Message: “Thanks In All Things”

SCRIPTURE

Main Text:	Cross References:
Luke 22:1–23	*Exodus 12:1–28* *Exodus 24:3–8* *Jeremiah 31:31–34* *1 Corinthians 10:16–17* *1 Corinthians 11:23–26* *James 1:17* *2 Corinthians 6:8–10*

UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

(This section focuses on understanding what the text means — before jumping to what it means for us.)

Read Luke 22:1–6

Main Idea: The final meal unfolds in the shadow of betrayal and death, yet even human evil cannot derail God’s redemptive purpose.

Commentary:
Luke deliberately begins this scene with darkness gathering around Jesus.

The Festival of Unleavened Bread and Passover recalled Israel's rescue from slavery in Egypt. At the very moment Jerusalem is preparing to celebrate God's historic act of deliverance, the religious authorities are plotting the death of the One through whom God will accomplish an even greater deliverance.

Luke also tells us that Satan possesses Judas. Judas is not an outsider. He is "one of the Twelve"—someone Jesus called, taught, traveled with, and welcomed into close fellowship. His betrayal shows just how near someone can be to the activity of Jesus while still resisting Jesus Himself.

Yet Luke never presents Jesus as helplessly trapped by events. Later, Jesus says that the Son of Man will go "as it has been decreed" (v.22). Scripture holds two truths together: Judas is genuinely responsible for his betrayal, while God's saving purpose is not defeated by it.

That tension runs through the whole meal. Jesus is surrounded by betrayal, hostility, and approaching suffering—but God's redemption is still moving forward.

The cross will not be evil's victory over an unsuspecting Jesus. Jesus is willingly giving Himself.

Think About It:

1. Why is it significant that Luke places the plotting against Jesus alongside the approaching Passover—the celebration of God rescuing Israel?

2. What does Judas being "one of the Twelve" add to the emotional and spiritual weight of this scene?

3. How does Luke hold together both human responsibility for evil and God's sovereign redemptive purpose?

   Takeaway:
   The darkness around Jesus never places God's saving purpose in doubt.

Read Luke 22:7–16

Main Idea: Jesus intentionally gathers His disciples around Israel's story of redemption as He prepares to reveal the greater rescue He is about to accomplish.

Commentary:
Passover reaches back to Exodus 12. Israel had been enslaved in Egypt when God commanded each household to sacrifice a lamb and place its blood on the doorposts. Judgment passed over the homes marked by the blood, and God brought His people out of slavery. Every year Israel returned to that story through a meal.

Passover was not merely history class. By eating the meal, retelling the story, and worshiping together, each generation identified itself as the people rescued by the God of the Exodus.

Now Jesus says: "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." Jesus knows where this night is going, yet He intentionally chooses table fellowship with His disciples.

There is also a future dimension in verse 16. Jesus says He will not eat the Passover again "until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." The meal therefore looks in multiple directions at once:

Backward — to God's rescue from Egypt.

Present — to Jesus and His approaching suffering.
Forward — to the complete fulfillment of God's kingdom.

Jesus is preparing His disciples to understand that the Exodus itself was pointing beyond Egypt toward a deeper liberation that He would accomplish. The original Passover involved deliverance from slavery through the blood of a lamb. Now the Lamb of God, Jesus, is preparing to give Himself.

Think About It:

1. What did Passover teach Israel about who God is and who they were as His rescued people?

2. Why might Jesus choose this particular meal—the meal celebrating Israel's deliverance—to interpret the meaning of His approaching death?

3. How does Jesus' statement about the future kingdom keep this meal from looking only backward?

Takeaway:
The God who rescued Israel from slavery was preparing an even greater rescue through Jesus.

Read Luke 22:17–20

Main Idea: Jesus transforms the Passover meal around His own self-giving sacrifice and gives His Church a sacrament through which we remember, receive, and respond to His grace.

Commentary:
Luke twice says that Jesus "gave thanks." The Greek verb is eucharisteō—the word from which Christians eventually came to call the Lord's Supper the Eucharist, or "thanksgiving." Christian

Communion has gratitude built into its very vocabulary because the Table centers us on the gift we could never provide for ourselves: Jesus giving Himself for us.

But Jesus does much more than thank God for bread and wine. He takes the familiar Passover elements and centers them around Himself:
“This is my body given for you.”
“This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”

The language of covenant reaches deep into Israel’s story. In Exodus 24, Israel’s covenant with God was ratified with sacrificial blood. Hundreds of years later, Jeremiah 31 promised a new covenant in which God would forgive sin, write His law upon His people’s hearts, and bring them into a renewed relationship with Him. Jesus announces that this promised covenant is now being established through His own sacrificial death.

Then He commands: *“Do this in remembrance of me.”* But Christian remembrance is more than occasionally thinking about an event from the past. At the Table, the Church deliberately places Christ’s saving work back at the center of its identity: His body was given for us. His blood was poured out for us. We belong to Him because of grace.

Paul takes this even deeper. In ***1 Corinthians 10:16***, he describes the cup and bread as a participation (koinonia—sharing or communion) in the blood and body of Christ. And in 1 Corinthians 11, the Church both remembers Christ’s death and proclaims it until He comes.

That is why, in the Free Methodist/Wesleyan tradition, Communion is not treated as merely a memorial — it is a *means of grace.*

The bread and cup do not literally become the physical body and blood of Jesus. Yet neither is Communion an empty symbol. Christ is truly present with His people in a spiritual manner, and as we receive the sacrament in faith, God ministers His grace to us—strengthening faith, renewing our dependence upon Christ, and drawing us deeper into the life He has given us.

Communion therefore moves in several directions:
We remember what Christ has done.
We receive His grace in the present.
We participate together in Christ.
We proclaim His saving death.
We anticipate the day He comes again.

The Table is remembrance—but it is more than remembrance. It is an encounter with the grace of the living Christ.

Think About It:

1. How do Exodus 24 and Jeremiah 31 help us understand what Jesus means by “the new covenant in my blood”?

2. Compare Luke 22:19 with 1 Corinthians 10:16–17. Why is biblical Communion more than *simply* thinking back on Jesus’ death?

3. What difference does it make to approach Communion as a means of grace—a place where we come by faith expecting God to work in us—rather than merely as a religious ritual we perform?

Takeaway:
At the Table we don’t only remember grace—we come by faith to receive the grace Christ continues to give.

Read Luke 22:21–23

Main Idea: The grace announced at Jesus' Table is revealed in the very presence of betrayal, reminding us that Christ gives Himself for sinners.

Commentary:
Immediately after Jesus speaks of His body "given for you" and His blood "poured out for you," Luke reminds us that Judas is sitting at the same table.

The contrast is jarring.

This sacred meal is not taking place among people who have everything together. Within hours, Judas will betray Jesus, Peter will deny Him, and the rest of the disciples will largely scatter. Yet Jesus gives the bread and cup before any of them prove themselves faithful.

That is the character of grace. Jesus does not give Himself to people because they have earned a place at His Table. He gives Himself to people who desperately need what only He can provide. At the same time, grace should never be confused with indifference toward sin. Jesus speaks a serious warning concerning Judas. The Table simultaneously announces mercy and calls for response.

Verse 22 also holds together divine sovereignty and human responsibility: *"The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him!"* The cross is God's redemptive plan—and Judas remains responsible for his actions. Even betrayal does not derail salvation. God turns the darkest moment in the story into the means through which forgiveness and new life become possible.

Think About It:

1. Why is it significant that Luke immediately follows Jesus' words about His self-giving sacrifice with the announcement of betrayal?

2. What does the disciples' presence at the Table teach us about the difference between receiving grace and earning grace?

3. How does the Table hold together both God's gracious welcome and His call for us to respond seriously to sin?

   Takeaway:
   We come to the Table because we need grace—not because we have already made ourselves worthy of it.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

Luke 22 gives us an unusual picture of gratitude. Jesus is not giving thanks because everything around Him is easy. *Betrayal is already happening. Suffering is approaching. The cross is coming.* Yet Jesus recognizes the gifts in front of Him, treasures the people around Him, gives thanks to the Father, and points His disciples toward the grace that will ultimately sustain them.

That gives us three challenges for becoming people of genuine gratitude:

1. **DON'T MISS THE MOMENTS.**
   Jesus says in *Luke 22:15: "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."* Jesus knows suffering is coming, but He is still fully present with the people at the table.

   Some of God's greatest gifts to us are not things. They are people. Life moves quickly enough that we can spend so much time thinking

about the next responsibility, problem, goal, or season that we fail to cultivate the relationships God has given us as gifts today.

2. **DON'T OVERLOOK EVERYDAY BLESSINGS.**
   Luke repeatedly tells us Jesus gave thanks for ordinary bread and wine. James 1:17 reminds us: "Every good and perfect gift is from above." God's faithfulness can become so normal that we stop recognizing it.

   Food.
   Shelter.
   Friendship.
   Strength for another day.
   A conversation.
   A moment of peace.

   Gratitude trains us to receive ordinary life as gift rather than entitlement.

3. **WHEN EVERYTHING ELSE CHANGES, JESUS REMAINS OUR GREATEST GIFT.**
   Paul describes himself in 2 Corinthians 6:10 as: *"sorrowful, yet always rejoicing… having nothing, and yet possessing everything."*

   Christian gratitude does not require pretending suffering is easy. We can grieve and still have hope. We can hurt and still know we are Loved. We can lose things we deeply value and still possess the One treasure that suffering cannot take from us.

   And this is where Communion becomes especially important. Jesus gave His Church a tangible practice that continually brings us back to the Gospel: His body — given for us. His blood — poured out for us. When we come to the Table, we do more than remember information about Jesus.

We come in faith to the living Christ. We receive again the grace He freely gives, allow Him to strengthen our faith, and remember that our deepest hope rests not in our circumstances but in Him.

Reflection Questions:

1. Who has God placed around your “table”—literally or figuratively—that you have begun taking for granted? What would being genuinely present with them look like this week?

2. What has become so normal in your life that you have stopped thanking God for it? What everyday evidence of His goodness can you intentionally notice today?

3. When circumstances are difficult, what would it look like to come to Communion expecting Christ not merely to remind you of grace, but to meet you and strengthen you through grace?

LIVING IT OUT

1. BEGIN PRACTICING “PRESENCE.” Choose one relationship this week where you will intentionally slow down. Put the phone away. Listen. Enjoy the person. Tell them why you are thankful for them.

2. PRACTICE EVERYDAY THANKSGIVING. Each day, identify something ordinary that reveals God’s goodness. Don't merely say:
“I'm thankful for this.” Turn gratitude toward its source: “God, thank You for this.” *Gratitude becomes worship when the gift leads us back to the Giver.*

3. COME TO THE TABLE EXPECTING GRACE.

The next time you receive Communion, resist the temptation to let familiarity turn it into routine. **Remember:** Christ gave Himself for you. **Receive:** Come in faith, open to the gracious work of the Holy Spirit. Give thanks: Jesus remains your greatest gift. And **look forward:** The One whose death we proclaim is coming again.

For LifeGroups

ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER

Share —

- What detail in Luke 22 helped you see the Last Supper differently?
- Why do you think Jesus chose Passover as the setting for giving His followers Communion?
- What everyday blessing have you recently realized you were taking for granted?
- Where is it difficult for you to practice gratitude right now?
- How does viewing Communion as a means of grace change the way you approach the Lord's Table?
- What part of Christ's grace do you especially need to receive and trust in this season?

Pray Together —

Pray that God would:

- Slow you down enough to recognize His goodness.
- Help you treasure the people He has placed in your life.
- Protect gratitude from becoming entitlement.
- Give you eyes to notice His everyday provision.
- Meet those who are grieving or walking through difficult circumstances.
- Root your gratitude more deeply in Jesus than in changing circumstances.

- Keep the cross at the center of your faith.
- Make Communion a genuine means of grace through which your faith is strengthened.
- Deepen your unity with Christ and with one another at His Table.
- Fill you with gratitude for the body given and blood poured out for you.
- Keep you looking forward in hope to Christ's coming kingdom.

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

DON'T MISS THE MOMENTS.
DON'T OVERLOOK THE EVERYDAY BLESSINGS.
REMEMBER YOUR GREATEST GIFT: JESUS.