



Jesus Fights For Our Redemption - Part 3 (The Last Supper)

(from 10/23/16 sermon)

I. **OPEN** - See if there is anyone who wants to share a short testimony, or if there are there specific praise updates to begin CG.

PRAY

Q - Sermon takeaways from those who were in attendance?

*READ ALOUD MATTHEW 26:17-30

II. REFLECT

In this passage we see Christ with his tight-knit group of disciples...the twelve...on the last night before being arrested and later crucified. And how did they spend this last evening together? Around a table over a meal. We were reminded on Sunday that food gathers us. In most instances where families or groups gather for enjoyment or stimulating conversation, more often than not there is food involved. Remember that of all of the people that Christ ministered to, He only chose 12 to really get close to, and of the 12 there were only 3 (Peter, James and John) who were most intimate with Him. It was these 12 that He was with on the last night. This was a group that had walked with Him, ate with Him, experienced miracles with him, laughed with Him, and learned from Him for the past 3 years of His ministry. He knew them well and truly loved them. But it was 1 individual from this tight-knit group of 12 that He proclaimed would soon betray Him. Ouch! We expect that those outside of our friend groups might hurt us, but when those that are closest to us hurt us the pain goes a little deeper.

While reclining at the table with the 12, in v. 21 Jesus suddenly declares that one of the 12 will betray Him. This troubled them greatly and they began to ask, "Is it I?".

Discussion - The fact that each of the disciples asked "Is it I?" is actually a good thing. Although they loved the Lord and felt confident that they'd never betray him, they also knew the condition of the human heart...fully capable of sin, betrayal, and unthinkable things. Consider I Cor 10:12 where we are told, "Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall." Why? Jeremiah 17:9 sums it up well: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" Q - Why is it critically important that we constantly understand the heart's propensity to sin? This is why we must learn to "walk in the Spirit." See Gal 5:16.

Discussion - Discuss the rewards and potential dangers of allowing ourselves to grow deep in our friendship relationships. The Word of God encourages us over and over to live as one, to love each other deeply, and to function as a single body. Loving one another isn't an option for us. But that doesn't mean that we can't or won't get hurt. So, how do we apply the Gospel effectively to ensure that these relationships are Gospel-centered and not idols within themselves? How does this help when hurts and betrayals come?

In v. 28, while reclining at the table, Jesus breaks bread and makes the boldest of redemption declarations when He states, "...*this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*" This was no longer just a meal, but He was leaning in & letting His friends know that His suffering and sacrificial death were looming just around the corner. This is why He had come...to die.

Q - The "many" of v. 28 can mean a couple of things. It can refer to the many Jews who would come to faith, and it can and does also refer to the fact that the Gentiles would also be invited to the table (see Acts 10). But on a more personal level, the "many" also refers to us...you and me. We are the "many!!!!" Do you/we really understand that fact? If so, how does that fact make the Gospel so much sweeter and amazing?

Christ knew that this was His last hour. He knew that He would soon be betrayed. He knew that He would soon be arrested. He knew that He would soon be flogged. He knew that He would soon be chosen to go to the cross instead of the criminal Barabbas. He knew that He would soon have nails driven through his wrists and feet and a sword pierced through His side. In short, He knew that He would soon die. So, *what did He do?* V. 27 says that He gave thanks. Remarkable!

Read Hebrews 12:2 - What was "the joy set before Him?" Discuss.

III. FURTHER APPLICATION

In John 6:35 Christ calls Himself "the Bread of Life" and in John 15:5 He calls Himself "the Vine."
Application?

*****Communion** - Community groups are encouraged this week to take communion together. Remember, wine was used for special occasions...festivals, weddings, banquets, etc. It was used to CELEBRATE. Keep this in mind as you take communion together. We need to be reminded and to remind one another that The Table is about Him and His perfect sacrifice, and not about us. It is a time of celebration, and not a time for mourning. Groups are encouraged to partake together and then dismiss afterward singing a song of worship.

IV. CLOSE

Final thoughts?

V. BE ON-MISSION

Q - a) How can we use the table/food to assist us as we attempt to disciple others? How can we use the table/food to assist us as we attempt to share the love of Christ and/or the Gospel with others? b) What 1-2 things did you receive from this passage or discussion that you can implement and/or give away this week? Specifically, how do you plan to do so?

Musician: Casting Crowns

Song: Who I Am

Not because of who I am, but because of what you've done

Not because of what I've done, but because of who you are

