

## **24<sup>th</sup> January 6pm Agape Meal**

Service led by Andrew Attwood, talk by Andrew Attwood, reading by Felicity Hawke, liturgy led by Rob and Emma Latham, personal reflection by Steve Sutton.

This transcript is only of the reading, the talk and the personal story.

### ***Reading: Matthew 26:17-30: The Last Supper***

20 When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. 21 And while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me."

22 They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?"

23 Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. 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 not I, Rabbi?"

Jesus answered, "You have said so."

26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered 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. 29 I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

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

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### ***The Last Supper, Exodus and Passover: True Liberty***

[Andrew:]

Thank you Felicity. Well, let's just have a moment of quiet before I speak and share some words. Let's just be still for a moment. Remember that Last Supper, that Jesus had with the Twelve.

Father God, would You help us to enter into the incredible mystery and power of what Jesus was doing that night with bread and wine. Amen.

So, the aspect that I wanted to explore this evening, when I was thinking about the Last Supper, was the theme of Exodus. Exodus obviously is the whole story of how the people of Israel were rescued. Why might Jesus have chosen Passover, as the particular festival where He would initiate this new covenant? Why would He choose this one? There were various other festivals He could have pointed to, and they all had significance. So why Passover? In simple terms, Passover was the ultimate sign of God's power and God's will to free His people from slavery, the ultimate sign of God's power and His will to free His people from slavery. And it was indeed, those of you who will be familiar with this, the nature of how Israel functioned, it was something rehearsed year upon year by the people of Israel rehearsing the story, all the time, and it was a defining story for them, so whole families would get together and even on a more frequent basis they would break bread and remember, and they would remember this moment of rescue, this extraordinary moment of God intervening in real time, in real history and setting them free.

Of course Passover is not a parable, it's something true. It was liberty from the oppressors in Egypt. Those of you who know the story of Genesis will recognise how the people of Israel, with Joseph in particular, ended up settling in Egypt for a while, and that whole extraordinary account of Joseph being exalted to a position of influence in Egypt, and the Israelites being favoured because of their connection to him. But time passed, and they became enslaved by rulers who didn't know of Joseph, and didn't know of the stories connected to God's people. And so there was a captivity that settled in.

Captivity is a theme that we are familiar with in the history of the world. Captivity is in every direction. And in a small sense, even in the UK we are experiencing captivity right now, because of lockdown, we're limited in what we can do. But the thing is this: Jesus was adopting the story of Passover, because it was a pointer towards something else. You see, the original Passover was to do with liberty from powers in Egypt, but what Jesus was going to do was liberty from the powers behind *all* such systems: the power of Satan and the power of sin. You see, God in Christ was about to break the power of evil and sin forever. Those of you who are familiar with what happens at Passover, a lamb was killed, and blood was sprinkled. In the very first Passover they sprinkled blood on the lintels of the door. They kind of surrounded that entrance point with fresh blood, and it was to protect them from the Angel of Death that was passing over.

And they would re-enact the killing of the lamb, the sprinkling of blood, and they would eat, and they would eat in haste, because they were about to leave, they were about to leave captivity and head out towards freedom. Death was going to pass over, but this time with the re-enactment of Jesus, at His Last Supper, the punishment was going to fall not on a lamb, but on an innocent Man, on Himself. The whole story, you see, of Israel is recapitulated, is retold through Jesus again and again and again, and it was in this instance that Jesus was effectively going to be like the new Moses, He was going to lead the people out of the true Egypt, the oppression of wickedness and the captivity of our own sin, almost like taking us through a new Red Sea into a new true Promised Land. I don't know how you feel about that. But when I look at the bread, and I look at the wine, I'm seeing them as symbols of liberty, symbols of great celebration, because something has been broken, and we can walk into true and new freedom. Imagine smashing chains of slavery. Imagine being bound by something that holds you. And then the chains falling off.

It's very important to remember that the role of the people of Israel in the first Exodus was simply to gather their possessions and follow Moses out, to walk behind him, and to be led out. The people of Israel were not people of war, they didn't have spears and they weren't fighting their way out in their own strength. They were walking out because God unilaterally had set them free. And so it is when we celebrate the death of Christ, we are simply walking behind Christ, out of our slavery, our slavery to sin and Satan, we don't contribute to it. We walk out behind Christ, just like the people of Israel walked out behind Moses. So, when we eat and drink, you see, we are allying ourselves to Him, to the new Moses, to Jesus. And as a result, we are made free. This is the true liberty from the real lockdown. This is where we get to be truly emancipated, truly set free. And every single time we break bread and drink wine we celebrate our own freedom that Jesus Himself has won for us.

### ***Personal story: What Christ's Death and Resurrection Means to Me***

Now we're just going to have a short video from Steve Sutton, who will tell us what the death and resurrection of Jesus means to him.

[Steve:] Jesus's death speaks to me of the holiness of God, and the severity of sin, the offence that it is against the holiness of God, the seriousness of sin. Jesus took my sin upon Himself and it cost Him His life. That's the seriousness of sin.

But His resurrection, that speaks to me of the total victory that He won over sin, over death, over Hell, over all the works of evil, and that His death was accepted by the Father. And it covers both sins of the past, sins of the present, and, should there be any future sin, He covered that too: a total and utter victory over the works of evil.

[Transcribed by Hamish Blair with help from <https://otter.ai>]

**[NIVUK 1984 unless otherwise stated]** Extracts from the Holy Bible, New International Version Anglicised, copyright © 1979, 1984 Biblica, formerly International Bible Society. [Used by permission](#). All rights reserved. 'NIV' is a registered trademark of Biblica. UK trademark number 1448790

**[NIVUK 2011]** Extracts from the Holy Bible, New International Version Anglicised, copyright © 1979, 1984, 2011 Biblica, formerly International Bible Society. [Used by permission](#). All rights reserved. 'NIV' is a registered trademark of Biblica. UK trademark number 1448790