



Date: July 28 - 29, 2018

Speaker: Matt Loveday – Pastor of Family Ministries

Scripture: Table Talk - Luke 22 - Salvation

Our lives come to us in moments. Some moments exhilarate us and leave us breathless, full of awe and wonder. Other moments leave us in shock, taking the ground out from beneath our feet, leaving us numb and desperate. Some moments are full of routine, the mundane everyday realities of life that come and go, come and go, while some moments arrive with great spontaneity and surprise. Our lives come to us in a variety of moments. The amazing thing about life is this: that one moment, just one single moment, has the power to change everything.

One of the moments that changed my life forever happened on a Friday. It was November 17, 2006 to be precise. I remember it well. It was later in the afternoon and I was in my car driving into town with a thousand thoughts flying through my head. I remember that my heart was pounding in my chest, but at the same time it was also stuck squarely in my throat. As I drove, I thought through my mental check-list, had I remembered everything, was there anything I had missed, was I really ready for this? As I pulled off the road and into the parking lot I knew my moment was coming closer with each and every second that passed. By the time I sat down on the park bench I could literally feel my nerves like they were now resting on the outside of my skin taking in everything and my heart, well, by now my heart had travelled some more and was now lodged somewhere in my nasal cavity. I took in one final breath, got down on one knee and somehow managed to say, “Christine, will you marry me?”

Our lives come to us in moments and just one moment has the power to change everything. She said yes by the way and my life has never been the same. After she said yes, we blissfully drove to Michael on the Thames where Christine and I spent the next few hours around a romantic table for two enjoying each other’s company, some great food and sharing dream-filled conversation over what life

would be like from that moment forward. This past June 23, we celebrated our 11th wedding anniversary and went out for dinner again, sitting around another table for two and leaving our three boys at home with a baby sitter, because you know, one life changing experience often leads to another, and another, and then in our case, one more.

Many of life’s greatest moments happen around a table over shared time and food. For the last number of weekends this summer we’ve spent some time here at North Park talking about the table and the time we spend around it with others. Specifically, we have looked at Jesus’ ministry and how so many meaningful and memorable life changing moments came for people because of time spent at a table with Jesus. We looked at Matthew the tax collector, someone unpopular and un-liked by many, but Jesus accepted an invitation and showed up flooding Matthew’s table with grace and giving him a second chance at a more meaningful life as one of Jesus disciples. A couple of weeks ago, we felt the stress and tension of Martha as she prepared a meal for Jesus and his disciples as her sister Mary chose to just sit with Jesus when he arrived and we learned that a meal doesn’t have to be extravagant to be meaningful. And just last weekend, Shane took us through the feeding of the 5000 – this amazing miracle that turned an entire hillside into a table and 5 small loaves and 2 small fish into a lesson on God’s heart for all people and that no one would be left broken on the ground or forgotten about, but be fed and cared for.

Well today we are going to be looking at Luke 22 and what is called the Last Supper. In a way, the Last Supper is like the life-changing meal that Christine and I shared at Michael on the Thames. It’s not a romantic meal, but it is one that has everything to do with love. God’s love for the world. It is a meal that is planned out and prepared

for. It's an intimate meal, one that is not shared with the masses, but shared by Jesus and his 12 closest of friends. It's a meal that is carefully planned for and anticipated. Each part thought through and full of meaning. It wasn't a romantic meal, but it was a meal that had everything to do with love – God's love for the world. It's a meal that marks a moment in time as Jesus prepares his heart and the hearts of his disciples for his death, burial and resurrection that is soon to come. It's a meal that remembers, celebrates and anticipates a moment that will change absolutely everything for all time.

Luke 22:7-8

7 Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread arrived, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed. 8 Jesus sent Peter and John ahead and said, “Go and prepare the Passover meal, so we can eat it together.”

What we know as the last supper actually finds its origins in a festival, the festival of unleavened bread. This week-long festival all starts with a meal, a purpose filled meal called the Passover meal when appropriately the Passover lamb is sacrificed. Every year the Israelites eat the Passover meal and when they did, it was for a purpose, to not just eat a meal together, but to re-tell a story, the story of God liberating the Israelite people from Egyptian slavery. Essentially Passover turned the table into a classroom, each part of the meal reinforcing one central truth. God is a God who saves!

For those of you who may not be familiar with the story, the Israelites lived as slaves in Egypt for many years, forced as foreigners in the land into hard physical labour and oppressive living. God sends Moses to go to Pharaoh and ask that he let God's people go free. But Pharaoh's heart was hard and economical, he didn't want his workforce to simply leave so he says no! As a result, God sends different plagues on the Egyptians to display his power – but each time Moses returns and asks for freedom for God's people, the Pharaohs heart remains hard and God's people remain in slavery.

The tenth plague was the death of every firstborn. A harsh plague to be sure, only God provides a way out. God is always gracious to provide a way out – this is God's loving way. If they sacrificed a lamb and put the lambs blood over the doorway of their house, they would be spared the plague. They

would be spared the death of their firstborn. That night, death literally passed over the houses of those who had sacrificed a lamb and followed God's way.

Pharaoh did not, and in devastation and grief he sends the Israelites on their way. While Pharaoh is bound in his grief, the Israelites are free, free to go, free to follow God wherever he leads. But God's salvation story does not end there. For Pharaoh's grief turns to anger and he changes his mind. He sends his army out after the Israelites to bring them back. Trapped between the Red Sea that lies ahead of them and the Egyptian army coming from behind, God parts the water and God once again saves his people. This is the reason for the Passover meal. It's an anniversary celebration – a meal that holds deep meaning and is shared intimately at a table with those closest to you, your family and closest friends. It's a meal with a message: remember how God saved us? And then do you remember how he saved us again?

In Luke 22, as Jesus asks Peter and John to go and prepare the Passover meal, there is one important fact to remember. It's not a fact about the past – but a truth about the present. As Jesus prepares to eat the Passover meal with his disciples the Israelites are under Roman rule. They were not free. It wasn't the oppression of the Egyptians, but the occupation of the Romans that the Israelites were now living under. Even still Jesus and his disciples along with other Jews were still sharing a meal and telling the story of how God had saved them, and ultimately looking forward to the day when God would save them again. This is the meal that Jesus is about to share with his disciples. A meal that powerfully and intentionally reminds them of God's saving power. It's a meal that re-tells the story of a God who makes a way when there seems to be no way. And it's a meal that looks not just to the past, but also beyond the current reality and gives hope for what God will do. He will save again!

Luke 22:9

*“Where do you want us to prepare it?”
they asked him.*

I can so relate to this question. It reminds me of trying to help assemble one of my kids toys at Christmas time. You know the one that comes with a disclaimer, “WARNING: some assembly required”. Isn't it the worst when you open the

packaging – the miles and miles of packaging and inside is one small slip of paper with about two assembly steps written out and neither one of them makes any sense. I imagine this is what Peter and John are feeling in this moment. I can almost see it. Peter and John look at each other waiting for more information from Jesus, a bit more to go on, but he doesn't give it. I wonder if they spoke to each other before asking Jesus where he wanted them to prepare the Passover. Ok he said go and prepare the meal. Did he say where? Did you hear him say where? I didn't hear, did you? Did he ask us to do this yesterday and we just forgot?

In 11 years of marriage, Christine and I have gotten to know each other pretty well, and in 11 years of marriage dear Christine still has to remind me of things that I should just know by now. I don't know what it is but sometimes Christine will tell me something that I have absolutely no clue about and no matter how well I try to hide it she always knows. Remember I told you yesterday she'll say.

I wonder if this was what was going on with Peter and John? I mean this was the Passover meal. It was like the Christmas or Easter meal and Jesus says – go and prepare the meal so we can eat it together. Peter and John look at each other – Uhhhhh...did I miss something? Did he tell us to do this before? Did we mess up? After drawing blanks they simply ask Jesus, where do you want us to prepare it?

Luke 22:10-13

10 He replied, "As soon as you enter Jerusalem, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him. At the house he enters, 11 say to the owner, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?' 12 He will take you upstairs to a large room that is already set up. That is where you should prepare our meal." 13 They went off to the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover meal there.

Jesus asks them to go and prepare the Passover meal. It's like the Christmas toy with no details. But then they ask Jesus where they are to prepare it and Jesus then gives them a list of detailed instructions. It's like LEGO. A whole step by step booklet outlining everything from start to finish.

Step 1 – Go to Jerusalem. Step 2 – Find the man carrying a pitcher of water. Step 3 – Follow him. Step 4 – When he enters a house go and ask the owner where the guest room is. Step 5 – Follow him upstairs to a large upper room. And there you have it. Passover room assembly complete. The best part is verse 13. They go off to Jerusalem and they find everything just as Jesus said. These verses remind me that God calls us to live a life of faith. We don't always know God's plan, what God is doing, what God will do and how God will do it. We aren't given all the details up front. God just asks us to go and trust him with the details.

In fact, this is mostly the biblical precedent. Noah is asked to build an Ark in a desert that hasn't seen a drop of rain in a long, long time. Abraham is asked to pack up and go to the land that God will show him. Moses is told to go and free God's people from Egyptian slavery, without a plan. Jesus calls his disciples saying, "come follow me and I will make you fishers of men", with no real understanding of what that means. God doesn't give us a LEGO life, no detailed step by step plan, just an open invitation to something more. More purpose, more meaning, more hope, more love. The details come later and often only in hindsight. The truth is that God calls us to a life of faith and God's plan for us unfolds more and more as we simply follow Jesus. So, let's get to the actual meal.

Luke 22:14-15

14 When the time came, Jesus and the apostles sat down together at the table. 15 Jesus said, "I have been very eager to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins.

Jesus and his disciples sit down together at the table. The Passover meal. And this is where Jesus says something truly remarkable. He expresses how eager he has been to share this meal with his disciples before his suffering begins. You see, Jesus knows the cross is before him. He understands the suffering that is to come and yet he says to his friends, I have been very eager to eat this meal with you. Why? Why would Jesus be excited for this meal? Because he knows that the moment is close at hand – the moment that will change everything. The moment when death will lose its sting, the moment when life will be made new, when light will pierce the darkness, when hope will be restored

and a way of salvation will be given to the whole world once and for all. Sure, He knows about his suffering, but he also knows of his resurrection. He knows that he himself, God in human flesh will become the true Passover lamb. His body will be broken and his blood will be shed and the world will forever know the extent of His power and the depth of His love.

Then he says, don't miss this, that he will not eat this meal again until its meaning is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. Again, his disciples don't get it now. But what Jesus is saying, is that what he is about to do on the cross is going to pave the way to another table. The banquet feast prepared in heaven for those who call upon the name of Jesus. This is why this Passover meal is called the LAST SUPPER. The account of Jesus' last supper with his disciples is told in all four gospels and in the gospel of John it is recorded that Jesus says this to his disciples.

John 14:1-6

"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. 2 There is more than enough room in my Father's home.[a] If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?[b] 3 When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. 4 And you know the way to where I am going." 5 "No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?" 6 Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

Don't you find this similar to Peter and John asking Jesus where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal? And remember, Jesus has a plan. It's all laid out, an upper room already prepared. Here in Johns account we see the disciples are worried and confused and troubled but Jesus says, don't worry, trust in me. There is more than enough room in my father's home and I am going ahead of you to prepare a place for you. All you have to do is trust in me. When we trust and when we follow, we are saved by the blood of the lamb shed on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins – and we are redeemed from a life of brokenness and slavery to sin so that we can come one day to the house of God and sit at

his table and eat and drink in the very presence of the God who made us, who loves us and who gave his life for us.

These verses remind me that there is far more to God's promise than we could ever imagine. We tend to think small seeing only a part of what God is doing, when in reality God is doing so much more.

In Luke 22 we see Jesus and his disciples sharing a Passover meal together, but in reality, so much more is going on. Jesus takes some bread, gives thanks for it, breaks it and shares it with his disciples saying, "this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." He takes some wine and says this cup is the new covenant between God and his people – an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you." There was so much more going on with this meal around that table. So much more than the disciples could ever have imagined.

The Lord's Table has a lot to teach us about the importance and the purpose behind the meals we share with others. Let me just give you a few.

1. We consume more at our tables than mere calories.

In today's world of technology history is at our fingertips, but in biblical times it was on the tip of your tongue. I wonder, do we still speak of God's goodness and God's saving power at our tables? As we gather around tables to eat and share with our family, friends and neighbours do we talk around the table about God's work in our world and in our lives? I'm not just talking bible stories here. I'm thinking more about personal things, things that God has done and is doing in our lives. Like the time God taught me this lesson, or the time God showed me that truth, the time I felt no hope but then found some. When Christine and I go out for our yearly anniversary meal we inevitably take the time to look back. Our conversation is often filled with sentences that start with, "Remember when....we lived in our first house? When we experienced that heartache? Remember when our boys were just babies? When God helped us, comforted us, sustained us, remember when God saved us? It's not that every conversation at the table has to be about God's work in our lives – but is God a part of our table talk? As we consume our

food, are we also consuming the truth that God is a God who saves?

2. God's plan for us unfolds as we follow Jesus.

We may not be able to see clearly how God is at work in our present circumstance or situation. Maybe life for you right now is difficult, a heavy burden and the way forward, the way anywhere is unclear. Perhaps you feel stuck or are full of questions that you have no answers for. I'm sure you've heard this week about the shooting last Sunday evening in Toronto and the ensuing #TorontoStrong campaign. When tragedy strikes, especially in your own backyard these are the moments that shake you. It's a reminder to us of the brokenness of our world. As a church we need to be praying for the victims, for the shooters family, for the community and as followers of Jesus our hearts should break with the brokenness of our world. But what do we do with our brokenness, those difficult, tragic, heart-breaking moments that life inevitably throws at us. We bring those moments to the God who saves. We bring those moments to the table of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Lord's Table reminds us to trust, trust that even though you cannot see it now, your heart can still know it. That God will not fail. That in the face of the devastation and tragedy God is present and loving and has the power to save. What God is calling you to do regardless of life's moment is to trust and follow.

3. There is room at God's table for everyone.

Think with me for a moment about the people who sat around the supper table with Jesus that night. If you read all of Luke 22 you will see that Judas has agreed to betray Jesus and that Peter, as devoted as he is, is going to deny Jesus three times before the break of dawn. And these are just two of the 12 sitting at the table. There is also Thomas the doubter, Matthew the cheating tax collector, some overlooked commoners, mere fisherman from Galilee. Each and every one of them carried a label some deserving, some just living under the weight of the hand life had dealt them. But each of them selected by God to be a part of a team, part of a movement and part of a kingdom that has no end. Here they sit sharing the Passover meal with Jesus at a table in an upper room in Jerusalem. Their labels may describe them, but they do not define

them. Jesus makes room for them at his table and gives them a new life, a new purpose and a new future. Why? Because God is a God who saves!

Our lives come to us in moments. And the amazing thing about life is this: that one moment has the power to change everything. Right now is a moment, perhaps for you it will be a moment that changes everything.

Points to Ponder

Table Talk ~ Luke 22 ~ Salvation

With a friend, your family or in your small group, discuss the following questions.

1. Times shared with Jesus around a table were always intentional in sharing more than just food, and the Last Supper is no exception. What does this teach us about God's heart for hospitality? In what ways can you extend hospitality "beyond the meal"?
2. The Passover meal traditionally turned the "table into a classroom" and was less about what was eaten and more about a story of God's saving power. What kinds of stories are often talked about at your table? What kind of stories can you share with others about God's saving power?
3. When Jesus' disciples entered Jerusalem to prepare the Passover meal, they found everything just as Jesus had said. In the message, it was mentioned that "God's plan unfolds as we follow Christ." Have you found this experience to be true in your own life? What is most difficult for you in accepting this statement?
4. At the Last Supper, Jesus speaks about sharing a meal with his followers in the Kingdom of God. What message does God speak to your heart most as you come to the communion table to "remember Christ"?
5. In this sermon series, we have talked about the fact that many of life's greatest moments happen around a table. Does the Last Supper change the way you think about and approach hospitality? How?