

May 26, 2019 – Elmont Baptist Church

Message Series: The Gospel of Mark

Week 46: “Take; This is My Body.”

Text: Mark 14:12-25

We’re unpacking and understanding the Book of Mark. The Gospel writer’s audience are Roman believers and he writes to help us see Jesus as the Messiah King and Suffering Servant. He works to answer three questions throughout the letter: “Who is Jesus?”, “What did Jesus come to do?”, and “What does Jesus expect of you?”

We do some things in church that are very churchy. They didn’t start that way, but have become that because we don’t often take the time to teach or learn about them. For faith families that are like ours there are two ordinances that we hold to as biblical commands to be continually carried out by the church. They are baptism and communion, or the Lord’s Supper. Even the word ordinance sounds churchy or legal, but it means a “practice or ritual intended to demonstrate or exhibit one’s faith.” For too many of us these foundational practices of our faith have lost, or maybe never had, significant meaning for us. We come to a passage today that is important in the lives of the disciples. It’s the last supper in one respect and the first supper in another. Ideally, we would incorporate the observance of the Lord’s Supper into our time together this morning, but due to planning and time considerations we aren’t going to do that.

Let’s READ our TEXT

Through this passage we can see that...

Christ followers celebrate the Lord’s Supper by taking it with thankful, repentant, joy-filled hearts.

The Lord’s Supper, or Communion, is rooted in the Passover meal. The Passover was first celebrated when God delivered His people, Israel, out of slavery in Egypt back in the book of Exodus. He gave them very strict orders about how and when to observe this meal and they obeyed. The centerpiece of the meal was the Passover lamb that was killed and its blood would cover the house and save them from death. Throughout their history, they continued to celebrate the Passover meal and now the True Passover Lamb, Jesus, is partaking of the meal with His disciples. In this meal there were four cups of wine, or grape juice if that’s easier for you to hear. Each had significance and was taken from God’s promise in Exodus 6:6-7. The first cup was “I will bring you out”, the second, “I will deliver you”, third, “I will redeem you”, and lastly, “I will take you”. It’s most likely this third, “I will redeem you” cup, that Jesus used to institute the Lord’s Supper. So they had the Passover meal and then Jesus begins this new tradition that we now call the Lord’s Supper.

The New Testament church continued this practice of a meal and then communion, or Lord’s Supper, faithfully for at least its first 200 or so years. We see the practice referenced in 1 Cor 11 and Jude vs 12 as they were commonly referred to as “Love feasts”.

We need all of that this morning to have a better, more holistic look at this foundational, biblically commanded, practice we still observe today. We need to better understand it and better understand how we should celebrate it, and maybe even by taking in the truth more deeply we will celebrate the Lord’s Supper more fully.

Christ followers Celebrate Communion by...

✓ **Looking Back at the Cross – 1 Cor 11:26**

- Jesus knows everything about you
- And has fully forgiven you

There's always been a little confusion for me about how we've observed the Lord's Supper in every church I've been. It's not that it was wrong, it just wasn't enough. It was one way, or one emotion, that we should express, but not all that should be present. For most of the churches that I've been a part of the words like "worship" or "worshipful" were synonymous with "reverent" and even "quiet". As a kid, the whole goal of the church service was to be "quiet". There is definitely a time for that, but it shouldn't be all the time. Even during the Lord's Supper there is a time for celebration that includes volume. There is a complexity of emotions that we should bring to the Lord's Supper table.

The first ten verses of our text tell us how Jesus knows everything. He knows what has happened, what is happening, and what will happen. This is true for each of us as well. He knows all that you are and all that you've done. All of it. Jesus didn't just save the "young, hasn't done or thought anything too bad" me. He forgave all my sin, for all my life. Knowing EVERYTHING, He still chose me. When we come to the communion table and take the bread while thinking back to the broken body of Jesus and the cup thinking of the shed blood of Jesus to cover our sin, yes there's rightfully an aspect of sorrowfulness for what our sin cost Him, but there's even more thankfulness for what His love bought us. Sometimes people at church don't look all that thankful.

The Lord's Supper is always a time to look back at the cross with thankfulness, and a time for...

✓ **Looking Now at My Life – 1 Cor 11:27-29**

- Are my relationships in right order?
- Am I living in the victory of being forgiven?

The cross of Jesus Christ was a one-time event in history that changed everything, but it's also an event that keeps changing us. If we take the Lord's Supper and look back with thankfulness, but don't take the time to examine our lives and relationships, then we are missing a great responsibility. To think that Jesus' broken body and shed blood only change your eternity is not the teaching of any part of the Scriptures. Paul picks up on this in this passage to the Corinthian church. He warns them of the seriousness of not looking at their relationships and the impact of God's forgiveness in their lives in how they love people. They understood the celebration aspect of coming together, but their celebration turned selfish and self-indulgent. The instruction is to take seriously the Lord's Supper and examine your heart's condition in relationships and selflessness and repent where needed. Our being fully forgiven at the moment of our trusting Jesus should drive us to keep short accounts of our sin and strive for godliness in more and more areas of our lives. We take communion with thankfulness, and we take it with repentance at the same time. We also take it while...

✓ **Looking Ahead to Heaven – Rev 19:6-10**

- There will be a great feast celebration
- Am I preparing for it now?

If we come to the Lord's Supper table together and fail to see it as a micro-illustration of the Great Wedding Feast that we will be a part of, then we miss an opportunity to set our minds and hearts on what awaits us for all eternity. This feast will be a celebration, it will be THE CELEBRATION! There hasn't been nor will ever be a celebration that will rival this one, and if you are in Christ, you will be not just a guest, but part of the family and wedding party. Celebration, enjoyment, doing fun things are not off limits for Christ followers. All those things should be God honoring, but they should be done with some regularity. It doesn't have to be extravagant, it can be if you have the means, and you can invite your pastor if you're not sure. It can be small things that you and your spouse or family enjoy. The bottom line is that we should do fun and enjoyable things that help us think more about heaven. The Lord's Supper should have an element of celebration to it as well. Because we can read all the way to the end of the story and know that Jesus' death and resurrection were the decisive victory forever, we can go ahead and celebrate now especially during communion.

The hope today is that we will think better about the Lord's Supper and not just approach it the same way every time. There is more than just one set of emotions or one mindset that we need to bring to the communion table. We need to be thankful for the broken body and shed blood of Jesus. We need to examine our lives and repent as needed. And we need to celebrate in preparation of the great wedding feast of Christ and His bride, the Church. And we may do all these things at the same time. Our church leadership will be working hard to help promote these other emotions and aspects of the Lord's Supper when we gather together.

Today, let's take some time to think and listen to the Holy Spirit encourage us in our thankfulness, repentance, and celebration of Jesus.