



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Lord's Supper; Mark 14: 22-25

The First Lord's Supper

TRANSCRIPT

Now we are studying the Lord's Supper. And for those of you who are visiting, in the first of the series, we are looking at the first Passover in Exodus chapter 12, and then we have turned to the New Testament, and we are looking at the last Passover, and the first Lord's Supper. Last Sunday, we looked at the last Passover. Today we looked at the first Lord's Supper, both of which occurred together in that meeting the Lord had with the apostles just before he died.

And we're looking at the Markan account in chapter 14 and for the Scripture reading today, we're reading Mark chapter 14 and verse 22 through verse 25. Here, Mark the Evangelist – probably the evangelist of Peter, as well as of our Lord, for this is probably Peter's approach to the gospel – we read in verse 22,

“And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament (or new covenant), which is shed for many (Matthew adds, “for the remission of sins”). Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

[Message] Our subject today in the ministry of the word is “The First Lord’s Supper.” It is probable that the word atonement is the most important word in Christian theology. Atonement, the English word, is derived from the English preposition “at,” plus the Old Middle English word, “onement” which means something like “union.” And so atonement is that which brings us into harmony with the one to whom the atonement is directed. And in the Christian context, atonement refers to what Christ did in his death, restoring the shattered relationship between sinners and a holy God. And the price of his death is the means of the atonement.

Liberal Christianity has always resented the evangelical doctrine of the atonement. It has sought to keep the word Christianity, and it has sought to keep the word redemptive, but it would love to be able to eliminate the historic Christian conviction that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in his sacrificial death upon the cross wrought reconciliation of men with God. For faith in a crucified redeemer, whose life is a ransom for sinners, they have substituted a “Christ-like” attitude, or a religious feeling, or even membership in the redemptive community.

It has been said, Professor Warfield said many years ago, that liberal Christianity “lacks the power to originate a church and can only exist as a parasite growing upon some sturdier stock.” Well that is true. Liberal Christianity can never originate a church, it can only live as a parasite, and by growing upon a sturdier stock, we have seen the strange thing take place that it has become the dominant force in many of our professing Christian churches.

The man who believes that he is redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ shed as a sacrificial sacrifice for him is of an entirely different character from the man who thinks he may redeem himself by a Christ-like attitude, or by good works. “There is indeed,”

Professor Warfield wrote, “No alternative.” The redeemed in the blood of Christ, after all is said, are a people apart. Call them Christians, or call them what you please, they are of a specifically different religion from those who know no such experience.

I believe that is true. I believe that when you meet a man who has come to the understanding of the fact that he does not have anything with which to commend himself to God, that he is by himself lost and undone, that he cannot save himself. A man who is relying on the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ wrought out as a representative sacrifice on Calvary’s cross, that person has a different flavor of life from the individual who thinks he may make himself acceptable to Christ by the things that he does, whether they be things that are of a moral character in his personal life, or whether they be things that have to do with a relationship to a religious group of people. Believers have a different spirit.

When Luther said to Zwingli in their discussions over the Lord’s Supper that your people are of a different spirit than ours, he was referring to simply the Lord’s table and the disagreement that they had over it, the Reformed and the Lutheran. But that same principle pertains more significantly and more emphatically between the true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and those who attend church, and who may be a member of an evangelical church but themselves have not entered into the experience of personal redemption. There is a different spirit in the two people, and one can sense it eventually. The man who knows that he is lost apart from Christ has a different temper or disposition from the other.

In a number of passages, the Lord Jesus Christ gives us his own teaching on his death. For example, in one passage he says, the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. That’s Jesus Christ’s own interpretation of his death. He also says I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. There are many other passages in which our Lord teaches the atonement. That’s an interesting study in itself, just to study the passages in which

Jesus speaks about the atonement and in the study of those passages construct a doctrine of the atonement based upon our Lord’s own words.

Well one of the most significant passages, probably the most significant is this passage. This passage tells us what Jesus himself would have taught us about the atonement. Those other passages teach us that the Lord Jesus died voluntarily. The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. That’s why he came, he said. The Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

The Lord Jesus died voluntarily. In this incident in which he institutes the Lord’s Supper, you can see by the very motions by which he undergoes that he regards his death as a voluntary death. But not simply a voluntary death, he regards it is as a propitiatory ransom price. In other words, he conceives of his death as a death unto the judgment for sin. In fact, he says this cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins. And the very fact that it is shed for the remission of sins indicates that he understands that men are under judgment and that his death is a ransom price for them. And also, it’s clear that he understands his death to be a substitutionary death.

This is shed for many. It is shed concerning many. The Markan passage says, the Matthian passage, or vice versa, says in behalf of many, a phrase that we undoubtedly now realize is a clear statement of the substitutionary character of the Lord’s death. In other words, he took the place of the people of God. He bore the judgment that the people of God should have bore. And in bearing the judgment that the people of God should have borne, in bearing it for them, heaven itself can exact upon the people of God no further judgment for the judgment has been paid.

Now that is what this passage teaches. It overthrows all so-called moral influence theories of the atonement. That is, that Jesus Christ came merely to give us reasons why we ought to be obedient to him. The moral influence of his sweet self-sacrifice is supposed to move us to obedience, but apart from any bearing of our punishment, this particular exposition, which our Lord gives us, not only here but in other places

overthrows this kind of teaching. It overflows the kind of teaching that he came here merely to give us an example of how we should live our lives. He did that of course, but that example is for redeemed people, not unredeemed people. And so it establishes the biblical doctrine of the voluntary, propitiatory ransom price paid through substitution for culprits under judgment.

It also establishes the principle of particularism. That is, that God came in the person of Jesus Christ to die for the people of God. He intended to die for a certain people. He died for that group of people. And he has made it possible for that group of people to enter into the possession of life, and he guarantees that that will ultimately happen for their debt has been paid. Payment, it has been well said, God cannot twice demand, first for my bleeding surety’s hand and then again at mine.

The only doctrine of substitution that is true substitution is that substitution. The idea that Christ came as a conditional substitutionary sacrifice is not taught in the word of God. You can search it from one end to the other, and you will not find that idea. That is inserted by interpreters. He died as a substitute for a definite people.

The institution of the Lord’s Supper took place at the time of the last Passover. Remember last week we pointed out or tried to that the Lord Jesus lived perfectly under the law. He had to carry out that Passover service with immaculate perfection. Not one thing could be out of line with the Old Testament teaching. Probably no one observed the Passover more perfectly than as our Lord did with the apostles, carrying out all of Moses’ injunctions absolutely perfectly, he fulfilled the law.

Now we talked last time about the four-fold division of the Last Supper. There was first a preliminary cup of wine, and the preliminary dish consisting of green herbs and bitter herbs and a sauce made of fruit puree. It was set on a table containing a bowl of salt water to remind them of the tears that had been shed when they were slaves in Egypt. Then the meal proper was brought in. A second cup of wine was put upon the table while the second part of the ritual took place, and that was the explanation of the

meaning of the Passover. The Lord Jesus was the *pater familias*; that is, the host and the head of the family. He stood for the Father. The Father expounded the significance of the Passover, not mother.

How often is it, you know, you sit down at a table in a Christian home and the wife says to the husband, would you return thanks? Some homes, the husband doesn’t even have an acquaintance with the Lord that is sufficiently close to return thanks. In Israel it was not so. It was the father who was the Bible teacher. It was the father who put the child upon his lap and taught that child the word of God. Mother had her important duties, but it was father who was the Bible teacher. And as Mr. Prier, our elder, says, “No one will ever have a better Bible teacher than his own father.”

And so the Lord Jesus, as the *pater familias*, expounded the Lord’s Supper, they would say, “What meaneth this sacrifice?” And he launched into an exposition of Exodus chapter 12 and all that it signified. Oh there are lots of things I’d like to hear. I hope in heaven we have instant replay, [laughter] because there are a lot of things I’d like to see. Take me back to the life of Abraham. Take me back to this incident. Take me back to that incident. I’d like to hear our Lord expound the significance of the Passover, and I’d like to hear that sermon that he preached on the Emmaus Road. And I wouldn’t mind hearing a few of Paul’s. I wish it were possible to erase some of mine [laughter]. Some of you might say, Play Dr. Johnson’s; there are a few things that I want to correct that he said. Well, that will be your privilege, then, and I will probably won’t mind it, then. [Loud, sustained laughter; Johnson laughs]

At any rate, after the explanation, then of course the beginning of the meal and there was the partaking of the dinner with the lamb. Grace was spoken by the *pater familias* over the unleavened bread. They had broken the bread earlier, but the other half of the bread was put aside and it is taken now and the thanks is given over it and it is probably at this point in that service that the Lord Jesus made these comments concerning the bread.

The meal itself consisted of eating the pascal lamb, eating the bread, eating the bitter herbs dipped in the sauce, the *cheriseth*, and the lamb all wrapped together frequently. And after prayer, a third cup of wine was drunk. And that wine, this cup, was called the cup of blessing. And that’s what Paul called the cup of the Lord’s Supper, so it was likely at this point that he said the words that he said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood.” You can see how the Passover service dovetails into the first Lord’s Supper, one being the type, the other being the antitype, both looking forward to the first coming, the other looking back to the ministry of our Lord, the other looking forward to the second coming.

Finally the service was closed with the fourth cup of wine amid the praise and the singing of the remained of the hymns which they had sung earlier, the great section in the Psalms, Psalm 113 through 118, the *balleal*. It’s against this background then that Mark gives his comment of the last Passover and the first Lord’s Supper.

Can you not imagine as they had reached the place of the meal and the time comes now to eat the Passover lamb, and the apostles, Peter, James and John in their places as we mentioned last week, and the Lord Jesus reaches into the common pot where the lamb was and takes out the choice piece and gives Judas on the sop. And then they all begin to eat. And each one takes the lamb and brings it toward his mouth, what kind of thoughts were in their minds?

Well I would imagine that they thought something like this. Having heard the exposition the Lord gave, this is the lamb, this is the lamb that was slain when Israel was in Egypt by which they had redemption. They obtained freedom from the sacrifice of the lambs and the sprinkling of the doorposts and the lintel with the blood of the lambs. And so they thought of that. And they thought also of the bondage from sin no doubt, even though they may not have had a deep conception of it, they knew their needs, and they knew he was the Messiah. They sensed in this that it had something to do with their spiritual condition. And when they took the lamb their thoughts went back to the blood

that was shed in that first Passover service, and their thoughts no doubt comprehended the relationship of the Lord Jesus to this.

They thought of release. They thought of redemption. They thought of freedom. What did our Lord think? When he took the piece of lamb and began to eat it, why he had no redemption to experience. He had no release to experience. As a matter of fact, our Lord must have thought just the opposite. He thought as he looked at the lamb, this lamb condemns me -- condemns me, not in the sad sense, but in the exultant sense that I am the lamb.

And in the taking of the lamb, he reflects upon the fact that it condemns him to death. He’s going to carry out the death that makes the ceremony possible. And so in his case, he thinks of the death that he is soon to experience in order to bring reality to all of these ceremonies and ritual.

Two lines, you see, met in the guest chamber: the line of the Old Testament and its revelation, the line of the New Covenant and its revelation. I am told – I don’t know, I never worked on the railroad – but I am told that in the places in the track where the switches are, the tracks must be especially straight and proper and perfect. Well, here is the place where we turn from the old covenant to the new covenant. Proleptically, because ideally it occurs when Jesus dies, but he’s speaking in the light of that, and here the lines must be especially straight.

In the Old Testament, it is the altar that is prominent. In the New Testament, it’s the table of the Lord. Up to now, every hour looked forward to the coming of the redeemer. Now all eyes will look backward to the redeemer who has come. And so we read, Jesus took bread. He reached over, took the other half of the loaf of bread that had been broken, the *athikamen*, and he took that bread and he broke it.

Now the bread is taken first because the bread suggests the means to the atoning death, the incarnation. The bread is taken; he is himself the bread of life, and that bread is broken. He took the bread and he broke it. Bread was normally broken, but it was a

beautiful figure, and our Lord used it of the death that he would die. And so he took the bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it. That of course, is intended to stress the fact that he must die.

Now I want you to notice that he not only took the bread, and he not only broke it, but he gave it to the disciples. I am told – again, I have never surveyed anything except surveyors surveying; I’ve surveyed them – but I am told that the transit compass must be put at the exactly perfect location, otherwise, every measurement will be off. Now when we come to the word of God there is a place where we need to put the transit compass in order to understand the Bible. One of the reasons people do not understand the Bible is because they don’t approach it with their compasses set at the proper place. Now, the proper place at which to set the compass of your Bible is to set it on the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. If we do not understand that our salvation is a work of God, it is sovereignly initiated by God, not by man, then all of our thinking in biblical things will be astray, askew.

That is what has happened in much of evangelical Christianity. We have set our compass on the sovereignty in part of man and in part of God, and therefore our doctrines are often askew. But if we put our compass on the doctrine of the sovereign initiative of God in our salvation, then the Bible will become a wonderfully open book. Even H.G. Wells said once, until man finds God and is found of God, he begins at no beginning and ends at no ending. I don’t think he understood the full significance of that statement, but it stresses the fact that the sovereign initiative in divine things is God’s initiative.

So, the Lord Jesus Christ took the bread, he broke the bread, he gave it to the disciples in a visible picture of what God does in the salvation of men. He takes the initiative. He carries out the work. He conveys it to us. He gives us the responsiveness in order that we may respond to the divine initiative. We would never respond did he not take the initiative. For, as we have said so often here, there is none that seeketh after

God, no not one, Paul says. There is none that doeth good, no not one. There is none righteous, no not one. What do we have, Paul said, that we have not received from the Lord?

Now, as he gave it to them he said, “This is my body.” A great deal of discussion has raged over that question. I don’t have time in the limited time we have to speak of the different viewpoints that have been offered with reference to this controversy. As you know, there are some who think that our Lord intended by that a transformation of the bread and the wine into his body and into his blood. There are some who insist on the personal presence of the Lord Jesus in, with and under the elements. There are still others who don’t go quite that far but insist on the personal presence of our Lord in the Lord’s Supper – a kind of experience of the presence – spiritually at least. And there are some who feel that the Lord’s Supper is a simple memorial service in which we remember what he has done, and by remembering what he has done, he has done under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit, for even that proceeds from divine initiative, we enter into a deeper experience with him.

The great majority of evangelical Christians have believed that the Lord’s Supper is a means of grace. That is, it is something by which God speaks to us and which he uses to build us up in the faith. There is a real communication of the benefits of the death of Christ in our, not only in the saving sense, but in the sanctifying sense itself when we sit at the Lord’s table and observe the Lord’s Supper. I am prepared to believe that there is a communication of great blessing to us as we sit and reflect under the Spirit’s guidance upon the saving work of Jesus Christ in those elements. In fact, the whole realm of salvation seems to be comprehended in the bread and the wine.

Regardless of the depths of our understanding of it, the truth does lie I think somewhere there. But at any rate, this “is” is not the copula of identification, substantial identification, but it is the copula of symbolic relationship. The same kind of is that we have when we read “the field is the world.” The field in that parable represents the

world. It’s the same kind of is that we have in other places, which we use in English and in almost all of the languages of the Western world. Is means “represents” often, and that is its meaning here. That’s clear from what follows.

It’s clear also from the fact that it is the Lord Jesus in his body who took the bread in his hands and said, this bread is my body. Why it was his body that was giving the bread. And the blood was coursing through his veins at that point. So it’s clear it seems to me he did not mean that there is a transformation of the bread into his bread or a transformation of the wine into his blood. He means, “this represents.” But, that would be the subject of several hours of debate and discussion, because in history it has been a matter of discussion and debate for centuries. Fortunately, the fundamentals of the Christian faith do not in the final analysis rest upon how we settle that particular question.

He said “This do in remembrance of me,” and I want you to think about this for a moment, because what did Moses say about the Passover service when he first gave it to Israel? Well, he said to Israel, now this is going to be the service of your birth-night. The birth-night of the nation was when they came out of Egypt. Every year they celebrated it as a kind of birthday remembrance. And they were told also that they were to celebrate it throughout all their generations. And so for approximately 1400 years they had celebrated the Passover service.

Now here is a relatively young Jewish man as you looked at our Lord, a relatively young Jewish man who had gathered to himself a small company of disciples and an even smaller company of apostles. He has them in the Upper Room, and now he says to them, I want you from now on to do this in remembrance of me. Forget, so far as first importance is concerned, forget about Egypt and the typical redemption there, and remember me from now on.

I am sure that there were people, when first apprised of something like this that would say well, to speak anachronistically, he’s a Jim Jones kind of fella. He’s overthrowing everything and putting himself at the center of the movement of God. He’s

saying, forget the Passover service which we’ve remember for 1400 years so far as its importance is concerned, and now put in its place the observance of a simple meal in which you remember me. We would say, what arrogant audacity to shove aside and put aside Moses and put in its place this service in which we remember this man. And I must say to you, it either is arrogant audacity, or he’s speaking the authoritative word of God.

Now if he’s speaking the authoritative word of God, and I’m sure that the great majority of you in this audience are convinced he did speak the authoritative word of God. If he’s speaking the authoritative word of God, what he is saying then is that I am the true Passover lamb. All the lambs up until this time pointed forward to me. They had validity as long as that old covenant was in existence. But now, from now on, in the light of the events of the next few days, that system is put aside. It has great didactic usefulness even today, but it is put aside as far as validity is concerned, and I am the true Passover lamb. And when our Lord dies on the cross crying out “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” the Lamb of God foreordained before the foundation of the world now offers that sacrifice that all of those lambs pointed forward to.

Not only that, his death is the true sacrifice. All of those deaths of lambs which secured for Israel that night in Egypt redemption from Pharaoh’s bondage now are fulfilled in the death of the Lord Jesus which is the true sacrifice that delivers men from bondage to sin. If the blood of the lambs was safety in Egypt for the firstborn that night, the blood of the Lamb of God is the true safety today. And if we are to have safety, we must have it under the merits of the Lamb of God.

Are you trusting in the merits of the Lamb of God? Is that the basis of your salvation so far as you know? Or are you trusting in your church? In your good works? In your observance of the ordinances? In your Christian “service”? Are you trusting in the merits of the blood of Christ. There is no other safety. It’s when I see the blood, I will hover over you and protect you from the destroying angel. The blood – that’s the true safety. This do, Luke says and Paul repeats it, this do in remembrance of me.

This is something that is to be done. Done continuously. Now the Bible does not tell us we have to remember the Lord’s death each Sunday. It says simply, go on doing this. Now it would seem to me if the Lord Jesus is the Lord, and if we want to please him, we would go on doing it. In fact, I think since we know it pleases him – he said, with desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you – we’d want to take every opportunity to sit at the Lord’s table and be ministered to by the Lord Jesus Christ through the elements and through contemplation upon the saving significance of the death through which we trust for eternal life.

He goes on in the ceremony of the cup to speak of the covenant. He says, “This cup is the new covenant of my blood.” Now in our text, here, we read, “And he took the cup when he had given thanks and he gave it to them and they all drank of it.” Matthew says “drink you all of it.” That’s the participation in the benefits of that covenant. But then he adds an explanatory word. This is my blood of the new covenant. That’s probably the most important statement for the atonement in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the redemption of sins. The blood referring to the violent death – not simply death – violent death. Death of the sacrifice, death of the slaughtered lamb. A death by heart attack would not have redeemed us; it’s the death that is the violent death. It’s death under the judgment of God, the death that communicates the idea of dying under penalty. That’s the saving death. That’s what he means when he says this is my blood of the new covenant.

So the broken bread, the outpoured wine suggest then the twofold statement: I must die sacrificially. The new covenant is based on a new sacrifice made with the true seed, and it is an unconditional covenant, and our Lord conveyed that in the work he was doing here. He took the cup, he gave thanks, he gave it to them. They drank of it. He said, this is my blood of the new covenant. It’s the foundation of the new covenant. It’s the inauguration when the blood is shed on Calvary’s cross. It is all of divine initiative; an unconditional covenant.

Someone said, Well, don’t we have to believe? Yes, but who communicates faith? Who communicates faith? We believe that’s our part, but it’s God who gives faith to us so that we exercise it. Augustine said that he learned that great truth from Paul, and Paul’s statement, what do we have that we have not received? Do we have faith? Where did you get it? You got it from God. That’s where you got it.

What do you have that you have not received? Nothing. You got it from God. Isn’t it great to have a salvation resting on the unconditional love of God? For by grace are you saved by faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, the salvation of grace through faith – it is God’s gift. Not of works, lest any man should boast. You won’t even be able to boast of your faith. Or your choice – you do make a choice – but your choice is initiated by God. When you get to heaven, you’ll sing with the rest of us. There won’t be an extra stanza for Arminians there. Arminians are going to sound like Calvinists in heaven [laughter]. They’re going to be singing, “Salvation is of the Lord,” and a lot of them are going to saying, “I understand now.” [Laughter]

That’s a partisan comment, you’ll understand, but I’m too old to worry about that, really. You understand I love my Arminian brethren. I lived as one for a good while. They can be pretty good fellows. Sometimes. [Laughter] I lived as one for a long time. I love Arminians. And I love converted Arminians just slightly better [loud laughter]. That’s what we’re all going to be when we all get to heaven; we’re going to praise the sovereign grace of God. We’re not even going to be Calvinists there. Calvin’s going to join with us and sing salvation’s of the Lord, and he’s probably learned a few things since he’s been up there, too.

Now the Lord Jesus says, It is shed for many. Shed – not spilled – shed. Not one drop is wasted. It is all intended by God to be the basis for the salvation of the people of God. We must as we study the Bible not be let astray by the Scylla of universalism that everybody’s going to be saved. If Christ died for everybody, the penalty that everybody

owed has been paid, and heaven can no longer exact any – there’s no penalty upon them, there’s no legal basis any longer. That’s the Scylla of universalism.

Or on the other hand the Charybdis of a frustrated deity. I tried to save them all, but I was unable to do so, because I’m not sufficiently powerful to do that. The universe he feign would save, but longs for what he cannot have. We therefore worship, praise and laud a disappointed, helpless God. No, no. We don’t do that.

I love the statement that Mr. Whitefield made. You know that I love George Whitefield anyway. And George Whitefield said – he was talking about the doctrine of election. He said this is one reason among many others why I admire the doctrine of election, and am convinced that it should have a place in gospel ministrations, and should be insisted on with faithfulness and care. Now this, mind you, is the greatest evangelist who every preached in the United States in my opinion. Mr. Whitefield, magnificent man.

He said, “It has a natural tendency to rouse the soul out of its carnal security. Therefore, many carnal men cry out against it, whereas universal redemption is a notion sadly adapted to keep the soul in its lethargic, sleepy condition and therefore so many natural men admire and applaud it.”

The Lord Jesus said, “It’s shed for many.” All kinds of people: Gentiles, Jews, rich, poor, black, white, red – shed for many for the remission of sins. That means the remitting of unmerited punishment – a judicial term. Penal substitution – the Lord Jesus died.

He follows in verse 25 with a statement concerning the great supper. And this saying converts the memorial into prophecy. He says, “Verily I will say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” The new covenant leads on to the new day of the kingdom of God.” Incidentally, the Lord Jesus knew from this that he would be exalted. It’s evident that he had the settled conviction that his death would not be the end of things. That he would rise from the dead and that there would be a great festival of the kingdom of God.

Now I want to ask you again. Is it not a startling thing that Jesus said, “Never forget my death”? Never forget my death. Underlying that statement is the conviction that his death is of the most fundamental significance for life, and further, that there would be a fulfillment of all that it signified. Never forget my death. Some have said, “If Jesus never did really anticipate his exaltation, all that would be would be a mistaken estimate of his own importance.

But he knew what would follow, that he would be raised from the dead. That he would ascend to the right hand of the Father, and that there he sits in triumph and glory, and when the Father speaks the word, he will come and he will manifest the kingdom of God upon the earth.

Well, our time is up. I must close. Have you not noticed this? The Lord Jesus Christ does not ask us to remember his life. He hasn’t asked us to remember the miracles that he performed. He doesn’t even ask us – at least in this case, in this fundamental place – to remember his ethical system. Later he will ask us to pay attention to the things that he has said, but this is one of those preeminent things that he has said. Our Lord’s desire is that his death be remembered, and remembered in this sense that he’s the true Passover lamb under whose blood there is safety, and our duty, suggested by the duty of those Israelites, is to put our fingers into the blood of that cross on Calvary’s sacrifice, spiritually, and sprinkle that blood upon the doorposts of our hearts, that we may have a relationship with him.

Mr. Spurgeon pointed out that this teaching was given to believers, men who had found virtue in his blood. Men who had found virtue in the full atonement that was to be made or had been made. Men who realized that there was a full atonement. They had responded to the unconditional offer in faith, and they had come to admire his justice. He says, I reverence the lawgiver, the mighty lawgiver who would not, even though he is love itself, suffer his law to be broken. I reverence him as the dreadful judge of this universe who will punish all sin and sinners.

But he said further, “I reverence him as the one who has come himself to pay the debt, himself, for Christ his son is one with him and dear to his father’s soul. Why more than reverence, it makes me feel an intense love to him. What was he so just, and yet was he so determined to save me that he wouldn’t spare his only son, but freely gave him up to die – O blessed God, I tremble at Thy justice, of which I come to admire, but O Thy love, what shall I say of it, it wins my love. I must love Thee, my God!” The just and yet gracious God, I must love him. May God give you to have a similar attitude to him who loved us and gave himself for us.

Now he said, this pleased him, to remember the Lord. It pleased him. Christians want to know how to please him. I often wonder if the things that I do please him, even the good things that are good in themselves – teaching the Bible, preaching the word, doing various forms of ministry – but they can be things that do not please the Lord if he wants we to do something else. I sometimes wonder, am I doing things that please the Lord when they’re not necessarily questionable things.

But there is one thing that pleases him – well, two – and they’re simple to do. When I come to faith in Christ, to be baptized in water – that pleases him. And then to observe the Lord’s Supper. That pleases him. To sit at the Lord’s table and reflect under the Spirit’s guidance for the things that he has accomplished for me – that pleases him. May God help us to respond. Let’s stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these magnificent words which no human tongue could ever adequately expound. Bless these feeble thoughts, those that are of Thee, enable us to remember them. Those that are not, erase them from our minds.

If there are some here who do not know Jesus Christ, give them no rest nor peace as long as they do not rest in his merits. Give them to understand themselves, enable

them to flee to the cross. Enable them to have a trust only in the blood that was shed.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.