



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Mark 14: 22-25

Mark

"The First Lord's Supper"

TRANSCRIPT

Well, our passage this morning is Mark chapter 14. We are looking at verses 22 through 25. This is a good passage in preparation for our meeting tonight where we celebrate the Lord's supper, because this is where it was instituted. Mark 14, beginning with verse 22, we read:

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." And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. 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."

May the Lord bless this reading of His word and bless our time of study in it together. Shall we pray?

[Prayer] Gracious heavenly Father, we do thank You for the great privilege that we have to come together and to study the Scriptures. And particularly, as we consider this particular passage in which our Lord and Your Son established the Lord's supper, that institution that reminds us of what He has done on our behalf and what we have in Him. The privileges of the New Covenant that He has established. We praise You and thank You for that great work of grace and mercy that You have performed for us in the cross at great cost to Yourself. The infinite cost of Your Son's life and the shedding of His blood. We pray that as we consider the things in our

passage this morning that You would open our hearts to receive them, that You would direct us in our understanding and guide us in that, that we might not only understand the meaning of the passage, that we would have an appreciation for it, that we would have a love for the truth that is present there, and that it would have its good influence on our hearts and our lives as we go out of this place into the world to live as witnesses for You.

One of the great incentives toward living a godly life, incentives for putting our lives on the line, so to speak, is realizing what Your Son did for us. He laid down His life for us. And what He has obtained for us, the immeasurable grace of God, and we thank You for that, and pray that our time together in this brief hour would be a time well-spent, a time in which we come to appreciate even more good work that Your Son did for sinners who did not deserve it.

Father, we pray for ourselves in that way and for our spiritual condition. We are a needy people, and we pray that You'd strengthen us spiritually. We pray for the lessons that have been taught, that they would have their good effect, and that the seeds that have been sown in the hearts of our children and in our own hearts from the lessons that were delivered by the various Sunday school teachers would take root and bear fruit in our lives. We thank You for their ministry in our midst. Thank You for the secretaries and those who work in terms of maintenance in this church, and we thank You for the deacons and for the elders. We pray for all of these individuals who serve You, that You would bless them richly and bless the work that they have performed, and may they see the fruit of their labor and gain great encouragement from it.

We pray, Lord, for our physical needs. You instruct us to do that, to pray for our daily bread, which is a reminder that everything that we have physically, from day to day, every moment of our life comes from You. It's something we take for granted. The health that we have to earn a living is a gift of Yours, and we pray that You'd continue to give us health and give us industry and energy, that we might do that which would earn a living for our families. Make provision for us. We thank You for the abundance that You give us. We pray for those who are in need in that way, and pray that You'd make supply for them and bless them, encourage them. We pray for the sick. We pray that You'd give encouragement and healing to them.

And we pray for our nation and its leaders, and pray that You would give wisdom and understanding. Bless this land, Father. may the Spirit of God move across this land and open hearts to the truth, to the knowledge of sin and the need of a Savior. And may they turn to Christ. May we be used in that way, this week. Prepare our hearts now as we look to Your word. Prepare our hearts with the singing of this final hymn, and may we be ready for the truth of Your text. Teach us with it. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] One of the questions that has fascinated people all through the history of the church is the question: what did Jesus look like? I'm sure that all of you have at one time or another asked yourself that question or wondered it in your own mind. What did He look like? Was He tall? Was He short? What was the length of His hair, the color of His eyes, the color of His skin? Did He have a rugged appearance? What did He look like?

The evidence that that has been a question that men have wondered about down through the ages is obvious from the evidence that is seen in museums. If you ever go into museums, you can't miss portraits of Jesus. All through the history of the church, the whole history of art. It has been consumed with this idea of His appearance. And yet, as you look at the portraits that are made of Him, they're all different, all interpreted according to the culture of the artist or the spirit of the age in which they were produced. Pictures of Jesus made during the Dark Ages tend to present Him as a man who was pale and somber, in contrast to modern pictures of our Lord that picture Him very much like a quarterback for the Cowboys. He's handsome. He' s strong, and He's usually smiling. We don't like the idea of Him not being a smiling, happy Savior. And so, He's usually presented in those ways, and in a variety of ways.

And yet, the reality is: we don't know what He looked like. The Lord left us without an authentic portrait of Himself, and with good reason. You can just imagine what would have happened, had the Lord left us with a portrait of Himself. It would have quickly become an icon. Men, women would have made an annual pilgrimage to that place, a cult would have been developed around it, and men and women would have begun to worship that image of our Lord. In fact, His appearance would have then become something of a touchstone of what physical appearance ought to be.

Truly, a spiritual man would be a tall man or a short man depending on what he was. The length of one's nose might measure the spirituality of a person in some way. And so, it was with great divine wisdom that God kept us ignorant of our Lord's earthly appearance.

And yet, we're not altogether without a picture of Jesus. The night that He established the Lord's supper, during the Passover meal, He gave us a kind of portrait of Himself so that whenever we take it, we are looking at Him as our Savior. That was the reason that He established the Lord's supper. It was instituted in order that the disciples would remember Him. In fact, in Luke's account of this in Luke 22, He says, "This do in remembrance of Me." When you take the Lord's supper, you are remembering Him. There is an image that comes before your mind as you take the elements of that supper. And it presents Him as our Savior. It presents Him in that way and reminds us of who He is, and what He has done, and the significance of His death.

Now, this ceremony of the Lord's supper was instituted during the Passover. And so, it has its roots in that ceremony. It has its roots in the Passover. In fact, the celebration of the Lord's supper draws its meaning in many ways from the Passover. We come into the middle of that Passover meal with verse 22 when we read: "While they were eating." The disciples were all reclining on couches around the table. And there, the Lord begins to instruct them on the significance of the bread and the wine of that Passover meal.

That's characteristic of the Passover. It was essentially instructive. Of course, it was a meal, and there was a great deal of joy and fellowship that accompanied that. But it was not principally for the purpose of satisfying their hunger; it was principally for the purpose of instructing them, of bringing to their mind the great grace that God had shown them and extended to them in the redemption of the nation from Egypt.

In order to instruct them in that and recall those great events to their memory, it was a ceremony that followed a procedure of several stages. It began with a prayer of thanksgiving by the head of the household. And in this case, it would've been our Lord who began with prayer. And then, was followed by the drinking of the first of four cups of wine, which were drunk during that meal. The next stage was the eating of the bitter herbs, which were a reminder to Israel of the bitterness of the slavery, out of which they had been delivered.

And so, they reflected back upon that condition out of which they had been redeemed by the Lord God, of course, creating within them a sense of great devotion and thanksgiving for what He had done.

Then, one of the sons would ask his father the question: "Why is this night distinguished from all other nights?" That would be the opportunity for the father to then give something of a sermon or a homily on the exodus from Egypt and what God had done for His people, or perhaps to simply open up the scroll and read from Exodus and the great events of that deliverance.

Then, they would sing the first part of the Hallel psalms, psalms of praise. The first two is what they would sing at that point, Psalms 113 and 114. Then they'd wash their hands and they'd drink the second cup of wine. And following this, they would eat the lamb and the unleavened bread. And the lamb would remind them of the protection that the blood of that lamb had given them when it had been put upon the doors of all of the houses of the Israelites as the angel of death passed through Egypt, slaying the firstborn of all of those households without the blood of the lamb on it. They would eat the unleavened bread as a reminder of the haste with which they left Egypt on that night.

The meal would then continue with each person eating as much as he or she liked. After which, they drank the third cup of wine. And then the feast would conclude with the singing of the last part of the Hallel psalms, Psalms 115 through 118 and the drinking of that fourth cup of wine.

It would've been in much this fashion that the Lord and His disciples celebrated the Passover, but with a significant change. It was probably during the main part of the meal when they were eating the lamb and eating the unleavened bread that as William Hendriksen says, "The Lord took the unleavened bread and the Passover passes over into the Lord's supper." That's when the Lord instituted a new sacrament, or a new celebration that replaced the old.

Now, it replaced the old, but there is a significant connection between the two. They are linked together. The Passover was a picture of Christ. It looked forward to Him. It looked forward to His death. The slaughter of the Passover lamb and Israel's deliverance from Egypt looked forward to what our Lord would accomplish upon the cross for His people. And when in a few short hours from that time, He went to the cross and He died upon the cross, the Passover would have reached its fulfillment

and served its purpose. That's why we speak of this as the Last Passover. It reached its fulfillment in Him when He died on the cross.

So, there is a link between these two celebrations. And what was essential in the Passover was carried over into the Lord's supper. Both look at the Lord and His death. The one looked forward to Him in a kind of prophecy, a typology. The other, that which we celebrate looks back. But they both converge at the cross of Christ, and the redemption that He paid for us both point to Him as the all-sufficient Savior, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

The Lord will now explain all of that to the disciples when He takes the bread in His hand, blesses it, breaks it, gives it to all of His disciples and says, "Take it. This is My body." Now, when He said that, He broke with custom and He introduced something entirely new. He said, in effect, "All of this that we have been partaking of, all of this that we have been celebrating, speaks of Me. I am the Passover. This is My body."

Now, that statement, "This is My body," calls for some comment because it's very significant to the meaning of the passage that we're looking at, very significant to the meaning of the Passover, and it has very great significance historically as the basis for a great deal of doctrine and a great deal of dispute and debate that has taken place down through the history of the church.

The Roman Catholic church says, you probably know, bases its doctrine of transubstantiation on this text of Scripture. They believe that Christ, in blessing the host and blessing the wine, and doing that through the priest, transforms the bread and the wine into the body of Christ and the blood of Christ. Now, it maintains its appearance to the sense as bread and wine. But in reality, it has been transformed into the literal body and blood of Christ.

There are a number of problems with that. We're not going to cover them, but it has a number of problems. Not the least of which is it ignores the obvious problem that the Lord was holding the bread in His hands. So, it couldn't have been His body, because His body was holding it. There's obviously a distinction between His body and the bread. Yet, they don't make that distinction. They don't recognize that distinction.

The Council of Trent went on to state that anyone who did not believe that that was the actual body and blood of Christ is an anathema. That is, they are accursed.

Protestants, of course, don't believe that. But even among them, there have been some sharp disagreements and very significant ones. The most famous is that which occurred between the great German reformer Martin Luther and his contemporary, the Swiss reformer from Zurich, Huldrych Zwingli.

Luther took the Lord's statement literally and he developed from it the doctrine of consubstantiation. he didn't believe that the bread and wine were transformed literally into the body and blood of Christ, but he did believe that the body and blood of Christ were literally with, or in and around, the bread and the wine.

Zwingli rejected that. He took the Lord's words figuratively, and that's the source of the debate between them.

You may know the story. They met in a castle in Marburg, Germany on October of 1529. And they did so to establish unity in the Reformation. Now, they needed to establish unity because they were not united. They had a debate going on through the books that they'd been writing for some time. They were not particularly friendly with one another, but there were some conditions in Europe at that time that made it very important that they unify because of the Reformation in Germany and the Reformation in Switzerland by a common enemy: Charles the V, the Catholic emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and his army.

And so, they had a common enemy, and they needed to unite against this enemy, and that's what they sought to do at this meeting in Germany. Luther didn't want to come, but he was persuaded to do so. He and a number of people were there, and they all agreed on 14 of the 15 propositions that would establish unity. The one sticking point, the one point that they could not agree on was the nature of the Lord's supper and how the Lord was present during that ceremony.

Zwingli believed that the Lord's supper was a memorial, that it was a remembrance, and that the words, "This is My body," meant this signifies, or this represents My body. And he argued his position very persuasively. He pointed out, first of all, that the Lord's body is in heaven. That's where it's located. And because it's a physical body, it's there, and it can't be there and here at the same time. Then he argued from Scripture, and many of the Scriptures that you're familiar with, to show that the Lord's words were characteristic of statements that He made elsewhere, which are obviously figurative. For example, He said, "I am the door." We don't take that literally. Luther didn't take that literally. He said, "I am the way." Well, nobody

thinks that He means He's literally a road. He says, "I am the vine." John identifies Him as the "Lamb of God."

All of these, and we could multiply the examples, are illustrations of the Lord's terminology which are understood figuratively, not literally. But, Luther, I guess in his characteristic way, was unyielding on his point and was adamant about it. He took a piece of chalk and he wrote upon the table around which they were all sitting and debating the Latin words, "This is My body." That was his text, and he would not give any ground on that point, so that they never came to terms on that. And as a result, at the end of three days, Zwingli approached Luther with tears in his eyes. He held out his hand as a gesture of unity and brotherhood, and Luther declined it, saying, "Yours is a different Spirit from ours."

It's a sad moment in the Reformation, and in fact one that had some very tragic consequences. Zwingli was certainly closer to the truth than Luther. But one thing that you have to say for Luther is that while he was wrong in his interpretation, he was right in his devotion. He was a man devoted to the Lord's supper, and a man who held it with great reverence and awe. I think that's something that we sometimes fail in our own spiritual lives. We can treat it with a little bit of indifference.

As you know, we celebrate it every Sunday night at Believer's Chapel. We do so in obedience to the command that the Lord gave us. "This do in remembrance of Me." And yet, the frequency of it can sometimes become a cause of indifference, and that's a terrible thing. We need to have the spirit of Luther when we take the Lord's supper, that this is something that is very important, very significant. He saw that.

Nevertheless, the meaning of our Lord's words is: this signifies My body. And by saying that, He was telling His disciples that the bread pictured Him. Pictured Him in a number of ways. First of all, it's a physical thing. And so, it pictures that He is a physical person. He had a genuine body, a genuine human nature. But His human nature was without sin, and that's what's pictured in the unleavened bread.

As you are probably aware, throughout the Bible, the word "leaven" is a word that refers to sin. It's used as a picture of sin almost always, perhaps always. It may be the case in every situation, that "leaven" is a picture of sin. And yet, our Lord's unleavened. He's pictured in that unleavened bread because He had no sin. He was sinless. And in breaking that bread, He was signifying that His body would be offered up for them. It would be broken for them on the cross.

And by giving it to them, He signified two things, two very important things, I think. First is that He took the initiative in their salvation. They didn't come to Him and break the bread themselves. He broke it for them. He gave it to them, and they received it. He takes the initiative in our salvation. John would later write in 1 John 4: "We love because He first loved us."

God always takes the initiative in salvation. He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. And what He's saying there is: He will continue to be with you. He will perfect it. He will never abandon you, because He's always with us, and that's what's signified also in the giving of bread, because they were all given this bread signifying that He's always with us. And when we celebrate the Lord's supper, we all take the bread, signifying that He is with us completely and fully.

He is not with the man or the woman who have been Christians for 50 years more than He is with the child who's been a Christian for 5 days, for 5 minutes. He's with us all equally and fully, and He's always with us. That's signified in the bread, which He broke for them.

Following this, He took the cup, which is the third cup of wine in this ceremony, the cup that was drunk after the meal was eaten. By this time, Judas had left the room and it was only the faithful eleven that were with the Lord when He gave thanks for the cup. He gave it to the disciples and they drank from it.

Then, He explains the meaning when He says in verse 24, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is to be shed on behalf of many." Now, that word "covenant" was a very important word to the disciples, very important word to the Jewish people, very important word throughout the Scriptures, both in the Old and the New Testaments. It's a word that simply means "an agreement between two or more persons." That's what a covenant is. In fact, I think we've seen something of an illustration of that recently in our news with the treaty that has been made between Israel and the PLO. It's a kind of covenant, not a covenant that some people are pleased with. But nevertheless, a kind of agreement. Not quite the same as this, but nevertheless, a covenant is an agreement that is made between two or more persons.

The disciples were very familiar with that word. In fact, they were already part of a covenant with God. The covenant that He had made with Israel at Mount Sinai after bringing them out of Egypt. We call it the Old Covenant, or the Sinaitic

Covenant, or the Mosaic Covenant. And in it, God established a relationship with Israel which was to be governed by the law that He had given to Moses. And in it, He promised that He would bless the people, and that He would be their God and have a special relationship with them if they would keep the law.

So, it was a conditional covenant. It was a covenant, the blessings of which were conditioned upon Israel's response, conditioned upon Israel's obedience. And the people accepted it. They accepted that arrangement. They agreed to it.

But of course, they failed to keep their part of it. In fact, within days after, just a few days after accepting the covenant and agreeing to do all that the Lord has said, what do they do? They make a golden calf and they begin to worship an idol, call it their god who brought them out of Egypt. And so it went down through their history. They continually sinned and continually broke the covenant. And so, sacrifices had to be continually offered to repair the broken relationship that had occurred between Israel and the Lord God.

Morning and evening, there were sacrifices that were offered at the tabernacle, and later at the temple. Once a year, there was the great day of atonement. And then, there was once a year, the Passover sacrifice, yearly reminders in addition to the daily reminders of the people's sin and their failure, so that at the heart of the Old Covenant, it's not only the law that was broken, but the sacrifices that would atone for those sins. because Israel of itself was unable to keep that covenant.

But even with the sacrifices, there was the constant reminder of separation from God with the tabernacle itself, and later the temple. You know the construction of it, and the privileges that were given to enter it; only the priests could enter. The Israelites, who were not priests, could not enter into that temple. They could approach it, but they could not enter into the holy place. Only a priest could do that, and only one priest, the high priest, once a year, could go behind the curtain, could penetrate the veil into the holy of holies. So, there was that temple which was restricted, and there was that veil within the temple that said there's separation between God at the mercy seat, and the people of Israel.

So, it was a covenant for all the blessings that it gave, and it did give many blessings. But for all of those blessings, it did not give the Israelites direct access to God. They could only approach God by means of sacrifices, and priests, and rituals,

because sin continued to be a problem under that covenant. Forgiveness was never final. It was a covenant that did not take away sin.

But the prophets promised another covenant, a new covenant, a better covenant in which a new relationship would be established between God and His people. Instead of writing the law on tablets of stone as He had done on Mount Sinai, He would, as Jeremiah promises, write those laws upon the hearts of His people, which is a way of saying He would give them ability that they don't have of themselves to be obedient. He would make it a part of our thinking and our desire and give us ability to keep the law that, in and of ourselves, we cannot keep.

In that covenant, the sacrifices would end, because God promised to forgive their iniquity and remember their sins no more. Jeremiah 31. That's where we find the New Covenant, and that's the covenant that the Lord was speaking of when He took the cup in His hand and he said, "This is My blood of the covenant which is to be shed on behalf of many."

The cup of wine symbolized His blood, His death, by which He would make the covenant and establish this new relationship between God and man, because that's how covenants were made, by the shedding of blood.

Read through the Old Testament. You see it. Genesis 15. God makes a covenant with Abraham. And what did Abraham do? He slaughtered animals, sacrificed a number of animals. And then, God came and made that covenant. Go over to Exodus in chapter 24 where Moses made or ratified this covenant at Sinai, and he sacrificed a bull, and then took the blood of that bull and he sprinkled it upon the altar. And then, significantly, verse 8 tells us he sprinkled it on the people.

Why was that necessary? I mean, when men make a covenant, businessmen enter into a covenant, they don't slaughter an animal, and they don't sprinkle blood on one another. They don't do anything like that. And yet, we see that when God makes a covenant with men, why is that necessary?

Well, the author of Hebrews gives us the explanation in Hebrews chapter 9 verse 22: "Without shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin." There's no covenant without the shedding of blood. There's no relationship with Him, because God's covenants are based upon holiness and justice.

But the sacrifices of bulls and goats and lambs were never sufficient to remove the eternal weight and the eternal guilt of man's sin. No covenant established on the

sacrifice of a bull could be eternal. And so, a better sacrifice had to be offered for a better covenant, for an eternal covenant. A sacrifice of infinite value, the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the Godman.

That's why God promised to forgive their iniquity and remember their sins no more. He would do what men could not do by offering His only begotten Son in the place of sinners. His eternal Son of God, whose death would be, as He says, sufficient for many.

Those words "shed on behalf of many," are very important words. They give us the essence or the nature of the Lord's death, described by theologians as a penal substitutionary atonement. That may sound like a mouthful, but it's really a very significant statement of faith.

The Lord's death was penal because it occurred as punishment. His blood was shed. It was poured out, signifying that it was a violent death, a death suffered in judgment, a death that was a punishment in payment for sin.

What are the wages of sin? You know the answer. Paul gives it in Romans 6 verse 23. The wages of sin is death. Physical death, spiritual death. Temporal death, eternal death. And that is the death that Christ died. That's the nature of it. It was a death for sin. Not His own sin. He's like that unleavened bread. He's without sin. He was sinless, but He died as a substitute, voluntarily substituting His perfect life for the imperfect life of sinners. He died a substitutionary death. that's the significance of the preposition "for" or "on behalf of." Meaning, "in the place of many." He died in our place. He died instead of us. And so, His death was an atoning death because it was a satisfaction to the justice of God. It satisfied God's justice. That's what atonement is. Christ satisfying divine justice by His sufferings in death in the place of sinners.

And in satisfying God's justice, He brought God and man together. He restored that relationship that sin had broken, and He did it for many. Not just a few. He did it for many. This is a gracious covenant. This is a generous covenant. It is for many.

Now, that word "many" naturally raises a question about the extent of the atonement. The question: for whom did Christ die? Who are the many for whom He died? For whom did He establish this new Covenant? Well, I think we have some help in the answer to that question by going back to something that we've already

looked. How was the covenant that Moses ratified at Sinai made? What happened at that moment when He sacrificed the bull?

Well, if you remember, Moses took the blood and not only did he sprinkle the altar, but he sprinkled the people. He sprinkled a particular people. He sprinkled the people of God, the chosen people of Israel. He didn't sprinkle toward Egypt. He didn't sprinkle toward Greece, or He didn't sprinkle eastward toward Canaan and Babylon and Persia, or any of those countries. One group of people were the object of that blood. It was applied to Israel, to God's chosen people.

That signifies the extent of Christ's atonement. His blood was shed for and applied to His people, His elect people, those who are actually saved by His death. This is often referred to by the term "limited atonement." You probably are very familiar with that term, which is the third point of the five points of Calvinism stated in the popular acrostic, T.U.L.I.P.

The T for "total depravity." Doesn't mean that we are as bad as we can be, but that sin has affected every part of our being. "Unconditional election," that God, with His unconditional love, has chosen some for Himself. And then L, "limited atonement," that His atoning sacrifice, His death was limited in its scope, in its application, in its saving effect to His elect people. That's all it means.

Another term for it is "definite atonement," expressing that His atonement was designed to secure salvation for a definite group of people, those whom the Father had chosen, those whom the Father had given to His Son. And many prefer that term, definite atonement, to the term limited atonement, because that word "limited" has some unfortunate associations. It somehow suggests limitations on God's grace, as though Christ's atonement could only save the elect, and the elect are a small group of people.

Well, we've already seen that that's not the case, that He has not chosen a chosen few, but rather many people, a multitude of people. Not just the people of one nation, but many people of many nations, as the 24 elders say in Revelation chapter 5 and verse 9. He did purchase with His blood, and that's an effective purchase. He obtained for Himself with His blood, some out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

So, God has elected a great number of people, an innumerable multitude of people. More than one can count. In fact, this expression, "the many," is a technical

term that's found in the ancient rabbinic writings to describe the elect community. It's also found in the Dead Sea Scrolls in the same way to describe the elect community.

But we know from the Scriptures that that is not a small community. That is a large community. That is an innumerable multitude, like the stars of the sky, the sand of the seashore, the dust of the earth, a great multitude which no one can count.

So, it doesn't diminish the extent of God's grace. It's great. Nor does it diminish the power of His grace. Christ's death is of infinite value and sufficient for an infinite number of people. But it's efficient. That is, it actually saves only those for whom it was designed, for His elect people.

Now, had He elected everyone in the world, it would be sufficient for them. Had He elected an infinite number of worlds of people, it would've been sufficient for them. It is infinite in its sufficiency. But, in its design, rather, in its sufficiency. But in its design, in its effectiveness, it is only for those whom God has chosen. Or, as the Lord Himself puts it in John 17, his high priestly prayer, "Those whom the Father had given to Him."

Now, to say that is really to say nothing more than the angel said when it announced our Lord's birth and said, "You shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins." Or what Paul says in Ephesians 5:25. "Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her." Or, as our Lord Himself says in John chapter 10 where He says that the "good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep," for His people, for His elect ones.

And He did that. And in doing so, He secured our salvation. he did not die in vain for anyone. He did not waste one drop of blood. What He did, he accomplished.

Now, that tends to trouble people. Maybe it troubles some of you. I don't know. I know that it does trouble people though. And to say that raises objections in people's mind of this kind, they say well, if that's so, if Christ just died for His elect, then we can't give a free offer of the gospel. We can only give it to the elect.

Not at all. I don't know who the elect are. You don't know who the elect are. God alone knows who the elect are. The evidence of election is faith. And so what we do is we present it liberally to all, not knowing who they are, but knowing that they're there, and knowing that it is a great number of people, and that the elect will receive the gospel, that we are guaranteed success in the giving of the gospel, and so we do it. Much like the farmer does when he goes out and sows seed, to borrow from

the Lord's parable of the sower. He goes out and he throws seed liberally. He knows that some of it's going to fall on bad ground, on rocky soil, on shallow soil. But he also knows that much of it will fall on the good soil, and that that soil received the seed, and that seed will take root and bear fruit. And so too when we give the gospel. We know that the elect are there, and they will receive, and they will believe in the gospel.

And that's really how we know that we are among the elect. If you're troubled by this question: am I among the elect? How can I know whether or not Christ died for me? Well, that's easy to solve. Simply believe in Christ, because the elect believe. They trust in Him.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was a great Five Point Calvinist. In fact, that in itself is something of an argument against the objection that Calvinists can't preach the gospel. Spurgeon preached the Five Points of Calvinism on Sunday morning and multitudes of people came to faith. And not only Spurgeon, but Spurgeon's great hero in the faith, George Whitfield, perhaps the greatest evangelist in the history of the church. Five Point Calvinist who preached these things and multitudes came to faith. His contemporary, Johnathan Edwards, was no different. Very instrumental in the great awakening here in America.

Go back before them to the Puritans and you find men who preached the gospel with great effect. Calvin himself preached the gospel, was a great evangelist, and sent men out throughout Europe into very troubled areas of Europe where they lost their lives preaching the gospel.

This is not a deterrent to the gospel. This is really an incentive to it because what it says is: there will be success in the preaching of the gospel. As God told Paul when he was in Corinth and worried about the situation there. He said, "Don't worry. Don't be troubled. I have many people in this city." They would receive the gospel, and His work would be successful.

Well, Spurgeon, as I said, was a man who believed these things and gives some help at this point with a question and a reply to some of these objections that are made and observing that election has as its goal, holiness, he would ask: do you want to be holy? Do you want to be saved? Do you want to believe in Jesus Christ? And if the answer was yes, then he would say, "Then God has elected you." You're one of the elect if you believe that. If the answer was no, "I don't want to be holy. I don't

want to change my life. I don't want to interfere with anything that I'm doing now. And as far as this gospel and this way of salvation through the cross and by faith alone, to me that is all nonsense. Don't believe it. I don't want it." Then he would say, "Why should you grumble then that God has not elected you to the very things that you don't want? Election is to holiness. Election is to faith in Christ. And if you don't want that, then you don't want election and can't complain about not having it."

I think that's true. If you want to be among the elect, if you want to believe in Jesus Christ, if you're concerned about these things, then believe in Jesus Christ, and you are one of the elect, because the elect do believe. Christ died in order that all who believe in Him might be saved. Those who do believe and those who are saved enter into the greatest of blessings. They enter into all of the privileges of the New Covenant, not the least of which is open access to God, something that the Old Covenant didn't offer. That veil in the temple has been rent from top to bottom. Access to God is now free, and open, and we have that great privilege.

We deprive ourselves of it so often when we don't go to prayer frequently. The author of Hebrews that develops this throughout his book, he develops the theme of Christ's priesthood, encourages us to draw close to God, to draw near to the throne of grace with boldness. And we'll be heard. We'll enter into that fellowship with God. We're to do that in time of trouble, in time of blessing, to be continually doing that, drawing near with our open access.

That's one of the great privileges that we have through Christ's death. We celebrate those blessings. We celebrate our privileges and the grace that is ours when we take the Lord's supper. And a time in which we reflect upon Him with elements that represent Christ as our Savior and remind us of the deliverance from sin and punishment that we have obtained through Him and through faith in Him.

Well, we look back upon that when we take the Lord's supper, but we also look forward to the deliverance that is to come, and the life in the future kingdom. It's very much like they did with the original Passover when they were in Egypt. When they took the Passover, they did it in anticipation of being delivered from Egypt and settling in the land of Canaan. And in the same way, when we take the Lord's supper, we are looking forward to the kingdom that is to come, because the Lord, after announcing His death with the cup, says in verse 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."

He's not drinking that with us now. He's not physically present with us now. He's not doing that in heaven. We are not physically connected with their bodies yet. That is something that's to come with the resurrection and the establishment of the kingdom. And so, this is a promise, first of all, that He would be resurrected, that He would conquer death, that His body would not remain in the grave, and that He would come again, and He would establish His kingdom. And in that kingdom, there would be a reunion, and blessing, and joy.

That's the goal of the New Covenant. It's not complete until the grace and the knowledge of God cover the whole face of the earth with what our Lord describes in Matthew chapter 19 as the regeneration. That's the kingdom. That's what we're looking forward to. That's our hope. This is not all that there is. The best is yet to come, and we look forward to that day when there will be great reunion, joy, and fellowship, and when we will see our Lord face to face. That's what the celebration of the Lord's supper looks forward to.

And, if we remember, the love of God, the sacrifice of our Savior, and the conquering king that is our Savior and who will return. And as we take the Lord's supper, we do so with that knowledge. And as we do so, this portrait emerges of our Lord, of His infinite love for us, and the salvation that He has gained for us, and all that we have with Him. He is a conquering king, and a loving Savior. One who is coming again. And He has commanded us, as we noted earlier, to do this, to take it, "to do this in remembrance of Me."

William Barclay writes that when Admiral Nelson was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral, a party of his sailors bore his coffin to the tomb. And one of the people who was observing the funeral wrote of that scene and records that with reverence and efficiency, these sailors lowered the body of the world's greatest admiral into its tomb. And then, as though answering a sharp order from the quarterdeck, they seized the Union Jack with which they had lowered that coffin into the tomb and began to tear it into small pieces. And each one took a souvenir of their great hero. And then, Barclay writes, "All their lives, that little piece of colored cloth would speak to them of the admiral they had loved."

That is a sacrament. And that's really what we have in the Lord's supper. It's like a little piece of cloth that reminds us every week of who the Lord is, reminds us that our departed leader will come back, and causes us to reflect upon Him and think about Him, much like we do with our photo albums. We take pictures of the people that we love and the places that we have enjoyed visiting, and we keep them there. And then we like to look over them and reflect upon them. And when there's a prolonged separation between a loved one, we'd go to those pictures and we'd look at them, and we reflect upon them.

Love draws us to the picture. And in the same way, love draws us to the Lord's supper, which is a portrait of our Lord which He has left for us of Himself, the portrait of a loving God, as I said, a portrait of a dying Savior, of a conquering king. And He's commanded us to remember Him in that way.

But, a picture is never as important as the person. And when the person returns, then the picture ceases to be of any significance to us. And that's the same way with the Lord's supper. It's not a permanent institution.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 11:26, "As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." The implication being that you don't do it after He comes. There will come a time when we won't need that portrait of our Lord that He's left us. We won't need it to help us remember who He is and what He's done, because we will be with Him. We will be physically present with Him. We will see Him face to face in that great kingdom that He will establish. In that great reunion that we will have not only with our Lord, but with loved ones who have gone on before us.

Is that your hope? Can you say as you think about these things that our Lord has said, can you say that Christ died for me, and I have trusted in Him as my Savior, and I'm looking forward to His return and the glorious kingdom that will come and that great reunion that will follow? Can you say that?

Or, are you sitting there, and perhaps a little puzzled and a little troubled by some of the things that have been said, and worried maybe that you're not one of the elect. Maybe Christ didn't die for you. Is that perhaps on your mind and troubling your heart? Then if that's the case, solve the problem. Solve it very easily by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and know by your faith that you are one of His

elect, that you are one of His people for whom He died. As Christ said in John chapter 6, "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me."

Now, in that statement, He's making two theological statements. All that the Father has given to me; unconditional election. They will come to Me; irresistible grace. They will inevitably come. The Spirit of God will lead them to me. And, He says, the one who comes to Me, I will certainly not cast out. He receives every sinner who comes to Him, regardless of the gravity of their sin. He receives them. He receives everyone who believes in Him. He died in order to save those who will believe, and He will not fail.

So, if your situation is one where you don't know where you stand, then come to Christ. Come in the weakness of your faith and He receives all who come to Him, and He will not cast you out. Come to Him. May God help you to do that, and may God help all of us to reflect upon the great work that Christ has done on the cross, and what He has accomplished for us. May we serve Him faithfully. Shall we stand now for the benediction?

[Prayer] Our great God and heavenly Father, we do thank You for the truth that we see here. We thank You for the reality of the sacrifice that Your Son made. Not a sacrifice that He made for friends, but for enemies. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. That's not because we did anything that pleased You, or merited Your favor, or merited His death. It was just the opposite. We were enemies. And yet, from all eternity, You set Your love upon a people. And as large in its number, and You supplied the sacrifice that was necessary for our salvation. Thank You, Father, for that grace. We pray that if there be any in attendance who've not trusted in Christ, that You may open their eyes to their need of a savior, to their sin, and the salvation that is in Christ, the forgiveness that's in Him, that they might turn to Him and receive forgiveness of sin and life everlasting. We pray these things in our Savior's name. Amen.