

Who Would Do This? (26:17-30)

If you've got a bible, go with me to **Matthew 26**. This November, **Ana and I will have been married** for twelve years. Thank you—it's quite the accomplishment, mostly for her. But I can still remember, vividly, the day we got married. It was a November day in Camden, SC—which is a city I can just about guarantee none of you have been to. It was a shockingly *warm* November day—we had all of my groomsmen wear *sweaters* for the ceremony, which we thought was a safe bet. But the high *that* day in Camden was 82 degrees, which is quite warm to be wearing a sweater, if you've never attempted that.

I hear that **a lot of people get nervous** on their wedding day—I don't remember being nervous at all. (Aside from one moment when our wedding planner forgot to go get Ana and bring her to the banquet hall on time—I thought she had gone "Runaway Bride" on me. But other than *that*, I was good.) **The day I was a little nervous**, though, was about a month later, when I went and did *Christmas* with my wife's *family* for the first time. *That* was a bit anxiety-inducing. We had a pretty short dating relationship and engagement, so the first *Christmas* we spent *together* was once we were married. So I was already locked in—no turning back now.

And personally, I think **participating in another family's traditions** is *always* a bit **weird**, regardless of the family. There are traditions and rituals and dynamics that you just don't know about going into it as an outsider. **So one of Ana's family traditions is that when the youngest generation opens Christmas presents, they do it all at once and then they ball up the wrapping paper and throw it, full-speed, at all the other people in the room. So you can imagine my shock that first Christmas when I'm opening my first present and just get beamed in the side of the head by a ball of wrapping paper.** But that's part of being an *outsider* at another family's traditions.

I can remember that first Christmas with Ana, **debriefing with her** after it all happened. Asking her questions like "okay, who is that person? And how are *they* related to everybody? And who are *their* kids? And where do they live? And why is *that* person like *that*? And why do they do *that* weird thing that they do? **And can I get an ice pack, for my head?** You know, all the typical questions you ask after a Christmas celebration. **There was just so much I didn't know or understand.** Now, twelve years *in*, I actually *love* my wife's family traditions—head trauma and all. But **that first Christmas, it was all completely foreign to me, and me to it.** I truly had no idea what was going on, at least at first.

Now, **I mention that because** I think that's kind of how *all* of us are going to feel at some point *today*, as we read about a tradition that's probably foreign to many of us. We are

going to read about a group of Jewish disciples celebrating the *Passover* together. Which wasn't just a tradition for *their* families, but for *all* Jewish families. Which means *in* it, there are traditions and rituals and dynamics that you and I, unless *we're* Jewish, aren't going to be super familiar with. Matthew, in how he records the story, just *assumes* that *we are* familiar. That we know the context and the background of all of it. But since we *don't*, we're going to need to work overtime to wrap our minds around it.

Because **to understand what's happening in *this* story**, you need to know at least *something* of the story and tradition *behind* it. Without an understanding of the *Passover* meal *in general*, we're going to have a hard time understanding the **meaning and significance of *this particular Passover*** Jesus shared with his disciples. So portions of today (specifically the last third or so) might feel a tad technical—but it's all being done with the intention of helping us track with the story we get in the gospel of Matthew. **So in a way, we're all about to be like me, that very first Christmas with my wife's family, asking "what in the world just happened, exactly?"** And that's okay—but I think we can make some sense of it before we're done.

So **follow along** with me in **Matthew 26**, starting in v. 17:

[17] On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the *Passover*?" [18] He replied, "Go into the city to a **certain man and **tell** him, 'The Teacher says: My **appointed time** is near. I am going to celebrate the *Passover* with my disciples at your house.'" [19] So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and **prepared the *Passover***.**

So **the *Passover***, as we mentioned last Sunday, **marked a time** in Israel's history where God rescued them out of slavery in Egypt. And because it marked such a momentous, pivotal moment in their nation's history, God told them that they should *celebrate* the *Passover* every single year. And in order to do that, there were *preparations* that had to be made. There were multiple courses and dishes that were a part of this meal, and the disciples needed to secure a *room* for them and Jesus to participate in it.

Now, keep in mind that they're all **flying a bit under the radar** right now because a group of chief priests are actively *looking* for Jesus, in order to kill him. So Jesus has to be a tad covert about where they eat the *Passover*. **Hence the spy movie-like instructions Jesus gives the disciples about finding a "certain man" in the city and asking to use a room in his house.** But they do all that, they make preparations—and then v. 20:

[20] When evening came, Jesus was **reclining at the table with the Twelve.**

Now, it's probably worth noting that **the Passover meal wasn't typically a very somber occasion**. At least *overall*. There were somber *moments* to it, to be sure—and *this* Passover specifically would *turn* somber in a moment because of what Jesus says next. But the Passover wasn't usually somber *in general*. So I imagine the disciples all **filling into the room**, catching up with each other; laughing, talking, shooting the breeze. A couple of the disciples are probably giving Peter a hard time about that time Jesus called him "Satan" in front of everybody. Because you know if you're one of the disciples, **there's no way you're letting him live that one down**. All of this stuff is happening around the table as they're eating. They're doing what you would expect guys to do who have known each other for three years and been through a lot together: just enjoying being *together* over a meal.

But **all of that is about to take a turn**. Verse 21:

[21] And while they were eating, he Jesus **said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me."**

So at this point, the **conversation quickly dissipates** around the table. The laughter screeches to a halt. All of a sudden, you can hear a pin drop in the room. **One of the disciples speaks up: "I'm sorry, Jesus—it kind of sounded like you said one of us will betray you?"** / But that can't be what Jesus *said*, right? I mean these are the guys who have *committed* over the past three years to follow Jesus with their entire *lives*. They've left *everything* to do it. *Most* of them have come to believe that Jesus is the *Messiah*—he's the long-awaited king the Scriptures talked about. And he has called *them* to be *his* closest *disciples*; his followers. Not to mention his *friends*. / So how in the world could he somehow now *think* that *one* of them is now going to *turn* on him? There's simply no way that could be true. Verse 22, so...

[22] They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely you don't mean me, Lord?"

So the weight of what Jesus just said is settling on the disciples. They begin to say to Jesus, one after another: "...surely you don't mean *me*, Jesus." "There's no way you're talking about me." "There's no way you think *I'm* going to betray you." "I mean, who would *do* something like what you're saying, after all?" Then v. 23:

[23] Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me."

Now, what we *just* read is **probably not the *best* translation** of what Jesus actually says. The way the NIV reads, it almost makes it sound like Jesus just *identified*, to everyone, who the betrayer *is*. But that's not really what happens. In the original language, **his emphasis isn't really on a particular person; it's on the *relational nature of the betrayal***.¹ A better translation would be something like: "indeed, one of the people who dips his hand into the bowl with me, will betray me." He's just reiterating that someone very *close* to him—in fact, someone at this very table *with* him—is going to turn *against* him.

Now, **that was significant** because, in the *ancient* world, **who you shared a meal with** was a big deal. It was a little more *significant* than it is to us today. **Back then, you only ate with people you were really close with—your family, your closest of friends**. So the idea that someone Jesus is *eating with* will betray him would be incredibly *troubling* for the rest of the disciples to hear. It would be very *destabilizing* to hear. It sends them all into a bit of a *tailspin*, asking: *who among us would do something like what Jesus just said?* But they likely *still don't know who* Jesus is referring to. Verse 24:

[24] The Son of Man **will go just** as it is written **about him**. But woe to that man who **betrays** the Son of Man! It would be **better** for **him** if he had not been born."
[25] Then **Judas**, the one who **would** betray him, said, "Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "You have said so."

Jesus seems to confirm to Judas that it is in fact *him*. Which is obviously not a surprise to Judas—it's just a surprise that Jesus *knows* about it. Now again: Jesus probably doesn't say this within earshot of the other disciples. *John's* account of the same story seems to indicate that at least the *majority* of the disciples *still* didn't know who Jesus' betrayer *is* at this point in the story.² They're all still wondering who would *do* the thing Jesus is talking about. **Which, I don't know about you, but makes me wonder why? Why doesn't Jesus out Judas at this point in the story? If Jesus knows that Judas is going to betray him, and Judas now knows that Jesus knows, why not disclose that information to the rest of the disciples? Why be so secretive about it?**

And I would guess there are **at least two reasons**. **One logistical** reason, and **one pastoral** reason. *Logistically*, I think Jesus knows that if he gave his disciples specifics on *who* was going to betray him, **there's a good chance that at least some of them would try to stop it from happening**. **Peter literally tries to do that later in this chapter**

¹ See D.A. Carson's note on v. 23 in *Matthew: The Expositor's Commentary*, p. 1171.

² See John 13:28

and ends up chopping off a guy's ear.³ He's *already* tried to stop Jesus from going to the cross at least once in the story before this.⁴ Jesus *knows* his disciples are fiercely loyal to him. So if they were to find *out* which person in this room is going to *betray* him, there's a real good chance they would insert themselves into the situation to stop it. Which could be why Jesus emphasizes that all of this "...will go *just as it is written* (v. 24)." He wants the disciples to realize it is not their job to *stop* this from happening to him.

But I think there's also **a pastoral reason** that Jesus doesn't tell the disciples who it is. And this is important. **Pastorally, it's because at least in a sense, it could be any of them.** Now here's why I say that. In v. 31 of this same chapter, Jesus says this:

*Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will **all fall away** on account of me, for it is written: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered (a quote from the book of Zechariah)."*

Jesus says that **in reality, "all" of the disciples will fall away.** And he's *right*: all of them *do*.⁵ **Biblically and historically, every single one of the disciples will turn on Jesus in the hours surrounding his death.** They'll *all* fail him in some way. If not out of *malice* and *deceit* (like Judas), simply out of *fear* and *uncertainty*. They'll *deny knowing* him.⁶ They'll *fall asleep* on him in his greatest hour of need, instead of staying awake and keeping watch.⁷ They'll scatter and run and hide when Jesus is arrested and killed.⁸ **The most honest answer to the question, "surely you don't mean me, Lord?" is that Jesus could mean any of them.** Sure, he specifically has in mind *Judas* in what he says. But I think Jesus holds that revelation *back* from the disciples because he wants *each* of them to earnestly ask the question: **could it be me? Am I capable of something like this?** He wants them to ask that question.

And **by extension**, I think we could probably ask *ourselves* the same thing: am I capable of something like this? Because **the most honest answer to "who would do something like this?" is that any of us could.** Right? I could. You could. Any one of us, given the right circumstances, the right opportunity, the right motivations, the right amount of sin taking root in our hearts for the right amount of time—*any one* of us could

³ See v. 51

⁴ See Matthew 16:22

⁵ See Matthew 26:56

⁶ Matthew 26:69-75

⁷ Matthew 26:36-41

⁸ Matthew 26:45

do something like what *Judas* does in the story. **Remember our teaching from last week: we are all making decisions constantly that functionally answer the question: *what would I trade Jesus for?*** What would I bail on Jesus *for*, if it meant I had something to *gain* in return?⁹

Judas turns on one of his closest friends, and the savior of the world, for thirty measly pieces of silver. *Four months' wages.* **But the uncomfortable truth is that you and I sometimes do it for less than *that*.** The trade that Judas makes—*baffling* as it may seem—is a trade that *any* of us are capable of making, at any point in our lives. Constantly, you and I are making exchanges that aren't far off from the one *Judas* makes. When we bend the truth to get ahead at work, that *is*, in essence, trading Jesus for career advancement. When we decide that God's design for sex is unnecessarily restrictive and go ahead and sleep with the person we're dating: that's trading Jesus for sexual gratification. When we decide that we'd rather hold on to bitterness and resentment instead of forgiving someone who has sinned against us, that's trading Jesus for a relational grudge.

The answer to “who could do something like this?” is that *all* of us could. All of us *do*. We are the ones asking Jesus, “surely you don't mean me,” and what we *should* be *thinking* is “it absolutely could be me.” It *is* me, a lot of the time. And until we understand that about *ourselves*, we're *not* going to understand the profound nature of the gospel message. Because **the gospel operates on the assumption that *all* of us, in one way or another, have made that trade. Do make that trade. But that simultaneously, Jesus has decided to do something about it. ~~Something completely unexpected.~~**

Which I believe is **what the rest of this passage is about.** Pick it back up with me in v. 26:

[26] While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; **this is my body.”**

So here is where we **dive into the tradition** of the Passover. At a *traditional* Passover meal, there would be a loaf of unleavened bread. The bread was *unleavened* because *when* God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, he did it swiftly and *suddenly*—so suddenly that they didn't even have time to wait for their *bread* to rise. So every year at Passover, from that point on, Israelite families would eat unleavened bread. As they sat around the table, the head of the household would take the bread and give *thanks* for it. Then he would say, “*this is the bread of affliction, which our forefathers ate in Egypt. Whoever is hungry, let him take and eat.*”

⁹ Listen to the previous week's teaching [here](#).

He would **then break the bread, distribute it** to everyone else at the table, and they would all eat of it together. Eating the bread was a way of remembering the suffering God's people endured in Egypt; but also a way of remembering that God *delivered* them *out* of that suffering. It was a way of *internalizing*, quite literally, the story of their ancestors. They were *grounding* themselves in that story, and reminding themselves of God's *presence* and *power in* their story. They were, again, quite literally, *nourishing* themselves with the story of God.

But here, at this Passover meal, Jesus *seems* to take things in an entirely *different* direction than all that. **He takes the same bread that his people had eaten every year for hundreds of years as the "bread of affliction," and instead, he says, "this bread is my body. Take and eat."** Now, that's a very *weird* and *off-putting* thing for Jesus to say, is it not? *Partly because it sure does sound a lot like cannibalism.* But more significantly, because that wasn't the thing he was *supposed* to say. He was *supposed* to say "this is the bread of *affliction*, which our *forefathers* ate in *Egypt*." What he says *here* would've seemed to the disciples like *Jesus*—who was *steeped* in the Jewish Scriptures and the story of the Old Testament—had all of a sudden *forgotten* what the Passover was about. Like he had somehow *forgotten* how it all worked.

But Jesus **hadn't forgotten** at all. **He was simply using an old, old story**—a story that **they all already knew—to tell a new story.** Or, to say it a bit more *accurately*, to show them that *he* was the final *chapter* of the story they had been remembering *all along*. **The unleavened bread on the table that night was the bread of affliction, and it was his body.** *Jesus*, in a matter of hours, is going to have his flesh *broken* open by whips, his head *pierced* by thorns, his wrists *impaled* by nails. A *staff* would be used as a baseball bat repeatedly against his head. He would be slapped, struck, and punched over and over and over again. If that's not *affliction*, I truly don't know what *is*. So this bread on the table was still *very much* the bread of affliction. It was just now *also* the bread of *Jesus'* affliction, too. *His story is Israel's story.*

Continuing, in v. 27:

[27] Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. [28] This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

At traditional Passover meals, there was **also wine.** The central idea *here* was **freedom.** **In the minds of ancient Israelites, only free people drank wine.** So during a traditional Passover meal, they would drink four different cups of wine that all

represented four different *aspects* of that freedom. The head of the family would take each cup in turn, would remind people what that cup *represented* in the story of the Exodus, and then they would all drink from it. / But once again *here*, Jesus takes it in a very *different* direction. He says, this is “my blood, of the *covenant*, which is poured out for many for the *forgiveness* of *sins*.” Which would’ve been *just as confusing*, and just as *unsettling*, as what he said about the *bread* a moment ago. But again here: Jesus wasn’t ignorant or dismissive of what the Passover wine represented. He’s trying to say that *his* story is the *continuation*, the *culmination*, of *that* same story.

In his own words, the wine represented a “**covenant.**” Now, chances are you and I aren’t crazy familiar with that word. A *covenant* was essentially a sort of binding agreement. But it usually carried a good bit more *weight* than just a legal contract like you and I would sign today. *Covenants* would happen, for instance, between the *kings* of two neighboring nations. They would agree not to invade each other, or strike up war *against* each other. And the penalty for *violating* that covenant was generally pretty *severe*. It wasn’t uncommon for one king to say to the other, essentially, “if I violate the covenant and invade your country, you can kill *me*. And if *you* violate the covenant and invade *mine*, I can kill *you*.” That was the deal. That’s how a covenant worked.

Now stay with me here: in the Old *Testament*, **God made several covenants** with his *people*. Those covenants were often guaranteed with the blood of an *animal*. So when God’s people failed to live up to the terms of the covenant—which was quite *often*, if you haven’t read the story of the Old Testament—they would offer an *animal* as a sacrifice, to make amends. That animal *sacrifice*—that shedding of blood, it was *thought*, secured their forgiveness from God. / But *that’s* what makes **Jesus’ words here** so very *interesting*. Because he just told his disciples that this cup of wine is ‘*his* blood of the covenant.’ Not the blood of an *animal*; but Jesus’ *own* blood.

Jesus seems to be saying that this covenant he’s making with them is a different kind of covenant. In this one, Jesus says, essentially, ‘if I fail to live up to the covenant, you can kill me. And if you fail to live up to the covenant...I’ll kill me.’ ‘If I fail, I die. But if *you* fail, I die in your place.’ This covenant, Jesus says, is going to be guaranteed by *his* blood and *his* blood *alone*. *His* life, and *his* life *alone*. So *this* is actually a *one-way* covenant—it just happens to have *two parties* in it. **The point of this covenant, it would seem, is that we won’t live up to it—but that Jesus *will*.** Does that make sense?

Now, I want you to **plug that information back into** our story. Plug it into what’s happening in the passage, both *historically* and *situationally*. *Historically*, the Passover is literally named after a time that God “passed over” any Israelite who had the blood of a lamb

painted over the door to their house.¹⁰ **The blood of the lamb made them safe. Here, Jesus seems to be saying that anyone in possession of his blood is safe.** He is the Passover lamb, as we mentioned last Sunday. He is the “lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.”¹¹ That’s what *this* covenant is about. Jesus wants his disciples to realize that about him.

But also, plug it into the story **situationally**. Remember what we started off talking about this morning. **Jesus has just told them that one of them sitting at the table is going to betray him.** One of them is going to radically *fail* Jesus in a significant sort of way. Which has then prompted *all* of them to ask the question “is it *me*? Am *I* capable of doing that? Could *I* do something like this?” To which the answer is *yes*—yes they all *are* capable of something like this. They are *all* going to fall away in some way, shape or form. ~~As are we.~~

// But **here, before any of that gets said or done, Jesus wants the disciples to realize something about their relationship with him.** He wants them to be real *clear* on how all of this works. And here’s what he wants them to know: **this covenant with God is not based on their ability to not fail.** It’s not based on their ability to be full of faith and absent of mistakes. It’s not based on their moral and relational tenacity. It’s not based on their strength or their courage or their giftedness. **The strength of this covenant isn’t based on any of that. It’s based on the broken body and spilled blood of Jesus.** It’s not based on *their* faithfulness to *him*—it’s based on *his* faithfulness. And his faithfulness *alone*.

So **Jesus looks up at this table full** of disciples who are *all* about to fail him in various ways. And he says to them, “this bread is my body.” “This *cup* is *my* blood of the covenant, which is poured out for the forgiveness of sins.” One of the other gospels records it like this: “this is my body, and my blood, which is poured out *for you*.”¹² Jesus is saying, **‘all of you are about to falter—but don’t worry: I won’t.’** As Paul writes to Timothy later in the New Testament, “even if *we* are *faithless*, *he* (Jesus) is *faithful*. For he cannot *deny* himself.”¹³ That’s the good news in the last supper. That’s *their* hope, and *our* hope, and every other person on planet Earth’s hope: that even if we are *faithless*, *he* is *faithful*. For he cannot deny himself.

And Jesus **backs it up with what he says next:**

¹⁰ See Exodus 12

¹¹ See John 1:29

¹² See Luke 22:20

¹³ See 2 Timothy 2:13

[29] I tell you, I will not **drink** from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it **new with you** in my Father's kingdom."

Jesus tells these disciples, just *hours* before they all fall away, that **one day they're all going to eat and drink with him again** in the new heavens and new earth. That they will be *with him again* one day. And that he actually is *waiting* until *that* day to celebrate with them again. Okay stop for just a second: what a *profound* sort of promise that is. **Jesus, knowing that they will fail him, gives them the assurance of knowing that he will also restore them.** That they will be unified around the table together yet again one day.

This is why **we say a couple things** around here often. Neither of these things are original to me, but they're so very helpful for us to say. **First, we say that you cannot outsin the grace of God.** Not possible. You can choose to *turn down* the grace of God—you can say "I don't *want* it." But you cannot sin so much that you're beyond its *reach*. The second thing we say is that **all of your sins were future sins when Jesus died on the cross.** And what we mean by that is that nothing you will ever do will *surprise* God. There's nothing you can do or fail to do where he will go "wow—I really wish I knew they were gonna screw up like *that* when I sent Jesus to the cross. *Because then I might not have gone and done all of that for them.*" Okay—that's not a thing. All your sins were *future* sins when Jesus died on the cross. He knew you were gonna fail, he knew you were going to falter—and he chose to go and do what he did *anyway*.

Don't you see—**that's what's happening when Jesus tells them** in *one* breath that they're going to fail him, and in the *next* breath that he's going to be with them again. He *knows* that they will fail, *and* he's *saying* that he's already taken care of it. **He's trying to show them that there is reconciliation after division. That there is hope after failure. That there is restoration after ruin.** And listen: that's precisely because this whole thing doesn't *hinge* on them and their strength. Just like it doesn't hinge on *us* and *ours*. It hinges on Jesus and *his*. So Jesus says to his disciples, we're gonna be together again in the new heavens and the new earth—I've made sure of it.

And **with that assurance given**, we get v. 30:

[30] When they had sung a **hymn**, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

They *will all be* together again one day. So **for now, they sing and hope** for that day. / So I don't know **where all of this hits you** this morning. I'll tell it where it hits *me*. A couple weeks ago, I was talking with the other guys in my LifeGroup about the *lies* we often believe. And I told them that I think for me personally, one of the biggest lies / am prone

to believe goes something like this: **that I don't need God's help to grow, because I can grow on my own.** I often functionally believe that I don't need to *confess* sin, because I'll just stop sinning. I don't need to ask for prayer and ask for help and ask for accountability, because I can cut it just fine on my own; I'll just try harder. And yes—I do realize how utterly wrong and silly that sounds when I say it out loud. But that's kind of the nature of lies, isn't it? Sometimes, what sounds very silly to say out loud sounds very *convincing* in the dark.

But I think **that is the lie** that the enemy most consistently uses against me. I'm an Enneagram 1, if you know what that is. Which means that I am continually striving to improve things and reform things and make things a little better. And a lot of times, that mentality gets applied to my own heart and discipleship to Jesus. And if I'm not careful, I begin to operate as if *I* am all I need to grow. That *my effort* is the only resource required for me to mature into who God wants me to be. I don't instinctively ask for help—because to me, asking for help feels like admitting *weakness*. And I don't *want* to admit weakness, so I just keep pretending I need no help. But here's what I miss when I choose to operate that way. **2 Corinthians 12, v. 9**—a verse I'm sure many of us have heard:

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, Paul says, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

God's power is made *perfect* in our weakness. **The Christian life has never been about our power, our ability, our moral fortitude. Our sufficiency. It's never been about our faithfulness; it's always been about his.** So **I tell you all of that** about my own journey this morning for *two* reasons. **One**, so that you can remind me of that when I need to hear it...which is just about 100% of the time. But **two**, because **I would imagine there's at least a little of that stubborn mentality in all of us—Enneagram 1 or not. I would bet that a lot of us have a propensity towards trusting in ourselves more instinctively than we trust in Jesus. Trusting in our own faithfulness, rather than realizing and relying on his. And I'd love for us to take this morning to get that switched back around in our minds.**

And **as a means to do precisely that**, Jesus leaves us this *meal*, that we read about today. It's had a lot of different names through the years. *The Lord's Supper. The Last Supper. Communion. The Eucharist.* But **whatever you call it, it is meant to be a powerful practice in the life of a follower of Jesus. Because this meal—just like the Passover meal it is based off of—is a way to literally ingest and internalize the story of God into your being. It's a way to nourish your soul on the one true story**

of the world. So we take the *bread*—which represents the *broken* body of Jesus on the cross—and we internalize it. We remember that his body was broken, for *us*. And then we take the *cup*, which is the new covenant in his blood, and we *internalize* it. We remember that his blood was spilled, for *us*.

This meal is **central** to our discipleship to Jesus. That's part of why we do it every single Sunday as we gather. 1 Corinthians tells us that as often as we eat this bread and drink from this cup, we *proclaim* the death of Jesus until he comes.¹⁴ This meal is also **communal**. There's a reason that we wait until we're all together on Sunday mornings to participate in it. And there's a reason that at our church, you'll look around and see LifeGroups and entire groups of people taking the bread and the cup *together*. Because participating in this meal reminds us that whatever our differences are when it comes to background, ethnicity, convictions, preferences or otherwise—the thing that we are all *unified* around is the body and blood of Jesus. *That* unity overrides any potential *disunity* there may be.

And finally, this meal is **hopeful**. As we participate in this meal, we look *forward* to the day that we will eat *again* with Jesus “in [his] Father's kingdom.” We proclaim the Lord's death until he *retu rns* to *make* all things new. And as we wait, we ask that he would enable his kingdom to come, his will to be done, through *us*, as it *is* in heaven. And all of that *starts* with realizing that it's always been about *his* strength, not ours. His *faithfulness*; not ours. That's what this meal is all about.

Which is part of why, **just like the disciples**, as we take in this meal, we **sing**. We sing to celebrate the faithfulness of God. We sing to celebrate that though *we* are often faithless, *he* remains faithful.. So this morning, I want to invite you to do all of that with us. The communion tables will be open across this room. Our prayer team will be available at the front of the stage and the front exits of the balcony. If you've got something you need to process and pray through, they'd love to walk through that with you. But we're going to have an opportunity to sing and celebrate and remember the faithfulness of Jesus together this morning. Sound good?

Let's pray.

¹⁴ See 1 Corinthians 11:26