

In Communion, we commemorate together how Christ has delivered us by his blood and made us one family to fulfill God's sovereign purposes.

Overview

In this week's passage, we see the continued plotting to destroy Jesus and the beginning of Judas's betrayal. We see these negative actions contrasted with the faith and devotion of a woman anointing Jesus' feet. This story reveals much about the tension that every believer must deal with: God's sovereign control of all things and our personal responsibility for the sin God allows us to commit in His creation. God has allowed our ability to sin while remaining holy. In our freedom, we are the authors of sin; God is not. These lessons and the contrasting events of the passage revolve around the context of the Passover meal, where something very new happens.

Learning the history and practice of a Passover celebration is greatly needed to understand the context of this passage and, most importantly, to understand how Jesus brought something new and different to the table. The Passover meal was a family affair that was intimate and intentional in its time of remembrance and teaching. In many ways, this meal defined the identity of the people.

Jesus took a meal and a tradition that looked to the past provision of the Lord and turned it into something that looked forward with a similar purpose. Communion, like the Passover, reinforces our identity as fully adopted members of Christ's family. We get to look back at what Christ has done and remember in the present all that He has done for us. In addition, we get to look forward to Christ's return and His Kingdom. This regular family meal helps us to love others, forgive, and reminds us of where our new identity comes from.

Outline

1. The Contrasting Actions: Devotion and Treachery (1-11)
2. The Big Picture: Sovereignty and Responsibility (12-21): *Psalm 41:9*
3. The Family Meal: Past and Future (22-26): *Jeremiah 31:33-34;*, *Ezekiel 36:25-27*

Discussion Questions

1. Communion reinforces our identity in Christ; we need this regular reminder because we can forget.
 - a. What are things in your life that you have identified with strongly? Why were these areas so important to you? *(Consider how others would describe you or think about politics, career, hobbies, relationships.)*
2. Concerning Judas, Pastor Leonard spoke of the need to hold two truths together: God's sovereignty and our personal responsibility for our sin.
 - a. How does knowing that one of the twelve could betray Jesus serve as a warning? What were his motivations?
 - b. What does Jesus' statement "It would have been better for that man if he had not been born" mean?
 - c. Although God works all things (including bad things) for the good of his people, how does God's sovereignty encourage your devotion and obedience (rather than to sin)?
3. Considering the devotion displayed in this passage:
 - a. How would you rate your devotion to Jesus?
 - b. What steps do you need to take in your practice of communion?
4. What else stood out in this week's message?

