The New Covenant in Jesus’ Blood

Luke22:1-23

Key Verse 20: **In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”**

What would you do if you died tomorrow? You will not do trivial table talk. Instead, you will focus on the most important thing. Today we will talk about Jesus’ last hours before his arrest, sufferings, death, and resurrection. We are getting into the most important hours of human history. As we consider the passage of Scripture before us today, we ought to remove the shoes from off our feet, because we are standing on holy ground.

Verse 1 shows the context of the Last Supper. The Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching. Like Christmas, Passover was full of holiday spirit and tradition. It was a celebration of God’s historical deliverance of Israel. Jews still today have a family dinner on the first night of Passover. People get excited, joyful, and often generous. Yet, during this time of celebration, the religious leaders were looking for a way to get rid of Jesus. Because of Jesus they were losing their influence and money, and thus they wanted to kill him. But they were afraid of the people.

At this point, Satan entered Judas Iscariot who belonged to the number of the twelve disciples. But he made a decision and discussed with the religious leaders how to hand Jesus over to them. They were glad and agreed to give him money. Money is almost always a good incentive to get someone to do something, or reinforce a person’s determination to do something. And it worked.

According to John’s gospel, as treasurer, Judas used to help himself to some of the money. Some people speculate that Judas betrayed Jesus because he had his own ideas and plans about what the Messiah was going to be. But if this was true, then all of the disciples would have betrayed Jesus because they all had their own ideas of what the Messiah was going to be. One difference is that they made a commitment to Jesus. Everybody has some kinds of expectations from Jesus. We each have our own agenda for what the Savior Jesus is going to be. Maybe you have family issues, health issues, job issues; or you have school study issues, friend issues, or marriage issues. Anyway eventually you’ve come to Jesus. But to be a Christian doesn’t mean that you have your own plan for Jesus. To be a Christian means that Jesus has his plan for you! And his plan is better than yours. You will experience that his plan for you is good! I pray that you make a commitment to Jesus.

Look at verse 7. “Then came the first day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.” They needed to make special preparations for this first day of Passover, and Jesus sent Peter and John to prepare it. They needed to prepare a place where they could eat a Passover lamb. A lamb had to be obtained and sacrificed at the temple. The lamb needed to be cooked. Bitter herbs and unleavened bread and some wine and water needed to be prepared.

They said to Jesus, “Where do you want us to prepare it?” Jesus knew where and how obtaining a room would take place. Jesus said to them (v.10-12), “As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there.” And since Jesus was always right, everything happened exactly as he had said it would. And they prepared the Passover.

The hour came to eat the Passover meal, and everything was ready. Jesus and his disciples reclined at the table. Then Jesus revealed his heart (v.15) saying, “**I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer**.” Jesus eagerly desired to eat the last supper. It was his heart’s desire. Why? For sure, His heart was set on his disciples and he treasured time with them knowing that He was only hours from dying. Imagine a devoted loving mother who has to say good-by the last time. Jesus really wanted to share His last meal, a special Passover meal, with his disciples. Why? It was because it was so important to Jesus and to all of us. Jesus wants to teach the most important thing. Through the Passover, Jesus now explains the meaning of his death on the cross.

**First, Jesus suffered to give us hope in the kingdom of God.**

Jesus says in v16: “For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.” 18. “**For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes**.” He celebrated the Last Supper looking forward to the great celebration in the kingdom of God. At the hour of his death, Jesus was full of hope in the kingdom of God. Jesus anticipated God’s victory. Through his resurrection from the dead, Jesus gives us hope of his second coming. We are not aimless wanderers in this world. We are walking toward the kingdom of God. We need strength on a daily basis. God strengthens us by Jesus’ body and blood. Jesus carries us throughout past, present, and future. I pray we may fix our eyes on Jesus and the kingdom of God.

**Second, Jesus suffered to give us life.**

V19. And Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, “**This is my body given for you.**” Jesus used the bread to symbolize his body. It means: “This is I. This is my life.” Very soon Jesus would be arrested, condemned, and crucified. This was done at the hands of evil men. But Jesus was not a helpless victim of evil men. Rather, he actively sacrificed his life for sinners.

1Cor5:7b says, “For Christ, our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed.” Jesus is the perfect Passover Lamb. The Passover in the Exodus is the primary event of God’s salvation in the Old Testament. The Passover is a preview and pattern of God’s salvation. Remember Israel celebrated the Passover to commemorate God’s grace of salvation from the bondage in Egypt. God sent an angel of death who passed over homes where the blood of a slain lamb was on the door post. Now Jesus died as Passover Lamb in our place.

We can accept Jesus’ sacrificial death with faith. John’s gospel helps us understand this more fully. Jesus said, “**I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world**” (Jn6:51).

Why does Jesus use the picture of bread? You’ve gotten to eat it and make it your own. If you don’t like bread, instead, imagine rice or noodles or meat. When you don’t eat, you will starve. And you don’t eat meal once a year, but you eat meals on a daily basis to live and have strength to live. In this way, Jesus visualized the relationship between his death and us. When we are in trouble, we want intellectual answers. We often ask why? Why these circumstances? But Jesus is the answer. When our soul is hungry, we come to Jesus and he will feed us with his bread broken for us.

**Third, most importantly Jesus suffered to fulfill the new covenant in his blood**.

V20. “In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, ‘**This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.**’ ” Jesus says the cup is the covenant. Jesus is not talking about the cup itself, but what the cup contains, namely, his blood poured out on the cross. Jesus said, “**This cup is the new covenant in my blood poured out for you**.” Underline, highlight, and circle that. Jesus here established the new covenant (as promised in Jer31). The new covenant was fulfilled when Jesus poured out his blood on the cross.

Basically the covenant is based on God’s grace. Imagine. How can the almighty God enter the covenant with a creature? As God delivered and chose Israel to be his covenant partner, it was God’s one-sided grace. God was saying like this: “I am your God, you will be my people. You do your part, I’ll do my part.” And to confirm the covenant, the blood of covenant was sprinkled on the people. The sprinkling confirmed the covenant between God and his people (Ex24:7-8). But because Israel didn’t obey God and chose sinful ways, the covenant was broken even right after its being established. Then, did God give up on incorrigible sinners? No.

God promised a new covenant that will not be like the old. Jeremiah describes it like this: “**I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people**… **For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more**” (Jer31:33-34). Simply speaking, God forgives your sins and transforms your heart. It’s like this. You failed the old project. And you are now getting paired with Jesus on a new project. And guess who did all the work? Jesus did.

To make this new covenant possible, Jesus had to shed his blood as the Lamb of God. It is the reality of the shadow in the Old Testament sacrificial institution. The image of the blood of a lamb is a preview of the story. The high priest would offer a sacrificial lamb for forgiveness of the sins of the people. Why blood? Heb9:22 says, “Apart from the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.” But a sacrificial lamb was only a shadow of the reality coming. It was like putting a band-aid on a gunshot wound. But to heal the wound, you need far more.

Jesus’ blood has incomparably greater value and power than the blood of animals. A man’s blood has greater value than that of an animal, because man is made in the image of God (Gen9:6). Jesus was not just an ordinary man, but a perfect man keeping the whole law of God perfectly (Heb4:15). And Jesus was more than a perfect man. Jesus is in very nature God (Phil 2). So Jesus’ blood has tremendous power, beyond any power known to man.

We must believe in the power of Jesus’ blood. The power of sin is too strong for us. It strains our souls so deeply that no human effort can uproot it. Sin makes our consciences guilty and condemns us to death. Recently I was deeply disappointed to hear about a gospel singer who hurt his fans by his sexual scandal. Last week I read news about law-suit for same-sex marriage. I learned that there are gay clubs even at high schools. I’m not saying this because I am a better man. I was a terrible sinner. By the grace of God I am what I am. Sometimes I am disappointed about me, when, loosing my temper, I got mad at my children. Some of you are suffering from the burden of life. Some are tired and feeling down. Many things look messy.

All of us desperately need the power of Jesus’ blood. The blood of Jesus is more powerful than the power of sin. Are you despairing because of your sins? The Bible encourages you: “**Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world**” (John1:29). I thank God that many among us experienced the transforming power of Jesus’ blood.

Jesus’ blood has the power to cleanse our consciences from all sinful acts (Heb9:14). Jesus’ blood cleansed us so completely that we can stand in the holy presence of God. By the power of Jesus’ blood, we can serve the living God in this generation. We can have an intimate love relationship with God. Jesus’ blood can transform incorrigible sinners into holy people of God. When we receive Jesus into our hearts, we can experience the power of his blood. His blood brings us into a new covenant with the living God. His blood creates a new start for each of us.

Jesus told us, “**Do this in remembrance of me**.” Jesus wants us to remember his grace by celebrating the Lord’s Supper. This is where the Holy Communion originated from. He wants us to remember his sacrificial death.

The cross was an awful thing, the most horrible instrument of torture, like an electric chair earring or an assault rifle t-shirt. If we saw the cross as it really was, you would not be allowed to wear the cross to school, and not on religious grounds. Bloodshed is gross, offensive, crude, and violent.

So why did Jesus want us to remember that? Why should we teach such a story? It’s because it is the truth about sin and death and salvation! The ugliest instrument of torture became the most beautiful symbol.

Jesus died to forgive our sins that they would be blotted out and gone forever. This is the wonder of the new covenant! This is grace. This is what Jesus wants us to remember. Don’t look at yourself, but look at Jesus! May God bless you to live in the new covenant in Jesus’ blood!