

# R2L: With a High View of the Lord's Table

*"Take it; this is My body." (Mark 14:22)*

Let me begin by saying that my week simply did not go as I intended this week. With the exception of Wednesday afternoon, I did not spend any time in my office. On Thursday I had some oral surgery that did not go as planned. It all worked out, but I was, shall we say, "out of it" Thursday afternoon and still groggy on Friday. This left my study time in a shambles and upon coming to the Lord for His grace to direct my studies in Acts 15, I found my heart returning to the event we will be partaking of immediately after this service, the partaking of the Lord's Supper as by family of God, the body of Christ, the obedient church. So let me have you turn in your Bibles to Mark 14:12-26 as we remind ourselves of the great blessing it is to partake of the Lord's Supper together.

## **Mark 14:12-26**

*12 On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was being sacrificed, His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?" 13 And He sent two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him; 14 and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is My guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"'" 15 "And he himself will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; prepare for us there." 16 The disciples went out and came to the city, and found it just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover. 17 When it was evening He came with the twelve. 18 As they were reclining at the table and eating, Jesus said, "Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me — one who is eating with Me." 19 They began to be grieved and to say to Him one by one, "Surely not I?" 20 And He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who dips with Me in the bowl. 21 "For the Son of Man is to go 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." 22 While they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is My body." 23 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. 25 "Truly I say to you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." 26 After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

Earlier this week, I heard a preacher speaking on the subject of church membership. I will not seek to go too deep into that subject, as it is not fitting our text directly. Yet, this man said something that struck me as significant. He said, just as a child who enjoys the privileges of family yet refuses to engage in the responsibilities of that family (say, do the dishes, take out the trash, mow the yard, etc.); such a child would be deemed a spoiled brat. In like manner, children of God, who want to enjoy the privileges of the church yet refuse to engage in the responsibilities of the church (say, faithful attendance, faithful service, giving of time and resources, engaging in regular fellowship, the Lord's supper, etc.) are nothing short of being spiritual spoiled brats.

I hope it is safe to assume that none of us would want to be labeled as spiritual spoiled brats; and so, as we prepare for the Lord's Supper during our second hour, let me remind you that this is just one of your family responsibilities, and yet it ought to be a joyful one. What is it that gets us complacent, not properly thinking and acting toward this time? I have a word in mind that explains why it is we can so easily forget or even disregard the wonder of this meal that is like none other. That word!?

*Familiarity.* The word "familiarity" has as one of its meanings, "an absence of ceremony and formality; informality." To be sure, we are to be in one sense "familiar" with the Lord's Supper, but there is a danger each one of us must be aware of and that is of becoming *so familiar* with things that ought to amaze us that we fail to be amazed. When was the last time you were amazed by prayer, your very communication link between you and your great, almighty God? When was the last time you were amazed by praise, your opportunity to let the God who made you and save you know how much you adore and appreciate Him? It is all too easy, is it not, to mouth the words without really meaning them?

And what is true of prayer and praise is equally true of this meal we refer to as "The Lord's Supper." We "do it" twice a month. We "have Communion." But even the way we talk about it indicates the potential danger. The Lord's Table is not to be merely something we "do" or "have." I know that the Lord

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never intended this meal to be a rote ritual. So then, just what is the purpose of the Lord's Table and how can we protect one another and ourselves from just going through the motions as we practice this command of Jesus? In our Mark 14 text, we find four keys we are to remember if we would regard this meal liken none other.

## I. We must remember the setting (14:12-16)

*On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was being sacrificed...*

There is a time indicator on this verse. The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were actually two separate holy events. Passover was one of three major holidays for the Jews (in addition to the Feast of Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles). It took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan on the Jewish calendar, which corresponds to around mid-April on our calendar. The Feast of Unleavened Bread took place the seven days following Passover. So important was this holy day or holy time that it was the ambition of every Jew to eat at least one Passover in Jerusalem in his life. Lodging was free, and since the city itself could not hold all the guests, the pilgrims would lodge in the outlying villages, including Bethany and Bethpage. It is hard for us to get a sense of how big this event was. You need to know that at any time other than Passover, the city of Jerusalem at this time would have a population of about 50,000, roughly the size of Rogers. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, in AD 65, the number of lambs slain during Passover was 256,500. According to Jewish practice, there must be a minimum of ten people represented by one lamb. This would mean that there was a minimum of 2.6 million and more like over 3 million people cramming into Jerusalem and the surrounding villages. This is the setting of the Lord's Supper; it was at the time of the Passover and there two things I would have you notice with me from our text:

### A. Jesus observed the Passover

**First**, we note the obvious, that Jesus observed the Passover. This was the day the Jews remembered how God rescued them from their bondage in Egypt. In Exodus 12:23 we read, **"For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you."**

Coming back to Mark 14:12, we read again, *"On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was being sacrificed, His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?"*

Mark mentions that more than one disciple asks Jesus the question but does not give their names. However, from Luke 22:8 we learn that they were Peter and John. Then we read in verses 13-16,

**13 And He sent two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him; 14 and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is My guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' 15 "And he himself will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; prepare for us there." 16 The disciples went out and came to the city, and found it just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover.**

It was the day of the Passover. We believe at this point that Jesus and His disciples were outside Jerusalem, perhaps in Bethany. Jesus responds to Peter and John's question by instructing them to go into Jerusalem to make preparations for the evening Passover meal, which was to be eaten between sundown and midnight.

It can be hard for us to appreciate what was happening here. Let me paint a bit more of the picture for you. Jesus mentions a **"large upper room."** In larger Jewish homes there was typically an upper room. Homes, at this time, were built like boxes, flat on top. Upper rooms were built upon the first story with access stairs on the outside so that a person would not have to walk through the main part of the

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house. It is believed that this particular house may have belonged to the family of John Mark, the author of this Gospel. Notice with me what Jesus told Peter and John here.

To begin with, He told them, **a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water...** That would have been a different sight for the disciples. In that day, it was the women who carried water-pots, not men. Thus to see a man carrying a water-pot would like seeing a man carrying a purse for us today. Truly a unique sign. And then Jesus told them and the end for verse 13, **follow him...** and then in verse 15, **And he himself will show you a large upper room furnished and ready...** I had to ponder at the mystery this location. Would it not have been easier if Jesus simply said to Peter and John, "Hey, we are going to have the Passover at John Mark's house?" It may have been easily until we remember that there was a traitor in the group. Just back in verses 10-11, Mark had commented on how Judas was plotting to betray Jesus. If Judas had known where the Supper was to be held, he might told the priests who might have crashed the supper. Jesus was determined to have this uninterrupted time with His apostles. In other words, Jesus was about to be betrayed, but it would be on His own divine timetable, not one set by Judas.

At the end of verse 15 Jesus said, **prepare for us there.** Did you ever wonder what Jesus meant by this? It would be clear to a Jew, but for us, we might miss the meaning. What Jesus was tell them is to do everything necessary for Him and the disciples to observed before eating the Passover meal. And there were specific requirements they had to follow. Some of you are familiar with these if you have participated in one of our Seder meals.

First, they were required searched the house for leaven; which was a picture of sin. Every speck of leaven had to be removed because at the first Passover meal as recorded in Exodus 12. The LORD had instructed the Jews to eat only *unleavened bread*, which was like a cracker. During the first Passover there was no time for the bread to rise, as the Jews ate in haste, ready to leave Egypt whenever God directed.

The second preparation was that on the afternoon before the Passover meal, a lamb had to be sacrificed. Peter and John would have to take a lamb to the temple, along with literally thousands of other Jews. Can you imagine the scene? Once in the temple court, John and Peter would have to slay their lamb. Between them and the altar would be two long lines of priests, each with a gold or silver bowl. As the lamb's throat was cut, the blood was caught in one of these bowls, and passed up the line until the priest at the end of the line poured it upon the altar. Then, the body of the lamb was flayed open, the entrails and the fat extracted as they were part of the sacrifice. The lamb carcass was given back to John and Peter. Peter and John would have seen the Temple courts and surrounding area literally flowing with blood. As they left the Temple with the flayed lamb, they headed to the upper room so they could roast it. On their trek to the room, nothing was to touch the lamb. It had to be roasted over an open fire on a spit made of pomegranate wood. This was the task Jesus gave to Peter and John.

Once the preparations had been made, this is an idea of how the room would have looked (Taken from William Barclay):

- (i) There was the *lamb*, to remind them of how their houses had been protected by the badge of blood when the angel of death passed through Egypt.
- (ii) There was the *unleavened bread* to remind them of the bread they had eaten in haste when they escaped from slavery.
- (iii) There was a *bowl of salt water*, to remind them of the tears they had shed in Egypt and of the waters of the Red Sea through which they had miraculously passed to safety.
- (iv) There was a collection of *bitter herbs*—horseradish, chicory, endive, lettuce, horehound—to remind them of the bitterness of slavery in Egypt.
- (v) There was a paste called *Charosheth*, a mixture of apples, dates, pomegranates and nuts, to remind them of the clay of which they had made bricks in Egypt. Through it there were sticks of cinnamon to remind them of the straw with which the bricks had been made.
- (vi) There were *four cups of wine*. The four cups, consumed at various stages of the meal, were to remind them of the four promises in Exodus 6:6-7.

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**Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, "I am the Lord, and <sup>1</sup>I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and <sup>2</sup>I will deliver you from their bondage. <sup>3</sup>I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. <sup>7</sup> Then <sup>4</sup>I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."**

Once Peter and John completed the preparations, the meal was ready for Jesus and the disciples. Observing Passover was very important to Jesus. Why? For two reasons.

## 1. It was a looking back to God's past deliverance.

Around 1445 B.C. God redeemed His people from their slavery to Egypt by His grace and for His glory. The word "redeemed" means to be bought back. Beloved, sinners, those in bondage, cannot save themselves. It is always God who saves sinners. Now listen carefully! When God saves sinners, it is His intention that they remember just how He accomplished it. This is where the Passover comes in. Look at the explanation given in Exodus 12:42 where we read:

**It is a night to be observed for the LORD for having brought them out from the land of Egypt; this night is for the LORD, to be observed by all the sons of Israel throughout their generations.**

By observing the Passover Jesus was looking back. But saw Passover as important because...

## 2. It was a looking ahead to a future deliverance.

Luke's gospel record Jesus making this statement in 22:15, "**I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer...**" Jesus knew that this Passover would bring a better redemption. At the first Passover God rescued His people from bondage in Egypt. That redemption did nothing for the greater bondage they were still under. What bondage am I speaking of? It is the same bondage you and I enter the world in, *bondage to sin*. What do those who are being held captive by a hostile force need? In this case, they need what only God can bring about: *Deliverance*. This is what this particular Passover is all about, the imminent rescue that God is about to perform for His people, not to get them out of Egypt, but to deliver them from their sins. And how did God determine He would bring about this deliverance? He would do it by sacrificing another Lamb, the greatest and final Lamb, His own Son; and then He would apply the shed blood of His Son, to hearts of His people who would receive the person and work of Jesus by faith as having been done for them. This is what made this Passover in Mark 14 so important. For not only did Jesus observe the Passover, but a second truth we glean is this...

## B. Jesus was the Passover Lamb.

It is almost ironic to think about the scene here. In the middle of the table where Jesus and the disciples were eating was a lamb. But who was serving the lamb to the disciples? The One who would be *The Lamb*. Remember the words of John the Baptist some three and a half years earlier when he declared in John 1:29; "**Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**" The apostle Paul would say it this way in 1 Corinthians 5:7, "**For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.**" And let us not forget Peter who said in 1 Peter 1:18-19, "**knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.**"

So, if we are to appreciate the Lord's Supper, we must remember the setting. That is the first key. Let us move to the second key that helps us appreciate this time...

## II. We must remember the sorrow (14:17-21)

**17** When it was evening [about 6 pm] He came with the twelve. **18** As they were reclining at the table and eating...

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Stop there and note the activity. They were *eating* together. We must remember that for people of the first century, eating together was more than filling one's stomach, it also pictured acceptance and fellowship. By eating with these men, Jesus was being intimate with them. We see this in two ways.

## A. Jesus opened Himself up to these men (17-18a)

Jesus spent over three years with these men. He loved them unconditionally. He taught them, opened His life up to their scrutiny, ate countless meals with them, and yet none was more significant than this one. As a side note, somewhere between verse 17 and 18 would have been the foot-washing described in John 13. Remember that scene as Jesus took the role of a slave and cleaned the dirt-stained feet of these men. Jesus opened Himself up to these men, and now, at the end of verse 18, Jesus stuns them men as...

## B. Jesus predicted that one of the twelve was to betray Him (18b)

*Jesus said, "Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me — one who is eating with Me."*

Here is where the scene turns sour. Can you imagine in the midst of one of our fellowship meals someone standing up and announcing that one of our fellowships was a traitor? It is one thing for a stranger to turn on you. You can understand it if an enemy *One of YOU will betray me*. It hurts if a stranger turns on you. It hurts if an enemy you know turns on you. But nothing compares to the pain of having someone close to turns on you, but to have someone you regard as family turn on you; can you imagine the hurt?

Notice what happened as Jesus uttered these words of prophecy. In verse 19 we read, ***"They began to be grieved and to say to Him one by one, "Surely not I?"*** Even Judas made this statement of sadness. So Jesus goes on to say in verse 20, ***"It is one of the twelve, one who dips with Me in the bowl."*** To betray a friend after eating a meal was regarded as one of the worst kinds of treachery to those of this culture. And yet not one suspected Judas. Not one. Judas, a wolf in sheep's clothing, a companion of Jesus and the others; one who was highly regarded the others. Judas was the trusted treasurer of the group (John 13:29). Judas was in charge of the benevolence monies to be given to the poor (John 12:4-5). Judas, the one Jesus sat in the seat of honor at this supper, at Jesus' left hand where he could easily receive the dipped bread. It has been noted that since they were reclining at the table, they would have been leaning on their left elbows, which means that Jesus' head was right next to Judas' heart.

If Jesus has simply declared Judas as a traitor, I have no doubt that Peter would have pinned Judas to the floor. A traitor was in the midst, but Jesus did not come to save Himself. Rather He came to save others and thus we read in verse 21, ***"For the Son of Man is to go just as it is written of] Him [notice the emphasis here on God's sovereignty]; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed [notice the emphasis here on man's responsibility! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."***

Let me remind you that just because God turns the wrath of man to accomplish God's purposes; this does not excuse the wrath of man. As one bible commentator put it, "Judas was neither a martyr nor a robot. He was a responsible human being who made his own decisions but, in so doing, fulfilled the Word of God. He must not be made into either a hero ('After all, somebody had to betray Jesus!') or a helpless victim of merciless predestination. Judas was lost for the same reason millions are lost today: he did not repent of his sins and believe on Jesus Christ... If you have never been born again, one day you will wish you had not been born at all." (Warren Weirs be)

We have seen the setting and the sorrow of the Lord's Supper. Let us now consider a third key...

## III. We must remember the symbolism of the elements (14:22-25)

We now come to the climax of the story, but a climax many of you are so familiar with that you forget to wonder at it. We are treading on holy ground here as all four gospel writers speak about what happened here. In just a few verses, Mark describes for us what happened as Jesus used two simple elements to symbolize what He was about to accomplish.

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*"Take it; this is My body." (Mark 14:22)*

## **A. He took bread (22).**

*While they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is My body."*

If you have ever attended a Passover Seder, you know that on the table are to be three pieces of unleavened bread, or matzos. The host would take the middle piece, break it, and then say, *"This is the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt. Whosoever is hungry let him come and eat. Whosoever is in need let him come and keep the Passover with us."* Let us see now what Jesus did with the bread. He did three things

### *1. He gave a blessing for it.*

In short, He thanked God for bread. There are those who refer to the Lord's Supper as "the Eucharist" - which comes from a Greek word meaning 'to give thanks'. So Jesus gave thanks.

### *2. He broke it.*

The bread here was more like a cracker than a loaf of bread. If was to be shared, it would have to be broken into pieces and handed out to those at the table. This is what Jesus did. None of this surprised the disciples as the host always did what Jesus was doing. Jesus gave thanks and broke the bread. But what Jesus did next would shock His disciples.

### *3. He said it represented His body.*

*"Take it; this is My body."*

There are some who want to take these words of Jesus literally. Of course the Roman Catholic Church teaches that says the bread and wine actually become the physical, literal body and blood of Christ. Beloved, it is true that as a general rule we should take the Bible literally unless there is evidence in the text that suggests otherwise. And that is what we have here. If we were to take these words of Jesus literally as His body and blood, we would be forgetting that these words were spoken by Christ to eleven men who were sitting at a table with Him. Not one of them would have even for a moment entertained the idea that the bread was changed into Christ's body or the wine into His blood. Why? Because Jesus was right there, alive, breathing and talking to them. To take these words literally is to forget the Jewish culture's fondness for vivid, figurative language.

Remember that Jesus has used such figurative language before. When Jesus said in John 10:7 that he was the door, no one looked for hinges to appear on His body. Why? Because they knew He was speaking figuratively. We need to remember that bread and wine were very common items and included in nearly every meal in this day. So we have Jesus taking every day items and using them to communicate something special message about Himself. He used bread to teach that He is the Bread of life, the source of life-giving nourishment. And as with real bread, so with the Bread of life. If you want to benefit from the bread, you must take it, not simply touch it, not simply look at it, but *take* it and eat it.

## **B. He took the cup (23-24).**

The second element is the cup, of which we read in verses 23-24: **23 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."**

I had mentioned earlier that there were four cups of wine on the Jewish Passover table. By this point in the meal, the first three cups were already used. Jesus picked up the fourth cup, the cup of praise, and notice what He did with it:

### *1. He gave thanks for it.*

Just as he had done with the bread.

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## 2. He gave it to them.

The way we practice communion we can forget that there was just one cup from which these men drank. From that one common cup the many drank and benefited, but it started with Jesus. Again, this much was nothing new for the men, until Jesus said one more thing as they drank.

## 3. He said it represented His covenant-making blood.

*"This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."*

What did Jesus mean by "blood of the covenant"? In the Bible a "covenant" is an agreement, a legal contract between two or more parties. At Mount Sinai God entered into a covenant relationship with His people, Israel. Under that contract, which we call the *Old Covenant*, God made it possible for His sinful people to be right with Him by bringing sacrifices. But here Jesus changes everything as the basis of the *New Covenant* is not on something we give or bring to God, but rather on something He gave or brought to us. **"This is My blood of the covenant,"** Jesus said. The basis of the *New Covenant* is the blood of Jesus that was about to be shed on the cross.

And notice what else Jesus said about His blood, **which is poured out for many.** Jesus is alluding to Isaiah 53:12 which says, **"Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors."**

Do you remember how the Mosaic Covenant was confirmed for the people? In Exodus 24:8 we read, **"So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words."** If a sinner was to be in a right relationship with God, blood must be shed and applied. Why? Does God love blood? No. But in God's mercy He accepts the death of a substitute. In the days of Moses, God accepted the blood taken from sacrificed lambs. The lambs died in the place of the people so that sinful people could be forgiven and live. The author of Hebrews made this clear. In Hebrews 9:18 we read, **"Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood."** And then in just a few verses later we read in Hebrews 9:22, **"And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."**

For hundreds of years, Israelites slit the throats of lambs and the priests sprinkled their blood on the altar, thus opening the way for sinners to be right with God for another year. But all of this was but a picture of the Final Lamb, the One who said, **"This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."** What makes this a meal like none other is that we are able to remember how Jesus has fulfilled everything predicted in the Old Covenant. And in so doing, Jesus was establishing the New Covenant, just as predicted by the prophets (Jeremiah 31:31ff; Ezekiel 36:26-28). And just as the Old Covenant was ratified by the blood, the blood of animal sacrifices; so too the New Covenant would be ratified with shed blood, only this time it would be the blood of the Son of God. At that point...

## C. He made a promise (25).

*"Truly I say to you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."*

Let us remember that Jesus did not die as a helpless victim. At every moment He was in control of His life and death as indicated by three promises He made.

## 1. Jesus died for the benefit of many.

Going back for a moment to verse 24, Jesus promised that His blood would benefit many. **"This is My blood which is poured out for many."** Why did Jesus die? He said it was for the benefit of many. He died so that many could live. This sets Christianity apart from all other religions. There are countless religions. Most have great leaders who told people how to live. Some have great leaders who showed people how to live. But what sets Christianity apart is that Jesus did not simply tell people how to live, or show people how to live, although He did. But more, Jesus died for people so they could live. He shed His own blood so that sinners like you and me could be forgiven by God and live with God forever. Let me

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remind you that Jesus did not come to make bad people good or good people better; He came to make dead people alive; alive to God! The first promise is that Jesus' death has a benefit for those who believe. But there is a second promise...

2. *Jesus would live again after He died.*

***"Truly I say to you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day..."***

One most impressive word there is *"until"*! Using *"until"* tells us that Jesus would not be defeated by death. To be sure, Jesus truly died for the sins of His people, but Jesus would not stay dead. And as the Scriptures testify, on the third day, He arose! He promised to live again! But there is one final promise

3. *Jesus is going to establish the kingdom of God.*

***"Truly I say to you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."***

Beloved, this has not happened yet. It is in the future. That day when the Risen Christ will become the True and Reigning Christ upon this earth. Jesus will return and establishes His world-wide kingdom. What makes this a meal like none other is that if you belong to Christ, you will drink with that cup with Him in that day. And why will we drink from that cup when Jesus is visibly reigning on the earth? I believe it is to be a reminder for us as to how we got there; by the sacrifice of Christ for us. Now I have gone too long, but let me wrap up the text by having you notice one final reminder...

## **IV. We must remember to sing praise (26)**

*After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

I wish I could camp out on this verse because Jesus does something here that ought to guide us in our own corporate worship. Let me ask you this, what would Jesus be doing in just a few hours from this moment? He would be hanging on a cross. Did Jesus know what He would be doing? Yes, and yet what is Jesus doing? Singing! Have you ever said or thought, "I do not feel like singing today because it is going to be a hard day" Or, "I am too sad about what is about to happen to sing!" Beloved, singing praise to God is like every other part of the Christian life. It is not something we are to do only when we *feel* like it; we need to remember it is a privileged responsibility of being part of the family of God.

Do you wonder if Jesus felt like singing here? Hard to say, right? Maybe He sang some sad, melancholy songs, right? Well, we know He sang, and to be honest with you, we are pretty certain what He sang? How do we know what He sang? Because the Seder meal closed with the Jews singing that is called the "Hallel" – the praise! The "Hallel" are Psalms 113-118. This is what Jesus was singing as He left the upper room for the Garden of Gethsemane and then on to the cross. Let me read for you the first four verses of Psalm 113 and then the last four verses of Psalm 118. This is what Jesus sang:

Psalm 113:1-4

1 Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord, Praise the name of the Lord. 2 Blessed be the name of the Lord From this time forth and forever. 3 From the rising of the sun to its setting The name of the Lord is to be praised. 4 The Lord is high above all nations; His glory is above the heavens.

Psalm 118:26-29

26 Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord; We have blessed you from the house of the Lord. 27 The Lord is God, and He has given us light; Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar. 28 You are my God, and I give thanks to You; You are my God, I extol You. 29 Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

As Jesus was approaching His death on the cross, He sang a song of thanksgiving. He sang a song that reminded both Him and His disciples of God's past dealings with His people. Are there any lessons for us in this? Yes, two with which I will end.



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# R2L: With a High View of the Lord's Table

*"Take it; this is My body." (Mark 14:22)*

## **A. We sing to remind us of what God has done in the past.**

Beloved, it is our desire that all the songs we sing be either Scripture or Scripturally sound. Why, because the Bible is the story of God's redemptive work in the past. This is a purpose of singing, to be reminded of what God said and did in the past. It does not matter whether the songs be older or newer so long as the lyrics of what we sing are firmly grounded in what God said and did in the past. And then finally...

## **B. We sing to prepare ourselves to live for God in the future.**

Notice where Jesus went after finishing the song? He went, "to the Mount of Olives." Let me ask you, what happened there? It was at the garden that Jesus suffered the agony of Gethsemane which included His betrayal, His arrest, and the abandonment of the disciples.

Beloved, I do not know what your upcoming week will be like. You may have great victories and blessings, or you may suffer some setbacks, difficult oral surgery or something like that. But one thing I know for certain, the song that we sing today are intended to prepare you to live for God in the future.

This is what we celebrate as we gather at the Table. I pray that if you do partake of the meal like none other with us, you do so because first and foremost, you are a believer in Jesus Christ. Your life has been and continues to be transformed by Jesus. Remember that is why He came, not to make bad people good or good people better, but rather to made you who was once dead in your sins alive to God, living for Him and remember the work of His Son, Jesus Christ on the cross by which He brings you to Himself, for His glory.

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*Soli Deo Gloria*

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