



Date: 09-07-2025

Sermon: Communion

Text: John 6:22-59 NLT

John 6:22-59 (NLT)

22 The next day the crowd that had stayed on the far shore saw that the disciples had taken the only boat, and they realized Jesus had not gone with them. 23 Several boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the Lord had blessed the bread and the people had eaten. 24 So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went across to Capernaum to look for him. 25 They found him on the other side of the lake and asked, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" 26 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. 27 But don't be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval." 28 They replied, "We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do?" 29 Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent." 30 They answered, "Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do? 31 After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32 Jesus

said, "I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. 33 The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 "Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day." 35 Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. 36 But you haven't believed in me even though you have seen me. 37 However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them. 38 For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will. 39 And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. 40 For it is my Father's will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day." 41 Then the people began to murmur in disagreement because he had said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42 They said, "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and mother. How can he say, 'I came down from heaven'?" 43 But Jesus replied, "Stop complaining about what I said. 44 For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up. 45 As it is written in the Scriptures, 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. 46 (Not that anyone has ever seen the Father; only I, who was sent from God, have seen him.) 47 "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life. 48 Yes, I am the bread of life! 49 Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died. 50 Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh." 52 Then the people began arguing with each other about what he meant. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they asked. 53 So Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. 54 But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day. 55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. 56 Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. 57 I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. 58 I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die as your ancestors did (even though they ate the manna) but will live forever." 59 He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

1) Remember: Jesus is the true bread from heaven

Text: John 6:26–35

2) Receive: Trust His once-for-all sacrifice

Text: John 6:51–53

3) Remain: Be nourished in Him with resurrection hope

Text: John 6:54–58

Notes:

Prayer

CONFESSION

Personal:

1 Corinthians 11:27-29 (NLT)

27 So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup. 29 For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself.

Corporate:

Daniel 9:4-5 (NLT)

4 I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: “O Lord, you are a great and awesome God! You always fulfill your covenant and keep your promises of unfailing love to those who love you and obey your commands. 5 But we have sinned and done wrong. We have rebelled against you and scorned your commands and regulations.

PRAISE**1 Peter 1:3 (NLT)**

3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation,

PETITION**Psalms 86:6-7 (NLT)**

6 Listen closely to my prayer, O LORD; hear my urgent cry. 7 I will call to you whenever I’m in trouble, and you will answer me.

Notes:

Communion**1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (NLT)**

23 For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread 24 and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me.” 25 In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me

as often as you drink it.” 26 For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again.

LORD’S SUPPER

A meal celebrated in honor of Jesus Christ commemorating his last meal with his disciples. In biblical theology Lord’s Supper is preferable to other synonyms: “communion” is a questionable translation of 1 Cor. 10:16, and “eucharist” does not appear as a name for this rite in the NT. In historical theology the eucharist is generally understood to refer to both the consecratory prayers and the rite of eating “the bread” and drinking “the cup,” practiced separate and apart from a regular meal in the Church. This practice can be dated as early as the 2nd century.

The term (Gk. *kyriakós*, “belonging to the Lord”) occurs only once in the NT (1 Cor. 11:20). The early Christian communities assembled in houses to share the main meal of the day (Gk. *deípnōn*, which occurred in the Greco-Roman world later in the day) in honor of the risen Lord. The celebration of a meal in honor of Jesus Christ on the Lord’s day (Rev. 1:10, the first day of the week on Jewish reckoning; cf. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2) is hallowed in Christian tradition (cf. Luke 24:1, 13, 29, the appearance of the risen Jesus to his disciples after his crucifixion). The term “love-feast” (Gk. *agápē*) was also used in this connection (Jude 12; and some manuscripts of 2 Pet. 2:13).

Paul

1 Cor. 11:17–34

The instructions of Paul to the church at Corinth contain the earliest solid historical information about the Lord’s Supper. 1 Cor. 11:17–34 addresses the problem of disunity that threatened to wreck a house church in Corinth. According to v. 21, at the time of the main meal some remained hungry while others had more than enough and even drank to excess. Apparently each one brought his or her own food, and the rich had conspicuously more than the poor. Those who did not have enough were shamed and marginalized (v. 22).

Paul interprets this as an indicator of a spiritual blight that had fallen upon the church (vv. 27–32). He urges the church to welcome and treat one another hospitably at the Lord’s meal (v. 33). To substantiate his argument, Paul rehearses the apostolic tradition he received about the Lord’s Supper (vv. 23b–26). That the meal had its origin on the night Jesus was betrayed

(v. 23) agrees with the Synoptic accounts of what took place in the upper room. Paul apparently understands Jesus' taking bread and the words "This is my body on behalf of you" (v. 24) as occurring at the beginning of the meal. The reference can hardly be to anything other than Jesus' offering of his life (body) on the Cross. The invitation to participate ("Do this in my remembrance") was an invitation to renew sharing in the benefits of salvation accomplished through this once-and-for-all offering. Likewise, when the cup was taken (v. 25) at the end of the meal the same principle applied. Paul's point was that if all at the table were able to receive a portion of gifts of this magnitude, it was unthinkable that all of the participants would not gladly share with their fellow believers in the food and hospitality of the meal.

Indeed, since the meal was not only an offer to reclaim the benefits of salvation under the Lordship of Christ but an anticipation of participation in the future messianic banquet at the Lord's coming, it could be seen as a proclamation of the Corinthians' faith (v. 26). Clearly then, the failure to welcome and show care for fellow believers indicated some were participating unworthily, and in so doing were misconstruing and defaming the purpose of Christ's sacrifice which they supposedly intended to commemorate (vv. 27, 29).

1 Cor. 10:14–22

Paul also addresses the incompatibility of Christian participation in meals in honor of the Lord Jesus and those dedicated to other lords. Paul did not believe that the pagan gods had any real existence, but he did hold that behind them stood demonic forces with real power (1 Cor. 10:19–21). Just as spiritual food and drink did not protect the wilderness generation (vv. 1–13), neither would participation in the Lord's Supper provide a wall of protection against the demonic powers operative at meals dedicated to pagan gods. Indeed, it was incompatible with the Christian confession to eat at the two tables; the two were mutually exclusive (v. 21).

In this context, Paul gives specific teaching with reference to the claim that the Lord Jesus made upon believers (vv. 16–17). Paul uses a fragment of tradition regarding the cup of blessing that probably derived from the actual meal on the night Jesus was betrayed (v. 16; cf. Luke 22:20). This is terminology used at the Passover to denote a final cup taken at the end of the meal. Paul claims that the cup of blessing is a participation (*koinōnía*) in the blood of Christ, and the bread in the body. Some, following analogies in Greco-Roman cultic activities, understand Paul as claiming that the believer is actually united with the risen Christ, who is thought to be present at the

meal. More likely the reference is only to participation in benefits of salvation won through the death (blood/body) of Christ.

Alluding to the one loaf which is taken and eaten by many (1 Cor. 10:17), Paul sees in this common action an expression on the part of all the participants of the visible oneness of the Church which, as an extension of Jesus' earthly ministry, now constitutes his presence in the world. Paul here anticipates 1 Cor. 12, where again he calls for unity within the Church under the general metaphor of a body.

Matthew and Mark

A second major tradition involves the Synoptic accounts of Matt. 26:17–30; Mark 14:12–26. Scholars have been unsuccessful in determining the priority of either account. The few variants may be explained mainly on either authorial style or differing liturgical practices in the communities that nourished these Gospels.

Both Matthew and Mark attest that the Supper was inaugurated at a Passover meal (cf. Luke 22:7–9). The reference to the cup (of blessing) after supper indicates that this was the unanimous view in the early Church (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). The different chronology of the Johannine Passion account (Jesus is killed while the paschal lambs were being slain; John 13:1; 18:28; 19:14, 31) suggests that John and the Synoptics reflect dependence upon different Jewish calendars or practices. John's account is also governed by a theological agenda (cf. John 1:29).

This tradition is also more developed liturgically than that in 1 Cor. 11:24–26. The account of the tradition highlights only such features of the meal that would be most useful to a later community that observed the Supper. Although such a community could not deny its historical origin in the time of the Passover festivities, it clearly differentiated it enough to be a significant new reality in the history of salvation.

A major difference from the Pauline tradition is that the bread and cup sayings (reflecting developing Christian practice) are brought close together, presumably at the end of the meal. The words of institution for the bread (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22) are the same as in 1 Cor. 11:24. Paul adds Gk. *hypér*, "on behalf of you," a version of which Matt. 26:28; Mark 13:24 connect to the cup (and also Isa. 53:12). Clearly, in both the Pauline and Matthean/Markan traditions Jesus' death is interpreted as something done on behalf of others (i.e., expiatory). This is underscored by Matthew's emphasis in 26:28 that it is "for the forgiveness of sins." As with the Pauline account—albeit in a more liturgical accent—the idea that the Supper is an

anticipation of the banquet at the end of the age is stressed in both Matthew (26:29) and Mark (14:25).

Luke

The Lukan account seems to connect two major units (Luke 22:14–18, 19–20). The first highlights the fact that Jesus is gathering with his disciples for a final banquet together, perhaps representing the culminating act of earlier times when Jesus was at table (Luke 7:36–50; 11:37–52; 14:7–24). It also functions strongly as an anticipation of meals in the kingdom of God, fulfilled to some degree in the post-Resurrection meals with the disciples (Luke 24:30–35, 41–43).

Thus, Luke has understood the Passover meal (Luke 22:7–13) to be “a banquet meal,” a glorious precursor of life in the kingdom of God. The cup, most likely the *Qiddûš* or first cup giving thanks for the wine, taken before the Passover meal itself, is incorporated into the banquet scene (Luke 22:7–18).

This enables Luke to follow the basic pattern of incorporating the bread and cup saying in the standard order of early Christian tradition (Luke 22:19–20). However, Luke not only uses elements of the other Synoptic tradition, but also incorporates elements of the Pauline tradition, or one similar to it. Thus, Luke and Paul agree that the bread is taken at the beginning of the meal and the cup at the end (Luke 22:20). Luke also uses the *hypér* saying with the body and the call to “Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24–25).

The fact that an important segment of the ancient textual tradition (Western) omits Luke 22:19b–20 has been endlessly debated. The matter is extremely technical, and for the purposes of this article these verses have been accepted as part of the genuine text.

Other Traditions

In John 6:53–58, at the end of the bread of life discourse, Jesus speaks of “eating his flesh” and “drinking his blood.” Although this may echo the Johannine understanding of the meaning of the Lord’s Supper, the text may also reflect the Johannine emphasis of calling one to participate in the outcome of the incarnate life of Christ in order to have eternal life. One cannot presume any additional information here on the early Christian understanding of the Lord’s Supper (likewise in Heb. 6:4; 13:10).

The references to meals in Acts (e.g., 2:42, 46; 27:35, with the possible exception of 20:7, 11) reflect Luke's emphasis on the continuation of the practice of disciples sharing meals together. The term "breaking of bread" here refers to a common practice at the commencement of the meal. It is synecdochical of an ordinary meal.

Conclusion

On the last day before the Crucifixion Jesus spent an extended time in a meal with his disciples. The details of what happened there have been susceptible to various interpretations throughout history; but no one can deny that the reality of these events have left an indelible impression upon the consciousness of the Church. Every first day since then people somewhere have gathered around a table in Jesus' name. The traditions examined here indicate that central to these observances of the Lord's meal is a projection of the mind of believers both into the past and into the future. By returning to the past the believer recalls and reclaims a share in the benefits of Christ's death. Simultaneously, life with the risen Lord in the fully realized kingdom of God is anticipated in the future.

Bibliography. X. Léon-Dufour, *Sharing the Eucharistic Bread* (New York, 1984); J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (Philadelphia, 1990); I. H. Marshall, *Last Supper and Lord's Supper* (Grand Rapids, 1981); B. F. Meyer, ed., *One Loaf, One Cup* (Macon, 1993).

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¹ Allan J. McNicol, "[Lord's Supper](#)," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 822–824.