



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Suffering Savior, Mark 14:12-25

"The Last Passover and the First Lord's Supper - II"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Our subject tonight is the conclusion of the study that we began last Monday night, "The Last Passover and the First Lord's Supper" and we're turning to Mark chapter 14 again and we're going to look tonight at verses 22 through 25; Mark 14:22-25. Next Monday night we're going to begin a two or three part series of a little different character from the studies that we have been engaged in so far, and if you have a copy of the schedule of messages, you will notice that they are entitled, "Why Did He Die? The Answers of History". And we're going to deal with what history has said about the death of Christ and particularly we want to deal with the interpretations that have been placed upon the death of our Lord Jesus.

Now this has been entitled all along a series of studies in systematic theology, but as you've noticed up to this point, we have not been engaged in a great deal of systematic theology and I have tried to do this on purpose so that we will have exposition mingled with the theological study. But for the next three Mondays that we have the class, we're going to deal with systematic theology and so our study will be largely historical. But I think it is of the greatest importance for understanding the New Testament to know the various interpretations that have been placed upon the death of Christ.

Very often in our studies and particularly Bible studies such as we have in the Chapel such as this, our studies of the Scriptures approach such subjects as the death of Christ from only one perspective. The perspective that the particular teacher feels is the correct one and I'm not having any particular objections to that. It's not my intent to be critical of myself or of others who follow this methodology, but I think that for a real understanding of the word of God in the light of its situation in history and for a breadth of view of the New Testament, we ought to understand other interpretations that have been placed upon the death of Christ.

Some of them by definite Christians and some even by those who are not definite Christians, but I feel sure if we will study such things as this our own understanding of the word of God will be more deeply grounded and we'll be able to handle questions that may arise in our personal witnessing. So I'm warning you ahead of time that for the next three Mondays that we meet, I'm going to meet next Monday, the following Monday I have to be absent, then the two Mondays that follow that we will deal with the question of the answers of history to the death of Christ.

Now we will also deal with certain Scriptural passages so it will not be simply a theological study without reference to the context of the Bible. We will deal with certain important passages, but I want to warn you ahead of time, that that's what you can expect. So it will be a time of study for you. I think it would be wise too if you can get your hands upon some of the books that have been recommended for study, to get your hands upon them, and then to do some reading that may prepare you for those Monday nights.

For example, the book by Gustaf Auléns, *Christus Victor*, if you should be able to get your hands upon that, you will find it has some information that would be appropriate to the next three studies or Robert H. Culpepper's work, *Interpreting the Atonement*. You will find also in A. A. Hodge *Outlines of Theology* some information that will be appropriate and Stalker's work, *The Trial and Death of Jesus Christ*, will have some information that is appropriate and Warfield's *The Plan of Salvation* as well. So if you get

a chance, do a little reading, a little studying, I think you will enjoy our studies a great deal more and you will also be able to study the Scriptures with more understanding.

The purpose of all Bible study, it seems to me, should be to bring you to the place where you are an independent student of the Scriptures where if, for example, you're never able to hear another Bible teacher, you would be able to read the New Testament and the Old Testament with understanding and profit from them. Of course, if Bible teachers are available, well and good, we should listen to all of them. I like to listen to them myself, but we ought to bring ourselves, be brought to the place where we can study the Bible for ourselves and that's one of the purposes that we have in these studies.

Now tonight, "The Last Passover and the First Lord's Supper"; our second and concluding installment on that particular topic. The Lord Jesus left the church two ordinances to observe until he returns. First, the ordinance of baptism, which emphasizes our entrance into the body of Christ; then the Lord's Supper, is the second ordinance and that emphasizes our continuance in the body of Christ. Baptism is an ordinance that we undergo once and for all; for once in the body of Christ, there is no need to repeat the ordinance; for once in the body of Christ, we are always in the body of Christ.

The Lord's Supper, on the other hand, is designed to stress our continuance in the body of Christ and particularly our continuance in fellowship with Jesus Christ and so it is an ordinance that is observed frequently as a command through the teaching of the word of God. "This be doing in remembrance of me," Paul says. So it is a command, the fact that the imperative is a present imperative suggests that the Lord's Supper should be observed frequently.

In the history of the Christian church, the great stress of its leaders as well as the great mass of professing Christians has been upon the observance of the Lord's Supper, Sunday after Sunday, or Lord's day after Lord's day. It is not sinful to not observe the Lord's Supper every Sunday, but on the other hand; the New Testament does stress frequent remembrance of our Lord. It is a privilege.

Are the ordinances for believers? Yes, they are for believers. Why are they for believers? Well, they must be understood in order to have any meaning we pointed out. A stranger at a baptismal service, not knowing anything about the Christian faith, might wonder if everything that he was seeing was simply play. Or a stranger at the Lord's table might think that the entire congregation was members of Weight Watchers if they're observing the little that they were eating. So consequently, in order to understand the ordinances, we must have some understanding of Christian truth and I think it is safe to say, therefore, that the ordinances are for believers.

Now as you have noticed, I have said simply that there are two ordinances; baptism and the Lord's Supper. There is a large professing Christian organization which says that we do not have two ordinances, but seven. There is also the ordinance of ordination, of confirmation, of matrimony, of extreme unction, and penance. In the light of the definition of an ordinance that we gave in which I think is agreeable with New Testament teaching, I think it is safe to say that these are not ordinances. But tonight is not the time to debate the issues so we'll just drop it at that point. The roots of the Lord's Supper extend back into the Old Testament and particularly extend back to the observance of the Passover ritual. That is evident from the fact that this last Passover is also the first Lord's Supper and the Lord's Supper is instituted out of the observance of the last valid Passover before Jesus died.

Now the parallels between these two rights of the Lord's Supper, on the one hand, and the Passover on the other, are very evident when you think about them. For example, the Passover was a memorial of a physical deliverance by means of sacrifice. Israel came out of the land of Egypt through the slaying of the lamb and the placing of the blood upon the doorposts of the houses. And as a result of the blood being upon the doorposts of the houses, the destroying angel passed by the doors where the blood was, did not enter in to destroy the firstborn of the family, and thus, the Passover, which was an observance of that great night in Egypt, when Israel was brought out of the land of

Egypt, that Passover service was always a memorial of a physical deliverance by means of sacrifice. It was a deliverance from Egypt by means of the blood of a lamb that was slain.

The Lord's Supper is a memorial. It is also a memorial of a spiritual deliverance and a spiritual deliverance by means of sacrifice. The difference is that in the case of one we have physical deliverance. In the case of the other we have spiritual deliverance. In the case of the one, we have a lamb as an animal. In the other, we have the Lamb of God. But both are memorials of deliverance through lambs and if we define our terms properly, you can see how they are alike and how they are different. In addition, the Passover was a service which was observed every year and it was observed in anticipation of a future and final fulfillment. Every time the children of Israel sat down to observe the Passover feast, when they did this once a year, every time they sat down at the table, they did it "till he should come". In other words, they observed the Passover supper until the Redeemer, until the Lamb of God, should come.

Now when we sit down at the Lord's table to observe the Lord's table, in the words of the Apostle Paul, we observe the Lord's table "till he come". In the case of the first "till he come" it is the first coming of the Lord Jesus. In the case of the second "till he come" in the case of the Lord's Supper, it is "till he come" in his kingdom. Then there shall be a great feast, which shall celebrate the coming of the millennial kingdom. So you can see that these two great feasts, the feast of the Passover and the feast of the Lord's Supper, are very similar and the Lord's Supper grows out of the Passover. And so it is not surprising, I say, that the institution of the Lord's Supper should take place at the time that the last Passover was observed.

There are three movements in our account that we have been looking at. The first is the preparation for the Passover in verses 12 through 16. The second movement is the celebration of the Passover in verses 17-21 and then in verses 22 through 25, we have the institution of the Lord's Supper. Now this is the outline that I gave you last week, I just am putting it up on the board exactly what we had last week for you who were not here.

Remember in the observance of the last Passover and in the institution of the first Lord's Supper, the Lord Jesus is fulfilling all righteousness.

Do you remember in the Gospel of Matthew, the first word that the Lord Jesus uttered in the Gospel of Matthew was a statement concerning the fact that he was here to fulfill all righteousness? At the baptism of the Lord Jesus in Matthew chapter 3, verse 13 we read,

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized by him. But John forbad him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?' And Jesus answering said unto him, 'Permit it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness'. Then he consented to him."

Now you can see from this statement that the Lord Jesus says that it is his aim and purpose to fulfill all righteousness. In other words, he came as a perfect Jewish man to carry out completely and perfectly the requirements of the Mosaic law. So he was fulfilling all righteousness. That is the first word that he speaks in the Gospel of Matthew, "I am here to fulfill all righteousness."

In the case of the last Passover, our Lord is still fulfilling all righteousness. He desires, of course, to institute the Lord's Supper. He desires to prepare the way for the many observances that have taken place since the time of his death and the institution in reality of the supper. But in order to institute the Lord's Supper, and institute it so it will be carried out scripturally, he must carry out the Old Testament requirements of the law to the end perfectly. And so in the Last Passover, he must observe every item of the requirements of the Old Testament in order that the institution of the Lord's Supper may come to pass in reality.

The birth room of the Holy Supper must be kept immaculately clean and so everything that transpired in that room, in which the Lord Jesus observed the last Passover

and instituted the first Lord's Supper, everything within that room must be completely in accordance with Scripture. Now, of course, it is a climactic occasion for the two lines of Old Testament truth and New Testament truth converge in that upper room. As someone has said, "Now the switch is thrown over and we move from Old Testament into New Testament by means of truth". So as everything takes place, it must take place in such a way that, on the one hand, an ultra fastidious Jew, or on the other hand an eager angel, cannot find anything in the observance of that Passover or institution of the supper, that contradicts any word of the revelation of God. So this is an important occasion.

And then, of course, remember that Judas has left the circle to complete the betrayal. Remember in our outline, as we were pointing out the preparation and the celebration of the Passover, we talked about how, turning to John chapter 13, how the Lord announced that one of them was going to betray him, and how the disciples went around the table one right after the other saying, "Is it I, Lord? Is it I, Lord? Is it I, Lord? Is it I, Lord?", until we come to Judas and he said, "Is it I, Master?" And I commented upon the fact that it's very striking that Judas puts the question that way in the light of Paul's statement that "No man calleth Jesus, Lord except by the Holy Spirit". It is almost as if Judas in the way he phrases his question reveals the fact that he does not really belong to the Lord Jesus.

Well, now that little incident took place in order that Judas might be separated from the rest of the apostles because he does not really belong to them and he does not really belong to the institution of the Lord's Supper. And we saw how Jesus, by the questions, by the prophecy, and by the questions that followed, and by Judas' action, sees Judas leave the company of the twelve and John adds as he leaves the little room and walks out into the darkness, "and it was night." He went out to complete his betrayal.

The story has often been told of Harold St. John a well-known Bible teacher among assemblies, who was standing in the private chapel of Keble College in Oxford one day looking at Holman Hunt's masterpiece of a picture, "The Light of the World", and

as he was standing observing that great picture, the silence was broken by a crowd of visitors, tourists obviously, led by a guide who had a very strident voice. And they came in and as he was standing looking at the picture, they all arrived at the same time and the guide was telling them things about the room and also now about the picture. And after an explanation of the painting, he uttered these words, "The original of this picture was sold for five thousand pounds". Without a moment's hesitation, Mr. St. John stepped forward, turned to the people who were with the guide and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, may I say that the true original of this picture was sold for thirty pieces of silver". And he said afterwards, there was a total silence. After his remark and after a few seconds of that silence, they all turned and silently made their way out of the chapel.

But it, of course, was a true remark. The true original of the picture was sold for thirty pieces of silver and Judas left the company of Jesus Christ and went out into darkness for thirty pieces of silver. Many people would not betray Jesus Christ for that price. Their price is higher. Some do not have that much of a price. But at any rate, it was a revelation of the heart of Judas. What is your price?

Now tonight, we're going to look at the institution of the Lord's Supper, and so we turn to the next step and the final movement in our section, verses 22 through 25. Here we have the ratification of the new covenant in his blood. The characteristic table of the Old Testament is the altar where the sacrifices were made. The animals were slain and they were slain upon the altar or placed upon the altar. The altar is a characteristic word of the Old Testament.

The characteristic word of the New Testament is the table, the table of the Lord's Supper. Some of our churches are still in the Old Testament and so they like to speak of the altar, the altar, the altar. But characteristic of the New Testament is the table of our Lord. For the altar suggests a sacrifice, but a sacrifice which is being made, and a sacrifice which must be made over and over again, but the table suggests a sacrifice that has been

made, the benefits of which are now ours, the results of which are the food of the believers. And so we speak of the Lord's table, not the altar.

Up to this time now, every eye has looked forward to Jesus Christ, but from this time ideally, everyone shall look back at him. And first of all, we look at the ceremony of the bread. "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave to them, and said, 'Take, eat: this is my body'". I wish we had time to talk about all of the details of the Passover supper, but that would take us far astray from our subject.

Remember last time I said there were four cups of wine that were drunk at the Passover supper. One was drunk before the supper began, right at the beginning. Then a second cup was taken. A third cup was taken much later. That third cup, probably to be identified with the cup of the Lord's Supper and its institution, and finally there was a fourth cup.

It is obvious from this that the Lord Jesus and the apostles did not regard it as a sin to partake of an alcoholic beverage and that, of course, is the teaching of the New Testament. When we observe the Lord's Supper, it is perfectly scriptural to observe the Lord's Supper with an alcoholic beverage. In 1 Corinthians, Paul speaks about the fact that those who were gathered there because they were misusing that which God had provided, they were getting drunk at the Lord's Table, and I've never yet seen anyone get drunk from Welch's grape juice. It is evident that they were really speaking of and really drinking wine.

Now they were drinking wine at the Lord's table and after they had had the first cup, and then the second cup, it was time for the Lord Jesus to reach over and take the remainder of the loaf of bread which had been used in the opening part of the service, and with that a *aphikomen* it was called, an after dish, he would take the bread and brake it and with that half loaf, he would institute the Lord's Supper. And that is what he did. He took the half loaf that was left after the early partaking of the loaf of bread, and he broke this half loaf, which was left, the "aphikomen" (that is spelled a-p-h-i-k-o-m-e-n and

it means "after dish"). If you're reading Edersheim, Edersheim has a very nice treatment of this aspect of the service of the Lord's Supper. So Jesus took bread. Now to take the bread suggests the means of the sacrifice for he says, "Take, eat: this is my body". So the bread refers to the body typically by meaning and the breaking of it suggests death.

Now I think this is somewhat important and I want to comment upon it. Let's turn over to 1 Corinthians chapter 11 for just a moment; 1 Corinthians chapter 11. In 1 Corinthians chapter 11, Paul reflecting upon the things that he has learned concerning our Lord's ministry, and also perhaps upon things that he himself "has received" as he says in verse 23, directly from the Lord and verse 24 adds, "And when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me!'" I want you to notice that little expression "Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you." Some of our manuscripts have the term "klomenon" which means broken. But most of the earliest of the manuscripts and the better manuscripts do not have the word "broken" and the text in those manuscripts read simply "This is my body which is for you".

Now I do not think there is any real significant meaning in this distinction, for it is obvious that the Lord Jesus broke the bread and the breaking has to do with death. That breaking refers to death. It does not refer to the breaking of our Lord's bones. He does not suggest by this that his bones are to be broken because, of course, the New Testament, as well as the Old Testament, state that not a bone of him should be broken. This is a reference to his death. So he takes of the bread then and he broke it and he gave it to them and said, "Take, eat: this is my body". The reference then is to the death of our Lord. It is as much as to say, "This bread represents my body and my body is to die and it is for you." So turning back now to chapter 14 of Mark verse 22, we read, "He broke the bread and gave to them."

Now I think that we are to lay a little stress upon that word "gave". It is obvious he does not say, "Now I'll give you each a piece, if you will also give me a denarius". But

this is something that is of grace. And so he took the bread. He broke it and he gives to them. And all of this is designed to stress the fact that the work that God does for us through Jesus Christ is a work of grace. Then he says, "This is my body, which is for you".

Now we must notice this because it is evident, if we know anything about Christian history, that there is a great deal of disagreement over the meaning of this expression "This is my body". Historically, there are four important interpretations that have been placed upon this expression, "This is my body". The first interpretation is the interpretation of the Roman Catholic Church and according to the Roman Catholic Church by virtue of transubstantiation, the bread and the wine become the body and the blood of our Lord Jesus, upon the words of consecration of the priest.

The Lutheran position is somewhat similar and yet, in a sense, radically different. The Lutherans have interpreted this to mean that the bread and the wine are not transformed into the body and blood of our Lord Jesus in the physical sense in which the Roman Catholic Church has interpreted it, but they have said that the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are found within the elements.

The Reformed position has been that the elements are not to be taken in a physical sense at all; but rather, we are to understand the Lord Jesus as spiritually present in the bread and in the wine.

And finally, in the particular interpretation of one of the reformers, Ulrich Zwingli of Zurich, Zwingli interpreted the Lord's Supper as purely a memorial. That the bread and the wine are designed simply to remind us of what Jesus Christ has done for us.

So the Roman Catholic Church has said, by virtue of their doctrine of transubstantiation, that the bread and the wine are transformed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The Lutheran position has been that the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are with the elements; physically with the elements: in, by, with. That's why their doctrine has been called con-substantiation. You remember your Latin, "con" means

with. So that the physical body and blood of our Lord are with the elements. The Calvinists, the Reformers, have interpreted the bread and the wine as representing the spiritual presence of the Lord Jesus. That he is only spiritually present in the bread and in the wine. And the Zwinglian position is that the elements are merely memorials.

Now I think that the important thing for us at this point is to ask ourselves some questions regarding the Romanist position. The other positions have some features that are similar and, actually, those positions are much more in line with the teaching of Scriptures than the Romanist position. So I would like to say a little bit about this Romanist position because a great deal more has been made of it than the Reformed and Lutheran churches have made of it. And let me now state a few things about the Romanist position.

The sacrifice of the mass in the Roman Catholic Church is a propitiatory offering on the altar. The mass is usually observed every Sunday, as you know. In fact, it may be observed more than once on Sunday. The mass is a propitiatory offering on the altar. The Eucharist or the sacrament of the Eucharist is not to be confused with the sacrifice of the mass. The sacrament of the Eucharist is the means for receiving something which imparts grace. In other words, a member of the Roman Catholic Church, in the observance of the mass, enters into the observance of the sacrament of the Eucharist and there he receives the bread in token of the fact that he is receiving something which imparts grace to him. At the act of consecration, pronounced by the priest, Jesus Christ becomes really present in the elements.

Alexander White was an outstanding Scottish preacher in the city of Edinburgh and he was involved in the writing of the book of Church Order of the Church of Scotland many years ago. In the course of writing this, they wrote up something, and Cardinal Newman of the Roman Catholic Church, who was a very good friend of Alexander White's in spite of their differences spiritually, wrote to Mr. White and said, "You have not accurately presented the position of the Roman Catholic Church". Now

Cardinal Newman had converted to the Roman Catholic Church and so he was very sensitive about these issues. And so, White wrote to him and he said, "If you will write to us and tell us in your own words what you think the Eucharist is, and what you think your position on transubstantiation is, we'll be happy to put it in our Book of Church Order in your own words". And that is what happened. And in that Book of Church Order it reads that the substance of the bread and wine is converted into the substance of the very flesh and blood of Christ. And so when we read, "This is my body", the substance of the bread is converted into the substance of the body of Christ at the words of consecration of the priest who is officiating at the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Now according to the Roman Catholic Church, the appearances of the bread and the wine remain because you might have thought, "Well, it seems to me observing this that the bread and the wine did not hear the words of consecration of the priest, for they have stayed the same". You might think that. And so in Roman doctrine, in order to counter the obvious objection that someone would make, "Well, it doesn't look like the body of Christ" or "It doesn't look like the bread of Christ", they remind us according to their teaching that the appearances, the technical term is the "accidents". Now "accidents" is just like, four people went out, got in their cars, and each one had an accident, well this is the plural of that kind of accident, but it's the technical meaning of the term. The appearances remain. That is, the shape of the bread is the same, the size of the bread is the same, the color of the bread is the same, if you partake of it, the taste of the bread is the same.

But, nevertheless, our senses are to be denied because by the words of institution, the bread has now become the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now some of you are smiling, but you shouldn't smile, that's naughty of you to do that. Cyril of Jerusalem said, "Judge not by the taste but by faith". He recognized that the average person listening to this doctrine might tend to think that it is an incredible doctrine and so he reminds us that we are to judge by taste and not by faith.

Now, of course, in the light of all of the controversies that occurred in connection with this, it's not surprising that we should find that the Council of Trent, which issued a number of official proclamations on behalf of the Roman church, and gave us a number of official interpretations of Catholic dogma, should pronounce a curse upon all who do not receive this teaching. And at the Lateran Council, which took place sometime before the Council of Trent, it was taught there that there is no salvation outside of the church that holds to this doctrine of transubstantiation. And so in official Roman dogma, if you are not in the church, which teaches the doctrine of transubstantiation, then you are lost according to official Catholic dogma.

Now, of course, in the light of the fact that the Roman Catholic Church in our present day has become much milder and much more ecumenical, these ancient dogmas that are still officially a part of the church of Rome are practically modified and almost all Romanists today acknowledge that there is salvation outside the Roman Church. But officially, these things still remain in their official teaching. Well, you can see that a man who became very much concerned over this question and concerned over the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church might have some questions about the doctrine and it's not surprising then to read in a lot of the literature of individuals who had problems with the doctrine of transubstantiation.

When I first became a Christian, someone put in my hands a book entitled *Forty Years in the Church of Rome* and it was written by a Roman Catholic priest whose name was Father Chiniquy. And this is a most interesting book and I'm sorry to say that years later, when I was thinking about going out to China as a missionary to teach in a theological seminary in Shanghai, I got rid of a lot of my books because I wouldn't have room to take them out to China. And that was one unfortunately I got rid of, but it's available if you wanted to go to the Dallas Seminary Library and other libraries and read it. Well, in it Father Chiniquy tells many, it's a large volume with four or five, or six hundred pages, as I remember, and it's very small print, I read every word of it. And was

most interested in it because he was an intelligent priest who had been instructed in the Roman Catholic Church, he knew their dogma and he explains in detail how he passed from adherence to Catholic dogma into evangelical truth. And he stayed in the Roman Catholic Church, sometime after he had come into the knowledge of evangelical truth because he had not had light yet on where to go afterwards and he was still seeking to bring the truth to his own congregation of people.

But he spoke of some of the problems that he had. And one of the problems that he had was that when he would go up to the altar, and there was the bread and the wine, and at the words of institution, after he had pronounced the bread the body of Christ, and after he had, through his words of institution brought it about, that the wine became the blood of Christ, in the process of serving the members of the congregation the bread (for remember in the Roman Catholic Church, the members of the church are not allowed to partake of the wine). He would notice occasionally, for he was in a large church, which was not quite as sanitary as churches ought to be, that occasionally out of the corner would come a little mouse and would wonder across the altar to where the bread was and nibble on the bread. And that plunged him into a lot of theological discussion within himself. Did he really partake of the body of Christ or not? What officially is the teaching on that point?

Well now, Thomas Aquinas, the greatest Roman Catholic theologian of all, was absolutely consistent. He said, and he spoke to this very point, he said, "If the mice do come and eat it, they do eat the body of Christ". That's what he said. Well, I must admire Thomas' consistency because that is what it seems to me we have to say. That the mice do eat the body or the blood as the case may be.

Well now, this kind of teaching, of course, in churches that are Protestant, is inclined to make us smile, as some of you have been smiling, look strange, or regard it as obviously incredible that anyone could believe such a thing as this. Upon what scriptural text is it based? Well now, I'm going to ask you to turn with me to John chapter 6 and

verse 51 and I'm going to read a few verses beginning with verse 51 through verse 56.

For here is one of the texts that is depended upon by the Romanists as teaching their doctrine. Here we read John 6:51,

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. (Now here we have bread that is given, which is called his flesh, which he gives for the life of the world. Verse 53,) Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. He who eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."

Now Jesus says very plainly here that in order to have everlasting life, we must eat his flesh and drink his blood. And if we do not eat his flesh and drink his blood, then we have no life in us. Therefore, I, as your father say to you, "You must eat the flesh and drink the blood." So what would you say to me? Well now, you would probably say something like this: "Well, I understand the eating of the flesh and the drinking of the blood as a spiritual eating and a spiritual drinking." And I would say to you, "Now give me some texts to prove that." And so what would you do? Well, most of you would say, "Well Mr. McRae said so [Laughter] or Dr. Johnson said so," or something like that. Well that's why we have Bible study so that you can answer these questions that come.

Now let's take a little look at our passage again. It's always good to read the context of the passage. We read in verse 35, "Jesus said unto them, 'I am the bread of life. He that cometh to me shall never hunger and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.'" Now it is evident from this text when he says that he is "the bread of life" that we shall never hunger if we come to him. And he says that we shall not thirst if we believe on him. Well, it is evident from this, that our Lord is not talking about the physical partaking; he's talking about the spiritual partaking, for he calls it "coming to him" and

"believing on him". And further, later on in the same chapter, John chapter 6 in verse 61 through verse 63 he says,

"When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, 'Doth this offend you? What if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.'"

In other words, what I am saying to you is something that is to be taken spiritually. These words are spirit. They are not to be taken in a ball literal fashion for as we have said in verse 35, "coming to him" and "believing on him" is the method of appropriation to partake. Furthermore, let's turn over to 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 24 where Paul repeats these words. 1 Corinthians chapter 11, verse 24, we read, "And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'Take, eat: this is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me.'"

Now here Paul repeats much the same thing, "This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me." But, did you notice verse 25? Verse 25 says, "He took the cup when he had supped, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; this do, as oft as you drink, in remembrance of me.'" In one text he takes the bread and says, "This is my body". Well, that is understandable according to this Roman literalist position. But the next verse that says, "He took the cup and he said, 'This cup is the new covenant'" is not to be understood in that way. For the "is" there is not the "is" of absolute identity, but the "is" of meaning. It is the "is" of signification. This cup means or refers to the new covenant. The cup is not the new covenant. It refers to the new covenant. And, likewise, the bread is not the body of our Lord, but it means or it refers to the body of our Lord.

Now it is evident from this, 1 Corinthians 11:24 and 25, that that interpretation will not satisfy these verses. Furthermore, in the upper room, as well as here, and any other time that the Lord's Supper takes place, but particularly in that opening Lord's Supper, when the Lord Jesus took the bread in his own hands, if we are to understand this "This is my body" as meaning the body of Christ, then how can we possibly understand the body of Jesus Christ present with the apostles, from head to feet, how can we possibly understand the body of Jesus Christ to be holding the body of Jesus Christ when he held the bread? It is absolutely impossible.

Further, the word "is" in almost every language has the meaning of "to signify" very often. Let me give you some texts. "I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but have the light of life". "I am the light of the world". Now that does not mean that our Lord Jesus is a light bulb [Laughter]. It means that he is the one who imparts spiritual life to the world. When he says, "I am the good shepherd", we are not to think of a literal shepherd in the sense of a person who has a body physically. We're to think of our Lord as a person who exercises the work of a shepherd. The Lord says, "I am the door". We're not to think of him as a door made of wood. But he is the means by which we enter into salvation.

We read, for example, in 1 Corinthians 10, that "the Rock followed Israel and the Rock was Christ". Now the rock was not Jesus Christ physically. The rock signified our Lord Jesus. And we have this most plainly of all, it seems to me, in Revelation chapter 1 and verse 20 where we have the verb to be, but clearly in the sense of "to signify". John is explaining the vision that he has just had, or is having the vision explained to him, and in verse 20 we read, "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven lampstands which thou sawest are the seven churches". And plainly, in the context of the passage, the word "are" means signify. So when Jesus Christ said, "This is

my body", as he took the bread, he meant this bread signifies my body. This wine signifies my blood, which shall be shed.

The Spanish priest, Father Maldonado, had it perfectly correct when he said, "Do not prepare your teeth and your belly for it, but believe in him and you have eaten him". Now that is evangelical teaching. That is not Romanist teaching. That is evangelical teaching. "Believe in him and you have eaten him".

Now there is a further inconsistency in the Roman Catholic position because as I said a moment ago, they allow the members of the congregation to partake of the bread, but they do not allow the members of the congregation to partake of the wine. Now it is not because they think that wine is bad for the congregation. They do this for other reasons. But now, of course, if you were to come to the priest and you were to say, "But Jesus said that we were to partake of the bread and the wine, and in forbidding us to partake of the wine, are you not taking from us privilege that was granted to us by Jesus Christ?" Well, they would say, "We have a doctrine of concomitance and by our doctrine of concomitance, which we have, the body and the blood are, by this teaching, so knit together that when you partake of the bread, you are partaking of the wine as well. And that is why, or that explains why, it is not contrary to Scripture teaching to partake only of the bread. For the bread and the wine are so bound together by the doctrine of concomitance that you partake of both when you partake of one". But this, however, is a correction and an improvement of our Lord's teaching and this is something that we cannot countenance.

Now we turn to the ceremony of the cup in verse 23 and 24. Now we have here in verse 23 and 24 these words, "And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it." In the Matthean account, the Gospel of Matthew, it says that he said, "Drink ye all of it". And I remember when I was growing up in the Presbyterian church, when the Lord's Supper was observed, I sat in the audience and the minister who officiated at the Lord's table generally ran these words together in such a

way that I was not sure exactly what he was saying. He would say, as he held up the cup, "Drink ye all of it". And I thought that meant that you were to drain that cup and be sure you did because otherwise perhaps your eternal salvation may depend upon it.

And I can remember as a child taking the cup, and turning it like this, and being sure I got every drop out of it. Then I was mortified to read in the Greek text one day, when I finally read this, that really the Greek text says not "Drink ye all of it", but "Drink, ye all, of it". [Laughter] And so everyone is to partake of it and I've always thought that if the translators had only been Southerners and had put "Drink y'all of it" [Laughter], we would never have had any problem at all. But he took the cup.

Now the cup, of course, was a beautiful symbol of the blood of Christ because wine was regarded as the blood of grapes. In Genesis chapter 49 and verse 11, wine is referred to as the blood of grapes. And so when Jesus chose the wine to represent his blood, it was a very fitting and apt symbol for him to use. And further, they drank of it. And remember, this is a word of faith. It points to the inward nature of the appropriation. For when you drink of something, what you drink of goes within you.

It, furthermore, points to something that is common. Faith is common. All drink whether they be nobles or laborers. Every one of us must drink, and so drinking is a beautiful figure for appropriation; the appropriation of faith. Furthermore, it is a very intimate act, for you come into very close contact with whatever you drink. So this is a beautiful figure of the appropriation. Eating and drinking are words of appropriation stressing the fact that the truth of the Lord Jesus must be appropriated most intimately. Then he adds, "This is the blood" or "my blood of the new covenant".

Now the new covenant is based upon a new sacrifice for the benefit of a new Israel. The old covenant of Moses was based or inaugurated by a sacrifice that Moses was responsible for, for the Israel that came out of the land of Egypt. But now, by virtue of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is a new covenant based upon a new sacrifice for a new elect company. Now the Epistle of the Hebrews has a great deal to say

about this and there is no need for us to stress it here. So that the Lord's Supper is designed to be a memorial of a new exodus accomplished at Jerusalem. At the Lord's table, we are to relive the experience of coming out of the Egypt of sin. Just as the children of Israel at the Passover supper every year relived that marvelous experience of coming out of the land of Egypt through the blood upon the doorposts, so every time we sit at the Lord's table, we are to relive the experience of coming out of the bondage of sin through the blood or sacrifice of our Lamb of God.

Now he says "which is shed for many". Everything led up to this, for the atonement was no afterthought, as our Lord was instituting the Lord's Supper. The cup, by the way, is more than a simple reminder. I must confess, I am not totally satisfied with Zwingli's interpretation of the Lord's Supper. It is the common interpretation that is practiced in evangelical churches. They think that the Lord's Supper, most of us have been taught this, the Lord's Supper is a simple memorial of what Jesus Christ did. I think it is a memorial of what Jesus Christ did, but I think it is more than that. I think it must be more than that because in a memorial, the emphasis is upon what we do. And in this sense, that interpretation has the same disadvantages that the Roman Catholic interpretation has. For Catholics, man offers a sacrifice to God in the sacrifice of the mass. For Zwinglians, for evangelicals, for you, man reminds himself of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, and gives thanks for it and publicly identifies himself as a Christian, and so it is man centered, this interpretation.

I am inclined to think that we should, in our observance of the Lord's Supper, lay a great deal more stress upon the fact that the cup, which speaks of the new covenant, is more than a simple reminder. It is a visible token, the absolute guarantee. It is the seal given by God that our sins and iniquities, he will remember no more. And so, when I think of the cup, as given by Jesus Christ to me, it is a kind of guarantee that the covenant which he has made and accomplished in his blood, is going to be carried out for me.

And I can rejoice in the salvation that is surely and definitely to be mine. Therefore, I like to put that stress upon the observance of the Lord's Supper.

By the way, in the institution of the Lord's Supper, the Lord Jesus takes a text from the Book of Exodus chapter 24, in which we have Moses inaugurating the first covenant, takes another text from Isaiah 53, verse 11 and 12, which is shed for many, a text that has to do with the suffering servant of Jehovah, puts the two texts together so that we are to understand that he is claiming to be the new Moses inaugurating a new covenant, but a new covenant that is possible only through the suffering of the suffering servant of Jehovah set forth so magnificently in the prophecy of Isaiah.

Now the conclusion of the ceremony; I'm going to go a few minutes overtime tonight and this is going to throw the tape ministry into terrible turmoil because they're not going to know what to do with a message this long. But that's too bad [Laughter]. The conclusion of the ceremony, verse 25, he says, "Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God." And here he says, the new covenant is to issue in a new day the Messianic kingdom. Then the *pater familias*, the head of the family, will be again present with all of his family and then he will rejoice with them over the great atoning work that he has accomplished.

And notice in this vow of abstinence on the part of our Lord, there are several implications that we may note in it. In the first place, it is implied that Jesus Christ is going to be exalted, for he says, "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine because the whole program has come to naught since they've got me and put me in prison or are going to". No, he doesn't say a thing like that. He is perfectly confident of the fact that he is going to survive all that the Romans and the Jews do to him.

He is to be exalted, in chapter 14 and verse 9, he said concerning Mary of Bethany, "Verily I say unto you, wherever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of her for a memorial of her". In other words, the gospel is going to go out to the world. Our Lord knew that his

mission would be successful, that he would be glorified and exalted, that he would survive all that the Romans and the Jews could possibly do to him.

James Denny, the great Scottish theologian, was once speaking on the Roman Catholic accretions to the cross and how much had been done to cloud and darken the teaching, the pure teaching of the word of God, by the things that that church had done and other churches had done and, finally, he said in the light of the fact that it was evident that some people in spite of the church had found the truth, he said, "You know, gentlemen, the cross is such a thing that even when you bury it, you bury it alive." In other words, no matter what man does to the work of God through Jesus Christ, no matter how he tries to snuff it out, it still will live in spite of what we do to it. And our Lord Jesus knew that he would survive all of the consequences of the actions of the Romans and the Jews. And so he says that he's not going to drink of the fruit of the vine until the day that he drinks it new with them in the kingdom of God.

In other passages dealing with this same question, it is stated that it shall be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. The kingdom shall be consummated then. The Passover and the supper culminate in the kingdom. And finally, there is to be a great convention of the redeemed in the kingdom. For Easter leads to the second coming of the Lord Jesus or epiphany. In the meantime, we feed on the bread and wine of our salvation.

Now I close with just a comment or two. If you are here tonight and you are not saved, your first responsibility before God is to step up and put your fingers in the blood that has been shed for you and sprinkle it on the doorposts of your hearts. I am speaking spiritually. As the Lord put it, "Take, eat". The supper is an emblem of his death and also of how we receive its benefits. If you're a Christian, if you are saved, then you should never forget his dieing love and meet...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]