

Introduction:

1. We are going to take a week away from our current direction of looking at the church as a disciple-making community.
2. In a few minutes we will celebrate communion or the Lord's Supper. Today will be a little different in how we do that as the hope is that it does feel a little more like a celebration today.
 - a. We have much to celebrate and I for one fail to celebrate all the goodness of God if I am not careful.
 - b. I'm a mostly positive person, but there are times when I'm prone to get stuck in my circumstances or the worst thing that's happened this week.
 - c. Today I want us to look at Jesus' words and the setting of the Last Supper and let it speak to our hearts and result in joy-filled celebration.

Let's look at Luke 22:14-20 together...

Communion or the Lord's Supper is a Celebration of...

1. Community – "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you"

- a. Jesus isn't walking them through a religious ritual. He is making much of the relationships closest to Him.
 - i. Yes, there's strong theological truths being unfolded before their eyes and ears and they have no idea, and we will get to that, but...
 - ii. There is a focus on relationships. This community that Jesus has drawn together.
 - iii. A strange group that would not be friends if not for Jesus.

- b. When we come to this place and look around at the faith family gathered we should take time to really think about the amazing reality of what God has done here.
- c. It's no more coincidence that we are all part of the same family than it was that these men were together for this meal. Jesus called them to follow Him. God brought you here.
- d. These men that Jesus "earnestly desired" to share this meal with weren't the most impressive group.
 - i. Their failures and struggles were severe and would only get worse after this moment.
 - ii. Jesus knew that and still "earnestly desired" to be with them.
- e. Jesus celebrated the community that the Father had given Him. (John 17:12)
 - i. The Father has given you a faith family, a community, for your good and His glory
 - ii. That should move us to celebrate. The people around you are reason to celebrate.

2. Reconciliation: ***"This is my body... the new covenant in my blood"***

- a. When we read this part of the passage, we usually talk about the broken body and shed blood of Jesus in very somber tones and there is a time and place for that.
- b. But the other side is that His body was "given" for us. It was a gift.
- c. Through His blood we have the New Covenant.
- d. Both of those realities are something to also celebrate as they make possible our being made right in relationship with God the Father.
- e. Sure there is always the gravity of the price that was paid for our salvation and what our sin demanded, but God doesn't look at us with eternal pity and desire that we walk with our heads down only contemplating the sorrow involved in our being forgiven.

- f. There is that Truth and there is also the Truth that because of Jesus, the Father delights in and finds pleasure in us.
 - g. He desires to say to you in the judgement, “Well done good and faithful servant. Enter into the JOY of your Master.”
 - i. Zephaniah 3:17, “The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness.”
 - ii. Psalm 147:11, “The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.”
 - iii. Romans 2:29, “But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.”
 - h. Celebrating our reconciliation with the Father, because of the Son, through the Spirit is not just something we can do, it’s something we’re commanded to do.
 - i. Philippians 4:4, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.”
 - ii. Romans 5:2, “Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”
- Illus:** I am completely aware of the many ways that my wife is better than me. SO many ways. No “Amens” needed. Believe me, I get it. But if I went around only speaking of how nice it was for her to marry me, and how I didn’t deserve her, and on and on. I would miss out on enjoying her. At some point she would be like, “Yeah, we all get it. I did you a favor, but can we enjoy the relationship now?”
- i. Don’t miss out on enjoying Jesus. Yes, be aware of your unworthiness, but don’t let that cause you to ignore the worth that you’ve been given as a adopted member of God’s family.
 - j. And that as family, communion reminds us that we will enjoy...

3. An Eternal Kingdom: *“in the Kingdom of God”* (*“with you in my Father’s Kingdom”* Matt 26:29)

- a. Eternity with Jesus will never be boring. In fact, our minds cannot comprehend how exciting it will be. Your best day does not compare.
- b. It’s ok and even expected that we will look forward to being with Jesus forever and be excited about it.
 - i. **Hebrews 9:27-28:** And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.
 - ii. **2 Timothy 4:8:** Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.
- c. The Father really sent Jesus to die for us. He really loves us. And Jesus is really coming back to get us.
- d. And we should really enjoy thinking about being with Him forever.

Closing

- 1. We’re going to move right into our Lord’s Supper celebration in just a few moments. But before we do:
 - a. Take a minute and thank God for placing you here and for the faith family He has given you.
 - i. You may not know many people yet, if any, but thank God for the possibilities
 - ii. You may be nervous about all this “family” language, so ask God for courage and compassion
 - iii. Many of you though, wouldn’t be where you are with Jesus if not for someone within this family. Thanks be to God our Father.

- b. Take a minute and thank God that because of Christ He doesn't tolerate you, He delights in you.
 - i. Not because you are worthy, but because He has given you worth
 - ii. And you can enjoy a relationship with Him
- c. Also, think about eternity with Jesus and it will be better than your best moment here times forever.
 - i. He's preparing a place for you if you are in Christ
 - ii. He's coming again to take you to where He is
 - iii. Ask God to help you love the thought of the return of Christ and eternity with Him. That you would be one that is "eagerly awaiting for Him."

As we pray our deacons and those helping them will come forward and prepare the Table.

Let's pray and then you remain seated and reflect on what God has said to you.

I'm going to read through our text one more time and then the deacons will distribute the bread and drink. If you are a Christ-follower, whether a member of this faith family or not, please join in with us. If you have children that have trusted Jesus for salvation yet, please let the tray pass by them and then encourage their questions.

Once all have been served, I'm going to ask you to stand and one of our deacons will pray for the bread. At the end of their prayer I will say, "and the faith family said?" Typically you would respond with "Amen", but today I will ask you to raise your cup and say "Thank you Jesus", and will do the same after the another prayer over the drink cup.