

The Last Supper

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[0 : 0 0] All right, let's pray. Father God, we thank you that you sent Jesus to this world for us.

And Lord, we pray now that your Holy Spirit would convict us where we need to be convicted. Lord, that you would change us and make us into better disciples. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Well, it's pretty easy, I think, to trivialise things that we do a lot. So, the first thing I thought of when I thought of things that I trivialise that I do a lot is driving.

The first time I ever drove a car was on my home street back in Tassie. It was about maybe 100 metres long. And I bunny hopped my way down the street.

I was driving a manual for about maybe 10 metres before my mum got out of the passenger seat. I'm pretty sure she thought she was about to die. Got into the driver's seat and drove the rest of the way like it wasn't that hard at all.

[1 : 0 6] And there I was. I don't know. I was not a born natural driver. But now, I've moved to the big smoke and I can drive down the eastern freeway in peak hour where everyone's going 100 and they're about that far away from each other and merge in between and get angry and do all the good things a Melbourne driver should do.

And sometimes, I get home and if I think about the drive that I've just been on, I just don't remember what I did.

I don't remember when I changed lanes. I don't really remember driving down Alexander Parade, which is the way I have to come back when I go into the city. I just can't remember my trip home.

I can't remember which traffic lights were green, which were red or anything. It's because it's become so second nature to me that I don't think about it anymore and I've trivialised the art of driving.

I don't realise that it's actually quite difficult and it's actually something that is quite dangerous. And so, tonight, I want us to think about two things that we can trivialise because we do them a lot.

[2 : 1 9] Sin and communion or the Lord's Supper. Sin and communion. I want us to stop trivialising those things and to realise their importance or the importance of not doing it in the case of sin and why we do it often and why we should try not to do sin often.

And so, we're going to do that by looking at this passage that Sharon just read for us in Luke. We started this series last week, I think, or the week before, two weeks ago. As Paul said.

And we're in the book of Luke, which is a book, but first part of a two-part series. Luke acts, they go together as one. And Luke's written these two accounts so that we might know the truth about what we believe in.

So, in the first case, this was a guy called Theophilus. But now we can use these two books to encourage us and to find out about who Jesus was and what he did.

And we're looking tonight at chapter 22, which is at the start of Jesus' final day on earth as a human before he goes to the cross.

- [3 : 34] And chapter 22 is divided up very nicely into three main sections. And for a nice change, the NRSV writers, I think, have got the three subheadings there.
- And they're actually quite good. They fit into where the passage breaks up naturally. So, the first six verses show us the plot to kill Jesus.
- The next, from verses 7 to 13, show us the preparations of the Passover that the disciples make. And then the final verses, from verse 14 through to 23, show us the Passover meal that the disciples celebrate with Jesus, which Jesus then turns into the first communion.
- And so, tonight I want to focus mainly on the first section, where there's a plot to kill Jesus, and on the last section, on communion.
- Because I think that's where all the good, juicy, interesting bits are located in this passage. So, keep your Bibles open and we'll start in the first six verses.
- [4 : 42] I'll just read them out again in case you've forgotten. Now, the festival of unleavened bread, which is called the Passover, was near. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to put Jesus to death, for they were afraid of the people.
- Then Satan entered into Judas, called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve. He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers of the temple police about how he might betray him to them.
- They were greatly pleased and agreed to give him money. So, he consented and began to look for an opportunity to betray him to them when no crowd was present.
- So, here we see, we've got the chief priests and scribes, kind of the upper crust of Jewish society. They want to kill Jesus because he's getting a bit too popular with the masses.
- And they don't want to make a big deal about it because they're afraid of the masses of people turning on them. And I don't think they have a plan, but luckily for them, perhaps, not luck, but Judas comes along and he decides that he's going to help them get Jesus, help them kill Jesus.
- [5 : 56] And what's most interesting to me when you read this is verse 3, where it says, Then Satan entered into Judas. And perhaps when you're reading this devotionally or whatever, you can kind of gloss over that.
- Satan entered into Judas. Yeah, fair enough, no worries. But if you stop and you think for a moment about that, then it can raise, raised for me, a whole bunch of questions.
- I just want to try and deal with them and show you why we must stop or never trivialise sin. So, Satan enters into Judas.
- Now, does this mean that Judas was innocent, he was a good bloke, and then Satan entered into him and all of a sudden he couldn't control what he was doing anymore and he went and betrayed Jesus and he had no control and it's not his fault?
- Did he have a choice? That's kind of the questions. What does this say about Judas' actions? Is he ultimately responsible for his actions if Satan entered into him, like the Bible says?
- [7 : 06] And likewise, for us, this turns into a whole bunch of questions for us. Could I just be a cool, normal, good, loving Jesus Christian, and then all of a sudden Satan enters into me and I do something I didn't really want to do?
- Or when I do do those things that I don't want to do, it's not really my fault because Satan probably entered into me. Is that legitimate? Can we argue that?
- Well, if we look at the life of Judas, I think we can see that we don't need to worry that Satan's going to come and possess us after church and we can't blame Satan for our sin.

So, Judas, he's well known, he's infamous, I guess, because of this betrayal and he was one of Jesus' chosen 12 disciples, which means he'd been with Jesus since the beginning of his public ministry.

So, he'd been walking around with Jesus, he'd watched Jesus do all this amazing stuff and yet he still decided to betray him. But what's more interesting about Judas is that he was given charge of the treasury and that money, that was the money that the disciples sort of used, I guess, to cover their everyday living expenses.

[8 : 35] And we read in John chapter 12 that not only was he in charge of this money, but that he took money out of this common purse for his own use, without anyone knowing.

And so, the Judas that we know of from the Bible is not an innocent man.

He's a man who's already committing sin and he's a man who's not dealing with that sin of stealing. And I think what that tells us is that Satan doesn't just take random innocent people hostage somehow, possessing them to make them do evil.

But before you think, well, it's okay, I'm off the hook, I think a true and proper reading of the scripture tells us that there aren't any innocent people, that we're all guilty of sin and therefore we could, maybe we could all be possessed by the devil.

But I don't think that is a viable option. I'll tell you why. Okay. Satan has power, but ultimately that's been dealt with in the cross and we'll get to that a little bit more when we talk about the last section of these verses.

[9 : 59] But today, where we let sin go unchecked, where we think it's not a big deal, where we've trivialised those sins that we do over and over again because that's the only way we can get our conscience to deal with them, where we leave sin unchecked in our lives, Satan has power to act.

Satan can bring us down with those sins. You see, Judas, ultimately he was a lover of money. He loved money more than he loved Jesus.

Sure, he must have pretended to be a pretty good disciple, all right, otherwise maybe he would have got kicked off the team. But deep down in his heart, he loved money more than he loved Jesus.

And then ultimately that's shown when he sells. It says there that the priests in verse 5 were greatly pleased and agreed to give him money.

So he sells Jesus, his Lord, his Rabbi, his Master for the last three years. He sells him out for money, for his real Lord. And so I think this is a good reminder for us to look at our own lives and to see where is sin going unchecked.

[11 : 19] Are there things that you would be willing to sell out for Jesus? You see, people are good pretenders, especially, I think, in middle-class society.

We're good at pretending that we're all right, that we're okay, that things are great. But deep down, perhaps there are people here who know that they're not really sold out to Jesus, that they're actually more in love with the idea of fame or the idea of fortune or sex or getting a promotion or being popular or having a girlfriend or a nice car, whatever it might be.

Maybe you know deep down that you are sold out to things other than to Jesus. And I think Judas is a warning to us that if we let those sins go unchecked, if we don't deal with them, if we don't stop being fake and pretending like it's okay, then things can go horribly bad and Satan can get a foothold in our lives.

Sin is a big deal. And it takes our attention away from Jesus. An unchecked sin, that is sin we don't do anything about, we just let happen, we trivialise it, that's where we're in trouble.

So I want to encourage us to stop thinking that our sins don't matter and to start taking steps to deal with our sin.

[13 : 03] We're going to move to the next sections now and hopefully you'll see how that encouragement to stop trivialising sin is related to the Lord's Supper, which we'll get to in a moment. So the next section, verses 7 to 13, basically just give us a bit of fill-in information.

It tells us that it's the day of the unleavened bread, that's the Passover, and it seems in these verses that Jesus has some sort of foreknowledge of what the disciples are going to find when they go into Jerusalem and it happens just as he said.

And the disciples listen to Jesus, they do what he said, they go off into Jerusalem and they prepare.

But in case you're wondering exactly what this Feast of Unleavened Bread is, what the Passover is, I just want to try and give you some background information on the Passover.

So many of you might know, but the Passover meal was a big deal for Jews and I think today they still celebrate the Passover meal. And when I was a kid, I wasn't a Jew, but I did go to Passover meals at my church, where we would pass around all these funny little bits of bitter herbs, which tasted disgusting, and salty water and lamb, which was good, and other bits and pieces of things.

[14 : 41] And that's the only reason I really know what Passover is now. And as I've grown up a little bit, I've found out that that actually is a significant, significant thing.

So the Jews celebrate Passover and it was the most important meal in the Jewish year. And it was a very traditional thing that they did, that they'd done, or they should have been doing, since they left Egypt.

And in the time of Jesus, it was a pilgrimage feast, that is, Jews, wherever they were living, because they were a bit dispersed, came back to Jerusalem, they ate the Passover meal together in Jerusalem.

And the whole point of the meal, as I sort of have foreshadowed, was to look back to the time when God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, which was approximately 1,450 years before Jesus.

So, in Exodus, we read the story of how the Egyptians are slaves, of the Egyptians, the Israelites are slaves to the Egyptians, and God uses Moses to bring them out.

[16 : 02] And he does this by showing, by using Moses to show how powerful God is, God is actually in control, by sending a whole bunch of plagues on the Egyptians, and Pharaoh sort of says they can go a few times, but then he changes his mind all the time.

And finally, the last plague, is the plague where God, it's not really a plague, I guess, but God goes around at night, and he kills the firstborn of the Egyptians, the firstborn son of all the Egyptians, and the firstborn of all their livestock.

And, he doesn't kill any of the Israelites' firstborns, because they have, as God instructs them to do, killed a lamb, and sort of painted over the door frames, with the lamb's blood.

And so, when God sees that on their doors, he passes over them, and he doesn't kill their firstborn, they're safe. So, the Passover looked back to that, and, it also had a sense of looking forward, where, once they were taken out of the promised land, and started remembering the Passover, they looked, out of Egypt, I'm getting my words awfully confused tonight, I'm sorry, they looked forward, to the promised land.

So, the Passover, had a sense of, looking back to Egypt, and looking forward, first to the promised land, but now, in Jesus' time, looking forward to, a coming Messiah, who would, save, and restore Israel.

- [17 : 50] And, the reason it's called unleavened bread, is because, it was traditional for them, to use unleavened bread, because, after, God killed their firstborn, they were, let go from Egypt, but they had to go quickly, because, the Egyptians, were a bit mad, fair enough.
- So, that's what goes on, that's why, they have a lamb, because, on Passover, they kill a lamb, to remember, the lamb they had to kill, to get God, to pass over their doors.
- So, the Passover, was a great festival, and I'm pretty sure, that, it was with great anticipation, and excitement, probably, that, Peter and John, went, and, made these preparations, that we talk about.
- So, then we get to, the Passover, that Jesus celebrates, with his disciples, in verse, 14. I'll just read, these verses for you.
- When the hour came, he took his place, at the table, and the apostles, with him. He said to them, I have eagerly desired, to eat this Passover, with you, before I suffer.
- [19 : 04] For I tell you, I will not eat it, until it is fulfilled, in the kingdom of God. Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he said, take this, and divide it, among yourselves.
- For I tell you, that from now on, I will not drink, of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom, of God comes. Then he took, a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave it to them, saying, this is my body, which is given for you.
- Do this in remembrance, of me. And he did the same, with the cup after supper, saying, this cup, that is poured out, for you, is the new covenant, covenant, covenant, in my blood.
- So the preparations, are clearly finished, the rest of the disciples, and Jesus, have joined Peter, and John, at this room, and, they're ready, to have, a Passover meal.
- All these guys, would have had, lots of Passover meals, before, and they would have, I'm sure, enjoyed it, and they would have been, looking forward, to it. But, this is not, your ordinary, everyday, Jewish, Passover meal.
- [20 : 13] And Jesus, ends up, turning this meal, into, something more, into a sign, that, the old covenant, which is, I guess, what the Passover, was the greatest, symbol of, it was, a symbol of, the Jewish people, and the covenant, that God had with them.
- Jesus turns this, meal, into, a meal, that symbols, the new covenant, that in just a few hours, he will, put in place, when he dies, on the cross.
- And in these verses, there are two, big ideas, that, we need to grapple with, to understand the passage better. First one, is kingdom, of God.
- Kingdom of God, Jesus mentions it, in verses 16, and 18, is, a coming, historical event. And, when Jesus here, talks about the kingdom of God, being fulfilled, he's talking about, being, happening in the future.
- And so, the obvious question is, when, is this fulfillment? When does this kingdom come? Does it come, when Jesus dies, on the cross, which is in the future, for, when this passage, is written?
- [21 : 30] Or, are we still waiting, the coming of the kingdom of God? Does it come, when Jesus comes, again? And, does that, does it even matter, really matter, when the kingdom of God comes, you might think?
- Well, it does matter. And the answer, does it come on the cross, or does it come, in the second coming, is, both. Both and. That is, the old Jewish Passover, that's the meal that, the disciples think, they're going to have, is, partly fulfilled, when Jesus, goes to the cross, to die for our sins.
- So, the Passover celebrations, looked back, and forward, as I've mentioned before, and I've talked about, the lamb before, and if you read, 1 Corinthians 5, 7, there Paul says, that Jesus, today, is our, Passover lamb.

And so, anyone who looks, to Jesus Christ, and, puts their faith, and trust, in his death, on the cross, and, if you like, puts his blood, kind of like, over the door, of your life, if you like, to sort of think, picture like, anyone who does that, they are saved, by the blood of Jesus, and the kingdom of God, is, is at hand, is at work, in your life.

But there's also, definitely, a future aspect, to the kingdom of God, that isn't, totally fulfilled, when Jesus dies, on the cross. And that, that fulfillment, comes at the end of time, when Jesus, comes again.

[23 : 09] See, there'll be a time, when all of us, have to stand, before the judgment seat, of God. And at that time, there'll be people, who've looked to Jesus, as their Passover lamb, and, they'll be passed over, God's judgment, will pass over them, and they'll be able, to come into, a right relationship, with God, in heaven, for all time.

But let me say, it is a terrible, terrible, thing, if you, if you are, at the moment, going to face, that judgment day, with God, without, without any security, without any security, without the security, of having your faith, in the blood, of Jesus.

So, if you don't, if you haven't, or you don't confess, your faith, in Christ, if you don't invite him, to be your Lord, and Savior, then on judgment day, when the kingdom of God, is fulfilled, in all its fullness, you will have to face, God's wrath, and, it's not going to pass over you, it's going to be, if you like, poured out on you, for all the sin, that you've done, and that is a scary, scary, scary thing.

But there's a, there's an awesome, awesome way out, you see, God, wants you, to let Jesus, be your Passover lamb, see that's why, he might have brought you, to church tonight, if you're not a Christian, because, he wants you to know, that, you can, have a relationship, with him, that Jesus, has died, for your sins, and that you, can be spared, the wrath of God.

So we should not, underestimate, how important it is, that Jesus, acts as that, that cover, to God's wrath for us.

[25 : 07] There are people who, dismiss such an idea, as cosmic, child abuse, that God would be so angry, that he would just, pour out his wrath on his son, how could any loving father, do that?

I would say tonight, that, if he didn't do that, then, there'd be no hope for us, and it is actually, an amazing act of love, for us, also his children, that leads him, to, to send Jesus, to die for us.

The second, big idea, in, these verses, these last verses, is, this, communion, thing, that Jesus, institutes.

and it's important, not to let, our familiarity, our familiarity, with, the story, of Jesus's death, and resurrection, get in the way, of just, how weird, what Jesus is saying, actually is.

See, verse 19, Jesus takes bread, and he breaks it, and he gives it to his disciples, and he says, this is my body. Just imagine, for a second, that you've gone to, a normal old Passover, and the bread's coming around, and I'm not sure, what they normally said, but I'm pretty sure, it wasn't, this is my body.

[26 : 35] Jews were not into, cannibalism, in the first century. You're going to think, this is weird. Maybe you even think, this is weird, now, when we come to do communion, once a month, here at this service.

You think, what's going on here? I'm not real comfortable, with this. It's not just, this is my body, he says. He also, takes a cup, and he hands it to his disciples, and he says, this cup, that is poured out for you, is the new covenant, in my blood.

Again, this is, not really, your normal, kind of everyday, dinner time, conversation. but, these things, that Jesus is saying, are deeply significant, and they are, pointing to something, they're a symbol, pointing to, what is about to happen, when Jesus goes, to the cross, his body broken, and his blood shed.

It's pointing, it's pointing, to the fact, that, God, will institute, on the cross, the new covenant, that he's been promising, for quite some time, up to the point, where, we read this passage.

Jesus', body being broken, and his blood, being shed, symbolized, in the breaking, of the bread, and the wine. These, are the signs, of the new covenant.

[28 : 14] See, communion, cannot be trivialized. It's so easy, for us, to do. If you, have grown up, in church, maybe you've had, communion, every single Sunday, of your life.

Maybe that's, somewhere in the order, of, over a thousand, communions, perhaps. Probably, many more. It is easy, like driving a car, which you've also done, probably thousands of times, to trivialize it.

I, find it easy, to just think, yeah, it's just communion, she'll be right, say the words, yip-dee-doo-dah. But, we, we must not do that, because it is a significant, amazing, thing, that's going on.

An amazing thing, that we're remembering, when we take communion. When we take communion, we're looking forward, we're looking backward, and we're looking, to the present.

I just want to unpack, those three things. We take communion, we look forward, we look forward, to the, final fulfillment, of God's kingdom.

[29 : 28] And, if you read Revelation, which talks a bit more, about that happening, you'll see that, when God's people, get gathered together, after the judgment, of God has happened, we get to eat, a massive meal, with God, with Jesus.

And so, in these verses, he says, I will not, eat of this again, until, your, my, until, the kingdom is fulfilled. and that, is what he's talking about, that final day.

And you and I, if we have our trust in Jesus, are going to be part of that. We're going to be sitting around, with Jesus, and about, a million, or billion other Christians, having an awesome, meal.

We look forward, to that, when we take communion. We also, though, look backward, backward in time. And we look back, and we remember, what Jesus is about to do, on the cross, when we read this.

We remember that, he endures the cross, that he dies, and that he defeats death, and rises again. And that if we put our trust, and our faith in that, we can be forgiven, and we can have a right relationship, with God, which is not tarnished, by our sin.

[30 : 46] See, we look back, and we remember, that God has dealt with our sin, and we remember, that God had to deal, with our sin, by breaking the body of Jesus, and by shedding his blood.

See, sin must not be trivialised. It had to be paid for, in a horrible, horrible way. And communion, must not be trivialised, because it's there, that we remember, what Jesus has done for us, what God has done for us, and what's going to happen, for us, in the future.

The other thing we do, when we take communion, is, we look, at the present. We look at each other. Communion is a, community meal.

I don't think the words, are related, but, communion, communion, it is, it's like our spiritual food, but we eat it together, and by it, we ask God, to strengthen, all of us, to live together, as his people.

Too much, the sin of, Western society, is to individualise, the Christian faith, to make it all about, me and my relationship, with God. And that's true. It is a lot, to do with, how you are, in a personal, right relationship, with God.

[32 : 04] But, we cannot, in doing that, overlook, the community aspect, of being a Christian. And, communion, is one way, that we remember, that it's about, being a body, of believers.

That we, together, celebrate, what God's done, for all of us, and we encourage, one another, to live, as changed people.

See, there's nothing, trivial about sin, and there's nothing, trivial about communion. Sin is, a terrible, terrible problem, and it, causes so, so many, so many problems, in this world.

And we, cannot serve, both, our sinful desires, and Jesus. We have to, choose. And communion, is a great, great, powerful symbol, and a great reminder, about how, God has dealt, with sin.

God has done, everything. We can do nothing, to approach God, nothing to make, ourselves right, with God. And, as we take communion, we remember this, we remember, what God has done, through Jesus.

[33 : 27] We look forward, to his return, to sharing, in that, massive, massive feast, with him. And we look back, and remember, like I said, what Jesus has done, on the cross.

and, we look around, at each other, and we, share in this meal together, and we support each other, and we take a stand together, as brothers, and sisters, in Christ.

I want to encourage you all, to, not trivialise, sin, and to not trivialise, this, very, very important, meal, and symbol, of our lives, as Christians.

Let's pray. God, I thank you, for, sending your son, Jesus, into this world. Lord, I thank you, that he deals, ultimately, with the problem, of sin.

And Lord, I thank you, that he instituted, communion, as a really powerful, way, of, us, remembering, that, and looking forward, to, what is to come, when your kingdom, is fulfilled, and of supporting, one another.

[34 : 35] Lord, we just pray, that we would not, trivialise, our sin, we would not, trivialise, this meal, we're about to share, with each other. Lord, help us to realise, its deep, and spiritual significance, and help us, to live, as 100%, sold out, followers of you.

In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.