

What are you Expecting to Happen at the Lord's Supper?

Class V

Introduction/Review

1. Last time we were focusing on the accounts of the Last Supper in Mark.
2. We noted that in Mark's account (as in Matt) there is no call "To do this in remembrance of me."
3. This suggests that the Last Supper account is treated as part of the general narrative account of the death of Jesus. In this connection it is significant that what takes place in the narrative before the words of bestowal at the Table and after have to do with betrayal.
4. Then at the Table Jesus is not only inviting the disciples to share in the benefits of his death ("Take, this is my body," "This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many.") But in *partaking they are making a solemn pledge of solidarity* -- to commit to Jesus' way.
5. Of course, they all forsake Jesus (14:50).
6. But resurrection faith brings them back and they are forgiven.
7. Likewise in the words of bestowal as we accept the bread and the cup we are pledging renewal of our covenant vows.
8. As in our pledges in the marriage covenant, these words are actually "performative utterances." Our commitments are affirmed -- as they ought to be -- on a regular basis. Does awareness of this episode cultivate appropriate seriousness?

Question: Remember the words of Polycarp, "Fourscore and six years have I been his servant, and he hath done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my king who saved me?" Do our pledges have this level of seriousness if the consequences are not so immediate?

Matthew's View of The Last Supper 26:26-29

1. Matthew's account is placed in the narrative flow of Jesus' last week.
2. It must be seen in a wider context -- the giving of the outpoured life of God's suffering servant for the forgiveness of sins.
3. In Matthew 1:21 Joseph names his son "Jesus" which means "Yahweh saves."
4. Notice in 26:26 the Last Supper account starts out with "Jesus took bread..." Now let us fill in the gaps.

- a. Throughout Jesus' ministry he preaches to Israel to prepare them to repent and be ready for the time of the great banquet. At the feedings in Matt huge amounts of food are left over.
 - b. By and large they reject him. He gets together the 12 -- the prospective leaders of a new Israel, *but there are consequences for the rejection of old Israel.*
 - c. This comes out in a very important passage in Matt 23:33-36.
 - d. All the righteous blood shed (poured out) from Abel onward cries out for just retribution. The leaders of Jesus' generation must accept responsibility to bring the people to repentance.
 - e. But this warning does not move the leaders of Israel. They arrest Jesus and in Matt 27:25, despite numerous references to his innocence, the people cry out "His blood be on us and our children."
5. So what is Jesus, the Son of God about to do in the face of this rejection?
- a. As the Son of God he offers his own life as sin offering for Israel. He reconfigures the Passover as the place where he makes that announcement.
 - b. What is critical here is in Matt 26:28 in the words of bestowal at the cup Jesus says, "This is my blood...which is *poured out* for the many for the forgiveness of sins."
 - c. This Greek word for "poured out" is the same word as "shed" in Matt 23:35. In other words the killing of the Son of God will be the ransom for the people of Israel (Matt 20:28). Jesus offers to be the "sin offering" on Israel's behalf.
 - d. Instead of God visiting his avenging judgment on Israel they are to be given the offer of new life by Jesus' death.
6. Jesus has acted in keeping with his name.

Question: So often at the Lord's Table we voice this truth about Jesus' sacrifice in a banal way. How do we get at it? It is like a people about to be destroyed by an enemy and then an ally comes in and saves them. They are immensely thankful. How do we maintain that thankfulness?

The Suffering Servant Motif

1. Throughout Matthew Jesus is pictured as the Servant of Isaiah 53 (Matt 8:17; 12:18-21).

2. Notice that in Isaiah 52:14 and 53:12 there is a reference to the “many.” This is probably a reference to the Gentiles. Not only will the repentant in Israel be the beneficiaries, but also the Gentiles (cf. Matt. 20:28).
3. Thus, as we read Matthew’s account we are reminded of Jesus’ marvelous offer at the Last Supper. He offers us the benefits of forgiveness of sins through his atoning death.
4. Will we graciously accept this gift -- or be like Pilate and wash our hands of “this man’s blood” (Matt 27:24)?

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