

## The Meal Mark 14:12-26

The following question always makes for a good icebreaker: Describe both your *worst* all-time meal and your *best* all-time meal. We recently asked our interns this question, and the responses for the first category had to do with eating mysterious foods *overseas*. The best meals were more appetizing.

Meals can be powerful. I don't mean "powerful" like the feeling you get after eating a Burrito Supreme at 10:30pm from Taco Bell, but certain occasions when you don't want the night to end – good food, good friends/family, good festivities. It's almost like we're made for it.

Perhaps you have a meal that takes you back home. I can't eat meatloaf without thinking about my mother!! Every time I go home she makes it for me. It's the best.

When overseas, certain American restaurants take me home too. When Kimberly and I were in Ukraine for 40 days adopting four of our children, we had eaten a variety of foods in the small town where we were staying. We missed certain foods. So when we would have to make a trip to Kiev, we would always stop in at Poltava because they had a *McDonalds*. Those golden arches seemed to be like the outstretched arms of Jesus – "Come to me, all you who are weary, and I will give you rest, and Quarter-Pounders."

The Lord's Supper takes us home, like no other meal takes us home. It reminds us that our home is not here. And it promises that one day we will all be home, and the meal experience then, will be unlike anything we've ever had.

You and I are made for a table.

We're made for companionship, fellowship, hospitality.

We're made to dwell with God in a place with no sin and no tears.

**In this life, we face trouble, but soon, we will be home and we will dine with our King.**

**And we will feel more at home than we ever have in this life.**

**This is what we get to talk about today.**

**This is good news today.**

**If you feel especially weary right now; if you're empty, frustrated, struggling with a particular affliction, then I pray that Jesus will feed you with his grace today, and you will find fresh strength.**

### **Mark 14**

**The passion narrative begins at 14:1, with the plot to kill Jesus, as we saw last week.**

- **1/3 of Mark's Gospel is devoted to Jesus' last few days.**
- **1/6 to his last 24 hours**

**In ancient biographies, many believed that how you *died* revealed your true character.**

**As we consider the brutal death of Jesus, we are confronted with a question.**

**It's not just a spiritual/faith question, but an obvious question.**

**A historical question.**

**A practical question.**

**Why would anyone read about the death of Jesus and say, "That's the message for me!"?**

- **"That's my Lord!"**
- **"That's my spiritual leader!"**

**On the surface, His death looks so pathetic.**

**You want to follow a weak victim of torture?**

**Confucius, Mohammed, Buddha, Moses – founders of major religions all died in old age – mostly in comfort & triumph.**

**Jesus died alone.**

**He died young.**

**Stripped naked.**

**Mocked from inches away.**

**Spat upon.**

**Crying in agony, “Why have you forsaken me?”**

**Yet, His death completely changed the ancient world!!!**

**Why? How?**

**It changed lives because people understood the MEANING of Jesus’ death.**

- They embraced this message (or him) by faith.

**Here’s why what we are looking at is so important:**

**Jesus reveals the MEANING of his death at a MEAL.**

- **When Jesus wanted to explain the meaning of his death, he didn’t pull out the PowerPoint presentation. He didn’t give a formal lecture at a podium.**
- **He chose a particular time and event: Passover.**
- **Thousands of lambs** were slaughtered in Jerusalem at this time.
- **They were drained in the Kidron valley.**

**He had been telling them about the cross.**

- **But they don’t fully get it.**

**If you don’t understand the meaning of Jesus’ death then you may say “that’s sad” or “that’s pathetic” or “that’s sacrificial” or “that’s moving.”**

**After the *Passion of the Christ* came out, many unbelievers were even**

sympathetic to the movie.

**A lot of people were crucified in Jesus' day.**

**But this was no ordinary crucifixion.**

**Something more than a Jew dying on a cross was happening.**

**In a word, his death means: *Substitution*.**

### **The Supper Today**

**It is not an exaggeration to say that the Last Supper has changed the world.**

**Many have grown so familiar with it that it no longer astonishes them.**

**It's like living by a train** – after a while you don't notice it; familiarity can kill astonishment.

Many Christians **downplay the Supper today.**

That's a **modern phenomena.**

- If you compare *Calvin's Institutes* (about 1500 pages, 90 on LS) to Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology* this is what you find. *Institutes* is about 1500 pages, and it contains 90 pages on the Lord's Supper. Grudem's *Systematic* is about 1200 pages with only 12 on the L.S.
- **Now, it was in part because of the battle that they were in, but that's not the only reason.**
  - It's simply not as central as it used to be.
  - **The Reformers believed that two things were central in worship: the preaching of the Word and the table.**
  - **Preaching to the ear, and preaching to the eye.**

It seems that this was the pattern of the NT church. (cf., Acts 20:7)

**The Last Supper appears in all four gospels, highlighting its**

significance, and Luke says, “Do this in remembrance of me.” (John records mainly the washing of the disciples feet at the meal).

Jesus foresaw that Christians would do this through the centuries.

### **3 Truths that Inform Our Understanding the Table**

#### **#1: Jesus Is the Ultimate Host (14:12-25)**

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The entire passage in verses 12-25 display the fact that Jesus is the host.

##### **1. He Arranges the Place for the Meal (12-16)**

**12: Thursday.** It’s the “first day of Unleavened Bread” when they sacrificed the Passover Lamb.

**12b:** The disciples want to know **where** they will have this meal.

- Passover was to be celebrated within the walls of the city.

#### **What was this Passover Meal like?**

We can’t be fully sure but from later Jewish sources we know the traditions that developed. And Jesus did something like it. Let me put it in **11 Steps**.

- 1. Gather around the table with a family, maybe extended family.**
- 2. Recline at the table (18).** Not chairs. Not Last Supper Painting. (They weren’t Italian renaissance people!).
- 3. The Father (or oldest male): Begin w/ a blessing on the Feast and the **first cup of wine**.**
  - You would drink the **first of four cups**.
  - You know the game, “**follow the cup**”? If you follow the cups, you can get the gospel.
- 4. Someone brings the food to the table.**
  - *Unleavened Bread* – symbolized the haste and danger of the Exodus
  - *Bitter Herbs* – Bitterness of slavery

- *Stewed Fruit* – Reminded them of the bricks
- *Roasted Lamb* – blood over the doorposts
- 5. The youngest son asks the question, “What does all this mean?”**
  - The Father would explain the story of the Exodus from Egypt. All night, he’s teaching.
- 6. Have a time of praise.**
  - They would sing the *Hallel* Psalms:
  - **Psalm 113-115** were the first half. They would sing those.
- 7. Have a **second cup of wine.****
- 8. The Father pronounces a blessing on the Bread and break it, and pass it out. And then the **eat the meal** - the bread, the herbs, and the fruit, then the real meal would begin with the roasted Lamb.**
- 9. When that meal is over, the Father blesses the **third cup of wine.****
  - I think the third cup comes in **verse 23**. After the meal was eaten (Lk 22:30)
- 10. Sing the second group of Psalms – Psalm 116-118.**
- 11. Drink the **fourth cup.** The ceremony ends before midnight.**

So hold on to all of this information...

**13-15: Jesus gives precise instructions.**

- Luke identifies them as Peter and John (22:8).
- This is very reminiscent of the preparation for the **triumphal entry** (Mark 11).

**13:** He sent two of them to the city to look for a **man carrying a water jar** (13).

- **Does Jesus have special opp agents? “Just look for the guy with the red rose”**
- Jesus may have arranged the covert meeting in advance.

- **A male water carrier would have been strange, for that was reserved for women and slaves.**

**14:** They are to follow him to a **specific house**.

**14b:** Then they were to say “**the Teacher**” **needs a guest room** in order to eat the Passover

**15:** Jesus told the disciples that this guy would show them a **large furnished upper room**.

- Have him get it ready.
- **There seems to be more than just the disciples having this meal.** It’s a large room.
  - Later, “one of the twelve” will betray him (20). Jesus narrows down the room to the twelve. It seems he’s got a room of more than twelve present.
- Most believe that this may be **John Mark’s mother’s home**, where the early church gathered. (Acts 1:13; 12:12)

**16:** Amazingly, **this all happened just as Jesus told them!**

**Notice: Jesus is in charge of the Passion Week!**

- **He makes the plans.**
- **The events leading to the cross did NOT catch him off guard!**
- **There’s not a hint of desperation, fear, or anger.**
- **“In 1906 Albert Schweitzer published his groundbreaking work, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. He believed Jesus saw Himself as a first century eschatological prophet who believed His ministry would usher in the apocalyptic end of history. Unfortunately, Jesus was mistaken. Things got out of hand, and He was brutally put to death in the process” (Akin).**
- **That’s not an honest reading of the Bible.**
- **Things don’t get out of hand. Jesus is in charge over everything!**
- **He’s willingly laying his life down.**

**A divine appointment was scheduled.**

**Jesus was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world (1 Pet**

1:20).

**My friends, the Lord Jesus is in control!  
You can trust his words, just as these disciples did.**

**2. He Presides Over the Meal (17-25)**

- A few thousand years precede this meal.
- Mark is very selective in what he shares.
- **There was a whole liturgy that went along with this meal – as I laid out for you.**
- Mark assumes his readers are familiar with it.

17-18a: Reclining at table.

**18b: The opening reference to the Last Supper in Mark 14:18 comes a good way into the Passover meal. It's already in progress.**

- During the meal **Jesus solemnly announces, “ ‘I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me.’”**
- Jesus applies a Davidic Psalm, **Ps 41:9, to this event.**

**19:** These words provoked the disciples and they began asking, **“Is it I?”**

**20:** Jesus says:

- It is one of the twelve
- It is one who is dipping the bread into the dish

**21: This verse is loaded with significance.**

- Jesus weds Daniel's **Son of Man** with Isaiah's **Suffering Servant**.
- Jesus **pitied Judas** “woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed”
- The **future judgment of Judas would be so bad** that it would be better if he had never been born!
- While this event happened under the sovereignty of God, **Judas was clearly responsible.**



**The clear call to us is that we are responsible and that we must repent in order to be saved from the wrath of God.**

**So here is the host! Here is a momentous occasion!**

**Verses 22-25** we see Jesus presiding over the meal, explaining the bread and cup. He's the host.

**Application:**

**Have you ever had a good host? Are you a good host? Do you enjoy hosting people?**

**My friends, we are hosted by Jesus Himself – forever.**

- **Every week, we come to His Table and he feeds us.**
- **In worship, we receive grace from Him.**
- **He says, “come to me, and I will give you rest.”**
- **He told the disciples, “I am going to prepare a place for you!”**

**Read the words of Isaiah aloud with me, as we look forward **the day to come:****

<sup>6</sup> On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

<sup>7</sup> And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.

<sup>8</sup> He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces. (Isa 25:6-8)

**What a host! The Lord will make it!**

- **Not a hot pocket! Not a hot and ready!**
- **An out-of-this-world meal, made by the Lord, with pallets not damaged by the fall, in the company of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Paul, Peter, millions more, with Jesus in the center!**

**Think about the greatest invitations you could ever receive. They all pale in comparison to this.**

**If you aren't a Christian, it's not because you're not welcome to come. Jesus invites you to come to Him, and feast.**

**Christian, find strength here.**

- **Jesus hosts us.**
- **He loves us.**
- **He feeds us.**
- **He makes us lie down in green pastures; he restores our soul... He prepares a table in the midst of our enemies!**

## **#2: Jesus Is the Ultimate Feast (14:22-25)**

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**Jesus is not only the host, but in the Lord's Supper, He is actually **the meal!****

**We see this in his reinterpretation of the elements.**

**Jesus has the audacity to change and revise the Passover meal that Moses said was to be done as a perpetual memorial (Exodus 12:14)!**

**He can do that because the Passover meal was pointing to something greater, to Someone greater: **Himself!****

**22-25:** The institution is described briefly.

- **It's only a few verses but it has major implications.**
- **A whole new era is dawning.**
- **Something huge is happening.**

**Summary:** Jesus takes the holiest time on Israel's calendar and says, "It's all about Me."

### **A. Bread**

**22:** “While they were eating, Jesus took **bread**, gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to his disciples.”

These words occur probably **between the second and third cups of wine. (the Meal time).**

- **The seven verbs in v. 22 (eat, take, bless, break, give, say, take), display Jesus’ grace.**
- Aramaic (Jesus’ native tongue): “**body**” likely meant “**my person,**” “**my whole being,**” “**my self.**”
- **The Greek word behind “body” is not *sarx* (flesh), but *sōma*, “body” or perhaps “being.”**
- Jesus will give *himself*, wholly and without reserve.

The “**unleavened bread,**” which symbolized the haste and danger of the Exodus, **came to represent the affliction and trials of the people in Egypt and the wilderness.**

- The Presider at the Passover would say, “**This is the bread of *our* affliction.**”
- **Jesus essentially says, “This is the bread of *my* affliction.”**
- The bread represents **his torn flesh.**
  - “This is the bread of my affliction.... my suffering”
  - “I am going to lead the ultimate Exodus.”
  - “I am the ultimate Moses”
  - “This is the ultimate suffering”
  - “I am going to bring the ultimate salvation”
  - “My death is the ultimate moment of the history of the world.”
  - My death is the most important thing that has ever happened.
  - "All the other deliverances were pointing to me."

## B. Wine

**23–24: Taking the third cup, Jesus gives it to the disciples.**

- **Between the bread (14:22) and cup (v. 23) is the period of time to eat the meal.**
  - The idea of **transubstantiation** is an over-interpretation of the text and is not what Jesus is saying. It's that these elements convey his body and blood; they represent his body and blood.

**24: The climax of the meal:** “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.”

- The life of a creature resided in its blood;
- **Jesus' reference to the cup as “my blood” points to his very life.**
- **Matt 26:28:** Matthew ties the blood to the “**for the forgiveness of sins.**” No blood, no forgiveness.

## C. Where's the Lamb?

Interestingly, there's no mention of a lamb at the table.

We read of bread and cup.

But this would have been a very strange Passover to not have a Lamb!!!

Again, Mark is selective, so we can't be sure about this, but it appears that there's no lamb present.

Have you ever been to a meal without meat? **Some of us start having a nervous breakdown!**

- **One of our first meal's after being married – me and Kimberly – spinach salad?**

What it seems is this:

**The lamb was not on the table because the lamb of God was reclining at the table.**

**Jesus was the main course.**

**An animal can't ultimately substitute for the sin of a person; only a person can.**

**“This is my blood that is poured out” (Mark 14:24) he is identifying himself with the suffering servant in Isaiah. “I am the lamb that all the other little lambs pointed.”**

- **John 1: “The Lamb of God that takes away in the sin of the world.”**
- **“Christ our Passover lamb has been slain” (1 Cor. 5:7)**
- **Revelation: "Worthy is the Lamb"**
- **Mark 10:45.**

**This is the meaning of his death.**

- **His death is a substitutionary death.**
  - **His death is an act of substitutionary, sacrificial love without which we cannot be saved.**
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- **Israel had to take shelter under the blood of the Lamb.**
  - **That lamb was their substitute.**
  - **It was killed but they would be saved.**
  - **No blood, no salvation.**

**This is a picture of the gospel: Your hope in escaping God's just judgment is not in your morality, your resume, your looks – it's only your faith in a substitute.**

**“That night, in Egypt, in every home there was either a dead son, or a dead lamb” (Ex. 12:30)**

**You were saved on your faith in a substitutionary sacrifice, or else.**

**“By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them” (Heb. 11:28)**

**Judgment is coming: Either Christ dies in your place on the cross, or you receive God’s just judgment.**

**1 Jn 3: “We know love in this – he laid down his life for us”**

**Trust in Him, for our salvation is bound up in a Person!**

- I’m sure that some in Israel put the blood on the doorpost **with some measure of doubt.**
- Others were **greatly confident.**
- But you know what? Regardless of how “strong” one’s faith was, both were saved – the one with little faith and the one with great faith. Why?

**Because you aren’t saved by the quality of your faith, but by the object of your faith.**

**Have you put your faith in God’s ultimate substitute: Jesus the Lamb of God?**

**Find shelter under the blood of the lamb, and be spared from the wrath to come.**

### **#3: Jesus Makes the Ultimate Promise (14:25-26)**

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**25–26: 14:25 falls at the drinking of the final cup of the Passover.**

**25: – But they don’t drink the fourth cup!!!**

**26: – they sing a hymn. That’s what you do at the end.**

**25: “I will not drink anew until that day...”**

**We will have to wait on that cup!**

**The four cups of wine is believed to have come from a four-fold promise in **Exodus 6:6-7**:**

- **“I will bring you out”**
- **“I will free you from slavery”**
- **“I will redeem you”**
- **“I will take you to be my people and I will be your God... I will bring you into a land”**

**That last promise looked to the day of complete consummation, in which God and his people were at rest.**

**Jesus is saying, “I don’t get that cup yet. It’s not that day yet.”**

**Instead of that fourth cup, which we will enjoy later, Jesus would drink a different cup**

**v. 36 – a cup of wrath.**

**We have the promise of lifting the cup again because Jesus drank that cup for us.**

**All of this, on the night before he was delivered...**

**Again, we can see the powerful parallels with the Exodus.**

- **Moses, a greater deliverer, instituted the first Passover.**
- **Jesus, the greater deliverer, instituted the Lord’s Supper.**
  - **He’s creating an even greater people of God that encompasses the nations.**
- **The first Passover meal was held on the night before a great deliverance — a deliverance from Egyptian slavery.**
- **The Lord’s Supper was held on the night before an even greater deliverance — salvation from sin and death!**

Everything in redemptive history has been pointing to this death – it's the climax of history....

#### **#4: How This Meal Can Transform Your Life: "Take it"**

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**I've had some wonderful meals lately....**

- **You can have a wonderful meal, and have it all laid out, and still starve to death if you don't do something.... What's that?**
- **You have to eat it!**
- **This is why Jesus says, "take it."**
- **Jesus is our salvation. "Take him!"**

**You don't get the benefit of food unless you take it in and digest it. For the unbeliever, You will not enjoy the benefits of Jesus' death without entering into a personal relationship with him.**

**Before you can take the Table, you must take the One to whom the table points: Jesus.**

**You must receive Him like starving person receives bread! Desperately. Dependently. You can't earn it, you receive it.**

**For the believer, we receive this meal for constant nourishment.**

#### **1. Take it with Dependency**

Pause for a moment. **Look around this table.**

- **It's a table of grace, not merit.**
- **We're here because of his blood, not ours. His performance, not ours.**
- **Depend on Christ's work not your own!**
  - **Jesus is saying: "Your salvation depends not mainly your commitment to me, but upon my commitment to you!"**



- Jesus makes this oath with blood.
- The Lord's Supper is designed to massage this grace into your heart.
- That your salvation is based upon Jesus' work, and you need to take it in – depending on him.
- Do you believe this?
- **My relationship depends not on my past but on Christ's past, not on my record but his record.**
- **"Jesus' commitment to you is the food your heart needs" – then you wouldn't be so scared, so upset, so depressed. (Ht: Keller)**

## 2. **Take it in Community**

Passover was a meal for **the family**.

- But Jesus pulls them out of the family and takes it with them (Keller).
- Why?
- **If you believe in Jesus' as your substitute, your Savior, then you have a new family and it has a stronger unity than your own family.**
  - Your **class doesn't matter; race doesn't matter.**
  - There's something stronger than all this: **His blood.**
- **What binds us together is that we have been loved by Jesus Christ, and we now love each, as he has loved us.**
- **The church is: not an event, not a building.**
- **It's a community of brothers and sisters adopted by the Father, purchased by the blood, indwelt by the Spirit.**
  - The table is a powerful display of unity.

## 3. **Take it with Expectancy**

- The Lord's Supper is a look into the future.

- This is just to **appetizer**.
- It is a reminder of what's coming to those who trust in Him.
- He says to his people, **“No matter how awful you feel right now, I’m going to get you to the table.”** (Keller)

**Depend on His substitutionary work.**

**Enjoy this new community.**

**Expect to eat it again.**

**The Table is powerful. It reminds us of home. And there's no place like home.**