

## Dinner With Jesus: Jesus Matthew 26:17-30

Our current series is “Dinner with Jesus.” What would it be like to have dinner with Jesus? Be careful. In all of the stories that we are studying in this series, Jesus reveals much about the heart of the host. Today, will be no different.

This morning, we are looking at the most famous dinner in history, “The Last Supper.” We have four accounts of the Lord’s supper in the New Testament. It’s one of the few events that all four gospel writers included. That’s a big underline and highlight.

DaVinci’s “Last Supper” captures attention people today. He pioneered a new technique in painting which unfortunately caused it to fade before its time. What a technically challenging work of art and something that it imprinted onto our brain. Scholars say that the meal was probably served reclining on the elbow. Other scholars said given the socio-economic status of disciples, it would have while special, more common. Maybe sitting cross legged on the floor (which makes some sense with all the talk of foot washing.) Nonetheless, a powerful image.

The symbols of the Lord’s Supper are some of the most powerful symbols associated with our faith, something that we will reenact even today.

Let’s look at the background. The events in this account occur Thursday after sundown. Later this evening, Jesus will go to the Garden of Gethsemane. There he will be arrested. Have a sham trial, and be placed on the cross on Friday morning. He will die on that cross and be placed in the tomb. On Sunday, Jesus rises from the dead on Easter Sunday. But let’s not get too far ahead.

**Matthew 26:17–30 (NIV84) <sup>17</sup> On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?”**

Here is the setup for this meal. The Festival of Unleavened Bread was one of the three festivals where Jewish families were to try to make it to Jerusalem and observe the festival in the city. The Passover Meal was the beginning of the festival.

**<sup>18</sup> He replied, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’ ” <sup>19</sup> So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.**

Jesus sends his advance team to prepare the Passover meal which will be celebrated in the Upper Room.

The Passover meal was a festival begun during the time of Moses. It had been celebrated annually for over 1,400 years before this Moment in Jesus' life. It was a celebration that to remind the people that they were slaved in Egypt for 400 years. And that following the ten plagues, and most especially the final plague—the death of the firstborn, they were to leave Egypt now! Slavery was over. The Passover meal was celebrated with Unleavened bread, because the Hebrew slaves in Egypt didn't have time to wait for the yeast to rise in the bread when the call came to leave.

Meal rituals are important. Candles on the table signify something special. Grandmother's dishes stir up family stories. I knew that I might be "in" with Sarah's family when they brought out the checkered birthday tablecloth, ratted and threadbare in place, but still the family tablecloth.

He then takes a turn on the tradition of the meal. He says that this 1500-year-old meal was no longer only about the Exodus from slavery in Egypt, but that it would be about Jesus and the freedom from slavery to sin.

<sup>26</sup> While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

<sup>27</sup> Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you."

Here Jesus gives us the formula for celebrating this Lord's Supper then and now. It's the eating of bread, which points to the pain and suffering on the cross. He shares with them the drinking of the cup which symbolizes the blood shed on the cross which provides for the forgiveness of sins. When we celebrate the Lord's supper today, we celebrate it in much the same way, with bread and with the fruit of the grape vine.

Can I focus on verse 28 for a second because what it says is so, so important. It gives us the HEADLINE and then the application.

<sup>28</sup> This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus says that it is this blood that is about to be shed on the cross is the entry into a New Covenant which all God's people following this moment will enter into.

Can I tell you for a moment what your relationship with Jesus means (or what entering into a relationship with Jesus means). It means covenant. It means relationship. It means

that Jesus had obliged himself for us and we are obliged to him. He calls it a New Covenant, but the Old Testament Covenants pale in comparison with this. They were loving acts of God, ultimately all of the Old Testament is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. When we are a Christians

Three truths about being in the New Covenant (Michael Green's commentary on Matthew is very helpful on this.)

1) God moves to charge our hearts. No longer do we worship God by the sacrificing of animals in an altar in Jerusalem like in the Old Testament. God works on us at the heart level.

Isn't it hard to change. We really like our sin.

In his book *Confessions*, Augustine tells a story from when he was a teenager.

One night he and a group of friends passed a neighbor's pear tree. The pears weren't even very good, but they climbed the tree and **stole a huge pile of them anyway**. Afterward they barely ate them — they mostly threw them to pigs.

Later Augustine reflected on the moment and realized something unsettling:

He didn't steal the pears because he was hungry.

He didn't steal them because they were valuable.

He stole them simply **because he loved doing what was wrong**.

That realization haunted him. He wrote: "I loved my own undoing. I loved my sin."

The Old Testament showed that more rules after rules won't change our hearts. Do you want hart changed? Haven't you felt that tug, "That's not you anymore." Do you want to be different.

2) God deals with us personally. Personal, opposed to mediation by a priest. You and I don't have to have an intermediary or a priest or a pastor between us and God. Jesus is our high priest. God wants to have a relationship with you personally.

Spurgeon once told a story about a **poor woman praying in a church alone**. Someone told her she should ask a pastor to pray for her.

Spurgeon responded:

"Why should she ask a servant when she has the ear of the King?"

I have gotten to the point when I can open my mind up to a relationship with God. It's not talk radio, but it's real and it's two-way.

3) In the New Covenant, we experience actual forgiveness of sins, In the OT, the sacrificial system technically didn't forgive sins, it rolled them back until another Day of Atonement.

A pastor once explained the difference between the Old Covenant and the gospel like this:

Imagine a man with a crushing debt.

Under the old system, every year someone would temporarily **delay the debt collector**.

But the debt never disappeared.

Then one day someone arrives and **pays the entire debt in full**.

Not only that — the creditor adopts the debtor into his family.

If you are a Christian stuck in sin or full of guilt, you can be free!

You are free from your sins. You can be free from your sins. We don't have to wallow in the guilt and shame of our past sins. They are forgiven in Jesus.

The lens through which we are looking at "Dinners with Jesus" is the lens of what Jesus reveals about the heart of the host. **If you look at this dinner, Jesus is the host. What does this meal reveal about Jesus? That He is ready. That He is willing to pay the price for the forgiveness of sins.** We talked about the most famous meal in history. Maybe today as you take this meal, it can be a turning point for you. Jesus has revealed his heart. He has revealed the price he was willing to pay for us to be in relationship with him.

Dinner with Jesus is waiting, will you answer the invitation.

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