

## **Matthew 22-10-23a**

Welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace & Truth Bible Church. This is the 23rd day of October, 2022. We continue our study in the gospel of Matthew.

We are in the upper room with Jesus and the 12 disciples. And he has made a special issue of the bread and the cup. We'll pause for a moment to acknowledge the importance of God's Holy Spirit to our understanding, our remembrance and our ability to interpret and apply and then we'll begin.

Father, we are so grateful for the gift of your Holy Spirit to enter into divine truth, into the realms of glory that are unavailable and inaccessible to the carnal mind. These things are spiritually discerned and we are so grateful that the Lord Jesus upon his departure has given to us another comforter who leads us into all truth. We look for that cleansing that comes through your grace by the blood of Jesus Christ that sanctifies us and makes us fit vessels to be a place of rest and residence for your spirit and for your word.

And we ask that as we look at these most important words of the Lord Jesus on the night before he was crucified that we will find not only understanding but meaning and purpose for our own application, our own walk before you as we avail ourselves of the work of Jesus Christ on our behalf. He is the propitiation for our sins. In his blood we have forgiveness according to the riches of your grace and we are so privileged and we wanna make the most of the opportunity to leverage the time that you grant to us in this life to prepare for service and function in the next.

So we ask your blessing on our fellowship, our conversation, our study of your word, all these in Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Once again in Matthew chapter 26, verse 26, 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. The bread and the cup. These are fraught with significance we have two different ways of understanding their symbolic value.

One is in the light of New Testament revelation, what they mean to us as a result of understanding the Lord Jesus Christ and the meaning with which he invests them on this night, something that is reviewed by the Apostle Paul over in Corinthians. But often the best way to get a handle on these higher and more metaphorical or symbolic truths is to first try to put them in the context that the original recipients would have received them. So let's put ourselves in the position of a disciple in the upper room.

It is the day of preparation of the Passover on the morrow 24 hours hence will be the time of the Passover meal, eaten with outer garments on, waist girt, staff in hand,

sandals on the feet, remaining indoors all night. All of those unique and specific requirements that God placed on Israel, we reviewed them last time as a memorial. And all of these provisions are a part of the memorial.

It is not just the slaying of the lamb, everything. And you see that in Exodus chapter 12, which we reviewed last time. And the bread comes first, this is my body.

And we've talked about this to some extent. There is more that we will see this morning in connection with the other linked element, which is the cup. And I find the cup intensely fascinating, not only from what we understand, but what the disciples could have and really should have understood as Jesus took a cup that ordinarily would have been no more significant than flatware on the table or the platter that held the bread or any other intrinsic part of eating a meal.

He takes something that has no special value, no unique significance, and it becomes significant because of what Jesus says and what he does. Most interesting to me is that it does not say in verse 27, then he took the wine, or then he took the unfermented grape juice, or then he took the beverage. It says he took the cup and it makes an issue of the cup.

Well, naturally this fascinates me. There are many things that Jesus could have said and done at this meal. If it had been the Passover meal, I feel almost certainly he would have done something with the lamb.

Wouldn't you expect? At the Passover meal, which I certainly am convinced is not to be celebrated till the morrow's eve, the flesh of the lamb roasted would be on the table with the bitter herbs. And to ignore that element, which was not on the table on this night, because you're not gonna have lamb two nights in a row. So that is not mentioned because the lamb himself is going to be sacrificed between the evenings the next day.

So it is the bread and the cup. And these elements are associated well back in the Old Testament. And there are many instances we could examine.

Abraham sharing bread and wine with Melchizedek is fraught with meaning and interest and focus on priesthood, on worship, on fellowship with the priest of the most high God, Melchizedek, King of Righteousness. You could spend all the rest of the morning and into the afternoon just talking about that scene. There are many other examples, but thinking ahead to the scene we have in the Gospel of John with the two men on the road to Emmaus after the resurrection.

This will be three days hence on Sunday afternoon. And they are accompanied by a stranger on the road and they share the news of the crucifixion. And the stranger then begins to open to them all the scriptures and explain things concerning himself.

And their hearts begin to burn within them. And it is as he is breaking bread with

disciples for the first time since this upper room scene that they recognize him. They recognize him in the breaking of bread.

And so the bread is endlessly fascinating and significant. And then there is the cup, specifically the cup. So this morning we're going to take of many examples, Jesus opened to them all the scriptures and we could stop here and just spend the rest of our lives until the rapture examining the Old Testament anticipations and adumbrations and foreshadowing of this.

But we're just going to take one, it's actually more than one episode, but it's one time in Israel's history where these elements occur. So let's begin by turning back to Genesis chapter 40. After Abraham and Melchizedek, the next time that you have these elements inextricably linked and associated is in Genesis chapter 40.

Because you are familiar with the overall structure and outline and sequence in Genesis, you know that by the time you get to chapter 40, you are in the Joseph story. And again, I could start talking now and not finish until after supper tonight, talking about all of the links, all of the archetypes, all of the anticipations of the Lord Jesus in the life of Joseph. But we're just going to focus on these that pertain to the bread and the cup.

You will remember that in chapter 39, Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. This is 39 one. You cannot understand this without the context.

So back a chapter to chapter 39, Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, captain of the guard, brought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. As one of many previous details, you know that Joseph was sold into the hands of the Ishmaelites, non-Jews, for a price of silver.

He was sold for silver. In this case, it was 20 shekels of silver, but he is sold by his brothers. He is betrayed into the hands of oppressors and slave traders for silver.

And he comes to the house of Potiphar. You remember that Potiphar's wife tries to seduce him. He refuses her advances.

She gets angry, falsely accuses him, and he is cast into prison. So in chapter 39, verse 21, the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. Favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

This is one of our contextual background pieces of information that is essential for what's coming up in the next chapter. So the keeper of the prison finds Joseph favorable. So the keeper, in verse 22, committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison.

Whatever they did there, it was his doing. The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority because the Lord was with him. And whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper.

Before Joseph becomes the vizier of Egypt and is entrusted with all things so that Pharaoh doesn't even look into it, but entrusts everything to Joseph, he says, only in the throne will I be higher than you, Pharaoh will say. Joseph first learns skills under oppression, in imprisonment, in suffering, but God gives him favor and mercy in his imprisonment and in his time of restriction and deprivation and separation from his family. And Joseph is faithful in this, which is least.

He is in charge of prisoners at a prison. And you think, how is this possibly blessing and opportunity? But much of Joseph's skill in his later role is honed and developed in this earlier role, dealing with people. And if you can deal with convicted criminals in the prison, if you can organize and structure and function in prosperity in a prison, think how much more you can do when you have all the power of Pharaoh dealing with issues, both domestic and foreign.

So this is preparation. It may not look like much, it may not look like preparation, but Joseph is faithful because he is trusting God. That brings us to chapter 40.

So fascinating. I just haven't been able to quit looking at this all week. It came to pass after these things that the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their Lord, the king of Egypt, and Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, chief butler and the chief baker.

So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined. Now, let me just say that this is a little clearer in Hebrew than it is in your new King James, because he is not the chief butler. He is not butling.

He is the cup bearer. And the word for cup and for drink is intrinsic to this term that is translated butler. He's the cup bearer.

And I think it says cup bearer in the King James. And I regret that they seem to have changed it here. He is the cup bearer.

So now let's just stop and think. What does a baker make? Bread. What does a cup hold? Wine.

So here we have at the beginning of chapter 40, Joseph associated with bread and the cup. And so Pharaoh puts them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard. Remember these guys, it's kind of like the titles that are assigned in England where you have knights of the garter and things that he doesn't literally put on somebody's garter.

It's an honorific that involves that function in these ancient days. But these men are members of Pharaoh's inner circle, perhaps advisors in his cabinet and so on. But their formal function is to be in charge of all of Pharaoh's food and in charge of all of Pharaoh's drink.

And it is an honor to hand the cup to Pharaoh. It is a matter of trust that it's not poisoned and so on. You know, they've always had these cup bearers that would taste anything the king is gonna drink to be sure he's not poisoned and so on.

So these are not only functional, but they are invested with great honor. Because of that, when these men are suspected by Pharaoh and they fall out of his favor, they don't get thrown in with the hoi polloi in the dregs of the prison. They are imprisoned in the custody of the captain of the guard at his house.

So they're not in the prison per se. The captain of the guard probably lives adjacent to the prison or in a dwelling that is attached to it. And that's where these men are confined.

So it's kind of like house arrest, but it's not their own house. It's the house of the captain of the guard. And the captain of the guard, verse four, charged Joseph with them and he served them.

And they were in custody for a while. This is something measured in months. And Joseph gets to know them and they get to know Joseph quite well over the course of these many weeks, dwelling together in the house of the captain of the guard.

Then verse five, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt who were confined in the prison had a dream, both of them, each man's dream in one night and each man's dream with its own interpretation. Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them and saw that they were sad. So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in the custody of his Lord's house saying, why do you look so sad today? And they said to him, we each have had a dream.

And there is no interpreter of it. Notice that there is an interpretation for each dream up above, but what they are looking for is an interpreter. It shifts from what is the meaning to who can divine the meaning, who can ascertain the meaning.

There's no interpreter of it. So Joseph said to them, do not interpretations belong to God. You're looking for an interpreter.

You should be looking to God. Interpreters only receive and divine the interpretation. There's a clue in the verb there.

How do you divine the interpretation? It comes from God. Joseph, even in this circumstance, is habituated to looking to God and to telling others that the answers they are looking for are to be found in God, not in him. So the chief butler told his dream, verse nine, to Joseph and said to him, behold, in my dream, a vine was before me and in the vine were three branches.

And it was as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth and its clusters brought forth ripe

grapes. Then Pharaoh's cup was in my hand. I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.

Joseph said to him, this is the interpretation of it. The three branches are three days. Now, within three days, Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place.

And you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand, according to the former manner, when you were his cup bearer. Then we have two verses of, please remember me. Remember me when it is well with you.

And please show kindness to me. Make mention of me to Pharaoh and get me out of this house. For indeed, I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews.

And also I have done nothing here that they should put me in the dungeon. Let's take a look at this first dream because we're focusing on the cup at first blush. In my dream, a vine was before me and in the vine were three branches.

The branches budded, blossom shot forth, clusters brought forth ripe grapes. Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, suddenly. So I took the grapes, pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.

Of all possible dreams, why this one? If you stopped here and had not heard Joseph's interpretation given to him by God of this dream, just stop and think about it. Or if you were gonna try to derive a method for parsing the elements of a dream and ascertaining the interpretation, I would ask myself, apart from revelation directly from God, so this man sees a vine and the vine has three branches and the branches bud and bloom, flower, turn into grapes and the grapes become ripe and mature. It's like one of these time-lapse things that in a few seconds, you see it all take place.

And he's got a cup, he's got grapes, says, well, I squeeze the grapes, put them in the cup, I give the cup to Pharaoh. Suddenly, Pharaoh is in the dream. He doesn't see Pharaoh, it progresses.

The focus is on the vine and the branches, the blossoms, the grapes, then it switches to the cup, then it switches to Pharaoh, whose cup it is, and to whom he gives the cup. There's movement here. And so the first thing Joseph says in interpretation is the three branches are three days.

Then the human mind wouldn't work this way, at least not initially. How does Joseph know that the three branches are three days? The branches are not distinguished one from another. They all have blossoms and grapes and such.

The three branches are three days. And I think, no wonder Pharaoh's magicians have trouble with dreams. People in general would have trouble with these dreams.

Later, Pharaoh's gonna have a dream about cows and ears of grain and such. Nobody can figure it out. These men certainly can't figure it out sitting there talking to each other.

The three branches are three days. And so I think about this and I think, well, if Joseph were working it out just from maybe a God-given gift, where he's got to do some of the work and God doesn't just flash his ram with the answer. You computer people know what I'm talking about.

The time element in this dream isn't in, the time is passing very rapidly. This branch, this vine and branches brings forth blossoms and grapes and ripe grapes, and he squeezes it into the cup. And by the time the cup is handed to Pharaoh, it's wine.

It has fermented. This is the implication. Time is passing quickly.

Time's not gonna stop once it's in the cup. So Pharaoh doesn't drink grape juice. The stuff would spoil.

It has to be fermented. And so symbolically speaking, it goes from zero to wine, very similar to what Jesus does at the wedding feast of Cana, very quickly. So Joseph, looking at the blossoms and the grapes and the cup and the wine that is squeezed, the grape juice that turns into wine when it's squeezed into it, evidently saw, well, that's not where the time is in this dream.

So if you want time, you've got to look somewhere else. And there is a number three. So three must relate to the time because the vision itself compresses time.

That's as near as I can get. And especially when we look at the second dream, the number and time seem to be separate from what is observed. But this is the cup, and this can't happen without the cup.

I asked myself, this dream could have been anything. We just take it for granted that it's the vine, the branches, the blossoms, the grapes, the cup, the squeezing, putting it in Pharaoh's hand. That's his dream.

Why isn't it wine skins? I'm Pharaoh's cup bearer. How did this guy normally get wine to put in Pharaoh's cup? He didn't squeeze it straight off the branch. There's lackeys out there.

Perhaps, you know, captives from another land that are stomping these grapes and putting them in skins and letting them ferment and bringing it in. And so why this dream? Why not wine skins? But the branch, the vine and the branches are there. And all of this is arranged in a way that they have to come to Joseph for the meaning.

You think about what God has done to bring this moment about. Both the cup bearer and

the baker have to be more or less simultaneously found heinous in Pharaoh's sight so that he doesn't just censure them. He doesn't just embarrass them.

He imprisons them. And through God's working in Joseph's life, they come to be sequestered with Joseph in this nicer part of the prison, the prison keeper's own house. And then they're both given this dream by God on the same night and they are downcast and Joseph initiates this session of interpretation.

They don't seek out Joseph. They don't know that he knows anything. Joseph comes to them and he says, you seem to have a problem.

We've had this dream. We don't know the interpretation. Each of us has had a dream.

Joseph says, well, interpretations belong to God. Tell me your dream. And their anticipation, their preparation is nothing without Joseph.

Joseph becomes the central piece. All of this, when you start thinking about the Lord Jesus and his role, just becomes more and more significant. I would bet 20 shekels of silver.

I would bet 30 pieces of silver. I would bet almost any money that on the road to Emmaus, this story was covered. Have you not heard what I did with my disciples in the upper room with the bread and the cup? Have you not heard of Joseph interpreting the dreams about bread and the cup? How could you miss this? And I asked myself, how can I miss it? I don't want to miss it.

So the interpretation of the dream is after three days, Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner when you were his cup bearer. Cup and cup bearer partake of the same Hebrew verb here. Butler is right out.

Just scratch that out and put cup bearer. He's the cup bearer to the Pharaoh. Remember me, he says in verse 14 and 15.

Verse 16, when the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, I also in my dream, there were three white baskets on my head, three baskets. In the uppermost basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head. We have seen the birds of the air enough in scripture to know what they portend.

But in the early days when Joseph is functioning, there's no written scriptures. He wouldn't know the symbolism of the birds as we do from scripture, but the birds of the air are significant. They come and eat the bread.

Pharaoh doesn't eat the bread, the birds eat it. Pharaoh does not appear in the baker's

dream like he does in the butler's dream. Joseph answered and said, verse 18, this is the interpretation of it.

The three baskets are three days. Notice verse 19. It is the same as its opening is the same as verse 13.

Not after three days, but within three days. This doesn't take place on the fourth day. It takes place after two days, within three days.

So on day three, this is going to happen. On day three, the cupbearer is gonna be restored to his position. And on day three, Joseph says, Pharaoh will lift off your head, not lift up your head, lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree and the birds will eat your flesh from you.

Notice the association of bread with flesh. This is the first time in scripture that direct association is made. The bread being eaten by the birds is the birds eating your flesh.

Now it came to pass, verse 20, notice on the third day, not after the third day, on the third day, this will become significant shortly. On the third day, Pharaoh's birthday. It is a special time.

It is a feast time. It is an annual celebration. Knock, knock, knock.

It's an annual celebration in Egypt. This is what makes me believe that the cupbearer and the baker were in prison for less than a year. Otherwise this would have happened a year earlier.

But it's Pharaoh's birthday. Remember that Pilate offers to release a prisoner because it's a feast day. I've got two prisoners here.

I've got Jesus and I've got Barabbas. Which one would you like me to release? How many people were on Golgotha being crucified? What does the scripture tell us repeatedly? He was crucified between two criminals, one of whom receives life, the other of whom does not. Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Joseph is here in the company of two criminals, one of whom is going to receive life and the other is going to be executed. No hope, no life. Same thing with the two thieves crucified with the Lord Jesus.

Barabbas and the Lord Jesus, which one? And on the feast day, on the day of celebration, one is released and one is executed. So many connections. And like the vine with the branches, it doesn't connect in the direct analogy way that we as humans would like to expect.

I would never figure out that the three branches are three days. I would never figure out that the three baskets are three days. Two of the baskets are apparently empty.

Have you ever gone to eat your hot dog or your hamburger at a cookout and you wind up getting two or maybe three paper plates and you think, well, this is good. These things are kind of flimsy anyway. I'll just eat off of these, but they're nested.

And in the baker's dream, these are nested baskets, but there's nothing in the first basket. There's nothing in the second basket. Only in the top basket are there all of these dainties for Pharaoh, but they never make it to Pharaoh.

Pharaoh is not pleased by them. He doesn't accept them. He doesn't receive them.

Instead, the birds take them. The birds will eat your flesh from you. So it came to pass on the third day, Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants.

And he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. He singled them out. You could imagine if someone were dramatizing this, Pharaoh was there in the midst of the feasting.

Both of these men have been released from the guard house, from the prison and the house of the prison keeper and have been brought to the feast. Pharaoh has them brought before him. They're both standing in his presence.

So their heads are lifted up in front of all of Pharaoh's servants. They are made an issue. They are a focus of attention.

The attention brought to them by Pharaoh himself. Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership. He restored the chief cup bearer to his cup bearing.

And he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. For the first time in many months, there must've been a surrogate or a substitute or an assistant chief cup bearer that has been doing it all this time. But in front of everybody, the cup bearer once again places the cup in Pharaoh's hand.

And I'm sure there was an obligatory applause scene. Isn't this wonderful? He's been restored. He's vindicated.

He is justified. He is righteous in the sight of Pharaoh. And he is qualified.

Who is able to bring the cup to Pharaoh? This man. He was accused, but he is vindicated. And he puts the cup, and this is not an empty cup.

You don't bring Pharaoh an empty cup. This cup has the acceptable beverage within it. But, verse 22, he hanged the chief baker as Joseph had interpreted to them.

But the cup bearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him. Did not remember, but forgot. This is so interesting in the light of later events, this favoring of one over another goes back to Joseph's great-grandfather, Abraham, who had two sons, Esau the firstborn,

Isaac the second born.

But Isaac is favored, and Esau is cast out. I'm sorry, Ishmael is cast out. I'm working my way down to Esau.

Isaac and Ishmael, Ishmael is cast out. Isaac is favored, atypically, not the normal primogeniture function. Isaac has two sons, Jacob and Esau.

Esau is the eldest, but it is the younger Jacob who is favored. And you know, at the end of Joseph's life, when he presents his two sons, what are the names of Joseph's two sons that he has with his Egyptian wife, Asenath? Ephraim and Manasseh. Who is the firstborn? Manasseh.

You know what Manasseh's name means? Jacob is going to cross his hands and put his right hand on the head of Ephraim. You know what Ephraim means? Fruitfulness. Fruitfulness.

The idea of fruitfulness, the vine, supernaturally, with these three branches, growing blossoms and fruit, that turns supernaturally into wine, fit to put in Pharaoh's cup and be handed to him. Fruitfulness. But this beneficiary of the interpretation from Joseph and the favor of Pharaoh forgets.

Joseph is gonna name Manasseh his firstborn, saying, all of these blessings in the land of Egypt have caused me to forget everything I lost in the land of my forefathers. Then when Ephraim is born, and think about this, this is our closing thought before we go to the break. Ephraim, think about that word.

What do you know about Hebrew? Tell me about the ending of this name. Ephraim. Technically, it's a dual, but remember Hashemayim, the heavens? Mayim is the waters.

It's multitudinous. The dual is used for a plural, right? It's the masculine plural, im. So what's the first part? If you take im off, that makes it a plural, what do you have left? Ephra.

What happens if you put th on the end of that? Or T-H-A-H? The fruitfulness that is associated with the vine and the branches is also associated with the bread in the baker's basket, right? Think with me now, where is Jesus born? What's the full name of the town where He is born? It's two words. Bet lechem Ephratha, the house of bread, manifold fruitfulness. Even in Jesus' birthplace, if you pay attention, Ephratha, Ephraim, Ephraim, the favored one, who is selected over Manasseh, forgetfulness, goes back to the cupbearer and the baker, one of whom is selected, whose dream represents fruitfulness, but the bread is, and the bread maker is sacrificed and his flesh is consumed.

The baker's flesh is consumed by the birds. When Jesus said, this bread is my body, take,

eat, what does that say about the eaters? There's a lot of food for thought here, all of it brought to mind by Jesus' actions in the upper room. We'll have more to say about it when we come back from the break.