentioned this previous to the upper room.

So when he says, assuredly I say to you, one of you will betray me, this is a shock. They were exceedingly sorrowful and each of them began to say to him, Lord, is it I? What is the vocative of address, as if you're going to look at it grammatically, how is it that these disciples address the Lord Jesus? Do they say, Jesus, is it I? Or Rabbi, is it I? Or teacher, is it I? What do they say? This is Lord, Adoni, right? Lord, is it I? He answered and said, it isn't really he, it is one who dipped his hand with me in the dish will betray me. Everyone

at the table at some point has dipped his hand into the dish.

We know from other gospels that Jesus will reveal the identity to Peter and John, but it is not shared with the rest of the disciples. 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.

There has been a lot of speculation and interest in this particular statement of the Lord Jesus. If it would have been good for him not to be born, then why was he born? God allowed Judas Iscariot to be born. Jesus purposely selected him as one of the 12.

Jesus knew about him and knew what he was going to do and yet chose him anyway. And it's just a reminder, as we saw last week, that God works all things together for good and incorporates bad decisions and failures, sin and evil into the outworking of his plan. He doesn't prevent it.

He doesn't stop it, although he could. And so when he says it would have been good for that man, if he had not been born, we have similar statements to the effect that it would have been better not to have been exposed to the truth of God than to have had it revealed and then to reject it. Because if you look at a neutral outcome, a positive outcome from responding to the Word of God, claiming the Lord Jesus Christ by faith as our Savior, there are so many wonderful potentials and privileges and inheritances and opportunities that come to us.

But to be offered those things and to reject them is to move into negative territory. And this basically says you would have been better off not to have been born, not to have been a partaker. You have this over in Hebrews chapter 10, having once tasted the Word of God and the powers of the age to come and having fallen away and not coming back to repentance.

Instead of a field where the rain falls and production is accomplished, it bears thorns and briars and is fit for burning and is near to a curse. It would be better for that field if it had just remained in its wild state, rather than having been cultivated and sown and rained upon and to produce a negative crop. Now there is burning and cursing involved.

This is the idea in verse 24. But now look at verse 25. So Judas, who was betraying him, he is in the act.

He's already accepted the 30 pieces of silver. They may even now be clanking in some bag secreted about his person. Judas, who was betraying him, answered and said, Rabbi, is it I? Do you notice a difference between verse 25 and verse 22? What's the difference? Rabbi.

He doesn't call him Lord. Rabbi. Now this is not in itself a bad thing.

You will anticipate that after the resurrection, when Mary sees someone she thinks is the gardener, and she says, tell me where they have laid him. I want to find his body. And as soon as Jesus speaks her name, what does she say? Rabboni.

Rabbi. There's nothing wrong with the form of address. But in this case, the distinction between the disciples who recognize Jesus as Lord and Judas, who will not use that form of address and simply calls him teacher, Rabbi.

This is why Jesus responds by saying, you have said it. You have said it. What you just said answers your question.

This is a similar response in a conversation Jesus will have in a few hours with Pilate. Are you a king? Look at what you have just said for your answer. This is essentially, this is the semantic meaning.

This is the connotation of these words. Look to your own words for your answer. So now in verse 26, this is where we pick up this morning.

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 that day when I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom. When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. The elements of what has come to be called the Lord's table or communion, it has been established in the formal church, beginning with the Catholic church as an ordinance, one of two in most Protestant churches that are observed and shared with Catholicism, at least loosely, which are water baptism and communion or the Lord's table.

And the partaking of the bread and the cup are ubiquitous in both Catholic and Protestant circles, generally speaking. So what is Jesus doing and why is he doing it? As they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed, and you have a text note in your New King James. There's an alternate reading that says gave thanks.

There's not a material difference here. Jesus looked to his father in heaven and probably did both. Gave thanks and asked the blessing or blessed the bread.

I personally prefer gave thanks. This is the more usual, but there would have been a giving of thanks at the inception of the meal, as we traditionally do as Christian families. We ask God's blessing.

We, my dad used to say return thanks, give thanks. There's not a great distance between thanking God for our food. Paul will say some years later that some people

refuse to eat certain foods.

They continue to function under the restrictions of diet given in the Mosaic law. Others, in the same way that they treat every day alike, instead of observing feasts and Sabbaths, Paul says, let each one be fully convinced in his own mind, all things are good for food if they are taken with thanksgiving. And this is one of several reasons why we pause to give thanks at the beginning of a meal.

It is a virtual certainty that this had already been accomplished at the beginning of this meal. So why does Jesus in the midst of the meal take a piece of bread off the table? Not a particularly special piece of bread. There were typically several pieces of bread for a group this size.

Jesus picks up a piece of unbroken bread, looks to heaven and gives thanks and or blesses it, and then broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, take, eat, this is my body. I ask myself, and I wonder if we've ever given it much thought, they're eating. They've been eating.

Some of the bread has been broken and eaten as a part of the meal, regardless of how anyone views this as a Passover meal, preparation night meal, any other meal, they have been eating. And Jesus in the midst of the meal takes a previously uninteresting, nondescript and unspecial piece of bread and lifts his eyes to heaven. They would typically take their head covering when they were going to pray and put it over their head.

You may have seen this depicted in movies. And at this point, when the disciples see Jesus raising his eyes to heaven and putting his head covering on, perhaps there will be a break in the conversation. There is a pause and Jesus prays to his father in heaven, giving thanks for this bread.

Then he begins tearing it into pieces and giving it to his disciples. And those at the further distance out of Jesus reach would have previously been picking up bread and tearing it for themselves. But Jesus, by taking this particular piece and breaking it and distributing it to his disciples, this is unusual.

So they are paying attention. Something unusual is happening. Even more so when he says, take and eat, this is my body.

This is my body. Dead seas of ink have been spilled about the Catholic Church believing that this actually becomes human flesh, not just any human flesh, but the human flesh of the Lord Jesus. Transubstantiation, it changes from being bread to being actual human flesh.

I don't think we have to strain ourselves very far to realize that this is a metaphor in the same way that when Jesus said, I am the door of the sheep, he doesn't at some point

turn into wood and hinges or a gate across a sheepfold. It is a metaphor. I am the good shepherd.

He doesn't turn into a literal sheep herd, although his father David certainly was one and many in that line. But Jesus says, I am the light. He doesn't turn into actual photons per se.

And so this is a metaphor. This is my body. This represents my body.

It is a representative metaphor. The bread is still bread. They don't become cannibals by eating it.

But because the bread is symbolic, the eating is symbolic. And you can't have one be literal and the other be symbolic. Otherwise, we have a faith that involves cannibalism.

Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost has a wonderful principle of Bible interpretation that when you come to a passage and you begin to find symbolic elements, you need to take everything symbolically. Don't mix literal and symbolic. It's the path to error.

And unfortunately, that's what the Catholic Church did centuries ago. Take, eat, this is my body. Let's talk about this bread for a moment.

And we're going to get a clue from the next verse, and I'm going to go ahead and read the next two verses because the central understanding is contained therein. So after distributing the bread, then he took the cup. And actually, this isn't even the cup.

It is a cup. He took a cup. He took a piece of bread, nothing special about it.

Don't have to go looking for the Holy Grail or finding a magical special cup that's going to be treasured. He took a cup. There were several cups available during the meal.

He picked up the nearest one, and it contained wine. How do we know this is wine and not grape juice? He's going to say in verse 29, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine. Fruit of the vine.

This is never anything but the product of crushed grapes. Now there are people who are concerned about alcohol, alcoholism, and they want this to be unfermented. And they want to try to parallel it with the bread and say, well, it was unleavened bread because it's Passover and it's unfermented wine.

Here's the problem. And this is a real common sense thought. What time of year is this taking place? When do we have Passover slash what people call Easter, I like to call resurrection Sunday.

What season is it? This is spring. When do grapes grow and mature and become available for putting into the press and being stomped or crushed into grape juice? Not

yet. Remember 50 days hence after Passover, you have Pentecost and this is the feast of first fruits.

You have feast of first fruits right after Passover during unleavened bread. But the harvest, the earliest harvest, the barley harvest comes 50 days later. Well, the grape harvest is even after that.

So there is no fresh grape juice available. This is last year's grape harvest that has been fermented to keep and is wine. There's not any unfermented grape juice available this time of year.

So sorry to all those who want to believe that Jesus didn't make real wine at the wedding feast of Cana. It was just really, really good Welch's quality grape juice. And that in the upper room, that this is the fruit of the vine.

It comes from grapes and there are no fresh grapes. Just like it's not the season for figs a couple of days ago, it's not the season for grapes either. The only fruit of the available is wine.

So it's wine. We just dispense with that issue at the beginning. But this is my blood of the covenant, blood of the covenant, the new covenant.

You see a text note there and it says that in some of the better texts of Matthew, the word new is not there. But if you look at the parallels, there is no text issue and it does say new and it is a new covenant. This is not the blood of the old covenant.

This is another reason why I think we have a clue here that this is not Passover with its traditional cups. It doesn't in any way represent the old covenant celebration of Passover. He takes a cup.

But this phrase, blood of the covenant, this is our clue because this is not a new expression. Blood of the covenant is not a new expression. Turn back with me to Exodus chapter 24.

Exodus chapter 24. You remember in the geography of the book of Exodus, my signpost of where I am in Exodus is I know in the early days you have the children of Israel suffering under hard bondage. You have the midwives, you have Moses in chapter 2 and so on.

You've got his time in Midian and you've got the plagues through several single-digit chapters. And by the time you get to 12, it is Passover and time to leave Egypt. Chapter 20 is the Ten Commandments.

So just roughly by memory, you kind of know where you are. If you're chapter 20 and later, this is the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. So we have come to chapter 24.

So God has already been speaking for the last three chapters to Moses, giving elements of the law. You have the Ten Commandments in chapter 20. You have the people fearing God's presence in the latter portion of that.

And the law of the altar, chapter 21, law concerning servants, concerning violence, keeping control of animals, what happens if they gore someone. Chapter 22, responsibility for property and restitution principles. There are moral and ceremonial principles in the last part of that.

God has been speaking for some time to Moses, giving the initial elements of the law. In chapter 23, no false reports, don't follow a crowd to do evil. Beginning at verse 10, you have the law of the Sabbath.

Verse 14 of chapter 23, the three annual assembly feasts, one of which is the one we are anticipating in our chapter, three times a year, you will keep a feast to me, keep the feast of unleavened bread. Unleavened bread will be eaten seven days as I commanded you at the time appointed in the month Abib or Nisan. In it, you came out of Egypt.

None shall appear before me empty. Feast of unleavened bread. We are looking at this piece of bread that Jesus picks up and distributes to his disciples.

So since I have concluded in my own mind that this is the day of preparation meal, is this leavened or unleavened bread? We know that it is unleavened bread for Passover the following night, but is this piece of bread leavened or unleavened? We are not told. However, they have prepared the Passover and you know how it was in Israel, especially under the guidance of the Pharisees, that you don't want to take a chance that there is anything leavened in the house where the celebration of Passover is going to take place. Purge out the old leaven.

I feel confident that this bread, even though it is not yet Passover, and this is not the Seder proper, that it is unleavened bread because that's all they are going to have in the house to ensure that they do not violate the very clear stricture on any leaven in the house for the upcoming feast. So any bread in the house, even a day prior to Passover is going to be unleavened. Then you have this great promise beginning in verse 20, I send an angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.

Beware of him and obey his voice. This is verse 21 of chapter 23 of Exodus. Do not provoke him for he will not pardon your transgressions for my name is in him.

This angel, and they put capital A in the New King James because they believe that the angel of the Lord in the Old Incarnate Christ, it's possible. I personally don't share that view, and this is one of the reasons. This angel does not forgive sin.

Only God can forgive sins. If this angel were God, the second person, then he would be

capable of forgiving sins. But God very clearly says, I'm going to send my angel before you.

Do not provoke him for he will not pardon your transgressions for my name is in him. This is a very powerful angel. This is very possibly Michael, the archangel, the guardian angel of the nation of Israel.

Mikael, me is who? You remember the first few weeks of Hebrew class, you learn about pronouns. Uh, who is he? He is she and me is who? Uh, so who is he? He is she and me is who? So me, M I is who? Ka is like, and L is the name of God. Who is like God? Mikael, my name is in him.

Now, of course, this is beyond just his actual name. This is, he represents the name. He is acting in the name in the same way that we pray to the father in the name of the Lord Jesus, our requests and our intercession and our, uh, uh, prayer before the Lord is in the name of, because the name of the Lord Jesus is in us.

If you obey his voice and do all that I speak, I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries for my angel will go before you and bring you in to the Amorites, Hittites and so on. Well, this is the context. God will send hornets to drive people out of the land, uh, make no covenant with them.

Verse 32, Exodus 23 32, make no covenant with the people of the land with them or with their gods. Why Israel is a covenant people to God and to God alone. Their covenant is with him.

What is Jesus about to say? This is the new covenant in my blood covenant. So covenant is important. Covenant is in the context here as we approach chapter 24, why they shall not dwell in your land.

Lest they make you sin against me. If you serve their gods, I will surely be a snare to you. I will cause you to stumble.

I will trip you up and stop your progress. I will be a snare. Note the word snare.

We have covenant and God himself. If they disobey and make a covenant with the people of the land and with their gods, God himself will be a snare to them. Now, chapter 24, he said to Moses, come up to the Lord.

You Aaron, Nadab and Abihu. Do you recall who Nadab and Abihu are? These are sons of Aaron. The law has not yet designated the sons of Aaron to be priests in the tribe of Levi, but these are going to be the initial members of the priesthood.

Aaron will be the high priest. Nadab and Abihu will be Levitical priests, sons of Aaron priests. They've not yet been so designated, but God calls them by name in anticipation.

And so Moses is going to come up. You Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and 70 of the elders of Israel and worshiped from afar. So how many people go up? There is Moses.

He's one Aaron, Nadab and Abihu. That's three more. That makes four.

Seventy elders, that's 74. And we know from the subsequent context that Joshua is there. His presence with Moses is assumed, but he is not named.

Yeshua is present, but not named. That makes a total of 75. Moses alone shall come near the Lord, but they shall not come near, nor shall the people go up with him.

So Moses came and told the people, all the words of the Lord, all the judgments, all the people answered with one voice and said, all the words, which the Lord has said, we will do. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. And he rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and 12 pillars, according to the 12 tribes of Israel.

Once again, these are symbolic. They are metaphorical. What would the altar represent? This is the presence of God, the place of meeting with God.

What do the 12 pillars, the 12 rocks represent? The 12 tribes of Israel. So God's people are represented by the 12 pillars, the 12 stones and God's presence is represented by the altar. Then Moses sent young men of the Israel who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the Lord.

Why does he send young men? You do not yet have designated priests. So Moses picks young men. I would guess, I would speculate that these might have been members of the tribe of Levi and perhaps uh, nephews and grandchildren and such of, of Aaron, but they are young men unidentified here who offer these, uh, sacrifices and Moses took half the blood and put it in basins.

Half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. He sprinkles half of the blood of these many sacrifices. These are burnt offerings and peace offerings of oxen.

This is a lot of blood. Half of it he puts on the altar. Then he took the book of the covenant, verse seven, which he has very recently written and read it in the hearing of the people.

And they said all that the Lord has said, we will do and be obedient. This is their second affirmation. Two times they affirm, I will be faithful.

Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, not on the rocks. He sprinkled it on the people. There's blood on the altar.

There are stones representing the 12 tribes, but they are not sprinkled with blood. The people themselves are sprinkled. What does Moses say? This is the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you.

According to all these words, these words of the book of the covenant. Well, what does this anticipate when Jesus uses the identical phrase, this is the blood of the new covenant. Here is the old covenant inaugurated with blood.

There is the new covenant inaugurated with blood. We will dive into this after the break.