

### UNTIL I DRINK IT ANEW IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Let's play a game called what am I. Here are some clues. I took 3 years to complete and was finished in 1498. I am the most popular and recognized piece of Christian art that you will find on carpets, carvings, canvas and hanging on walls. I was originally a 15 x 29 painting made by a famous painter. What am I? **If you guessed this**, the Last Supper by Leonardo Da Vinci, you are right. Did you know that from the time it was completed in 1498, it started to fall apart? Da Vinci had decided he was going to try something different. Instead of using wet plaster, he thought he would try dry plaster. Not a good idea. It may have looked nice but it would not last. It began to flake off and people have been trying to restore it ever since. The Last Supper wasn't so lasting.

That may be true about the painting but it is not true about the Last Supper, the event we are celebrating today that took place in the Upper Room between Jesus and his disciples. This is a supper that has lasted and will last until the end of time. In fact, Jesus says this supper will go on for all eternity for he said in our text, **I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the day I drink it anew in the kingdom of God.**

What a special night this was for Jesus and his disciples as they gathered to celebrate the Passover meal! What usually happened when family members or friends gathered together for this meal was they would talk about the history of their people and how God in his grace had set them free from their slavery. Imagine sitting around the table and grandpa starts telling you the story. "Many years ago we were slaves in the land of Egypt for 430 years. It was awful and the people prayed to God to deliver them. God sent Moses as well as 10 plagues to convince the Pharaoh to set the people free. The plagues were horrible. The Nile River turned to blood; frogs were all over the place, in the bedrooms, in the living room, in the ovens; gnats and locusts and flies; complete darkness for three days, and the final one was all the firstborn in the family would die. The only way the firstborn would not die was if the blood of a lamb was put on the doorframes. The angel of death would see the blood and pass over that house. So our people did that and none of their firstborn died. This plague convinced the Pharaoh to let the people go. Our people were so happy. As they left Egypt God showed he was with them by a pillar of cloud to guide them during the day and a pillar of fire during the night. As they kept going, Pharaoh changed his mind and came after them with his powerful army of chariots. The people didn't know what to do. The Red Sea was in front of them. They had nowhere to go. God told Moses to lift his staff over the water and God then parted the Red Sea so the people could cross to safety. Once they were across, he brought the waters of the Red Sea back together drowning the army of Pharaoh." As Grandpa told this story, the eyes of the young children got wider and wider. Grandpa ended by saying, "This is why we celebrate the Passover every year. It reminds us of what a great and gracious God we have and how blessed we are to be a part of his family." I am sure Jesus and his disciples were discussing the same thing. What a special night the Passover was for the people of Israel! What a special night it was for the disciples because they were celebrating it with Jesus!

Then Jesus did something the disciples did not expect that made this night even more special. As they were eating, Jesus took some of the unleavened bread which was part of the Passover meal, held it out and said, **Take and eat, this is my body.** He then took the wine which was also part of the meal, passed it around and said, **Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant.** Jesus' words made it very clear that this was the beginning of something very special. Jesus was making the Last Supper with his disciples the Lord's Supper in which he was giving them his body and blood that he was about to offer on the altar of the cross. He also made it very clear to them right away that he would not be meeting with them in this same setting again or

enjoying this meal with them again here on earth. He said. ***I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the day I drink it anew in the kingdom of God.*** In other words, Jesus told them. “I can’t stay here. I have to leave you. I need to sacrifice my body that I have just given you in the bread and shed my blood that I just gave you in the wine. I need to do this to forgive you of all your sins.”

Yet they would not be without hope. Jesus used the word “until,” a word of promise and hope. This night in the upper room dealt with the past, the present and the future. The past was a reminder of God’s grace and deliverance from their slavery in Egypt. The present was the meal Jesus instituted for them to eat and to drink. The future was a future won for them by the events that would take place the next day, Jesus’ suffering and death which would guarantee them a future in which they would dine with him at his banquet hall in heaven.

Today we celebrate the past, the present and the future. My friends, you and I are about to enjoy a meal unlike any other. In the Lord’s Supper Jesus tells us to look back into the past, to eat and drink in remembrance of him and what he has done by his perfect life and perfect sacrifice, to proclaim his death until he comes. He also wants us to look at the present. As we come to his table to be fed, God wants us to first look at ourselves, to examine ourselves so that we see that we are sinners, unworthy of God’s love, unworthy to receive his body and blood in the bread and wine, worthy only of his wrath and punishment. We need his forgiveness. Today Jesus attaches himself to the bread and wine and as you receive these elements, he offers you his forgiveness in his words spoken personally to each of you. ***Take and eat, this is my body given for you. Take and drink, this is my blood shed for you.*** The same is true for the people who are standing around you as they too receive Holy Communion. What a blessing to be united with fellow sinners who are united in faith and belief! We need to appreciate and encourage one another for ***we who are many, are one body for we all partake of the one loaf.*** How good it is for us to be here! Appreciate this meal that your Savior is feeding you and not just today but every time you come to eat and to drink.

As you leave God’s table, your Savior tells you to look ahead to the future, to look forward to the day when you will drink it anew with him in the kingdom of God. We have reservations at the greatest banquet hall that exists, reservations that were made for us with the very body and blood Jesus offers us in Holy Communion. We will dine with Jesus at his table in heaven. What it looks like, what it will taste like, how it will be served is something we have to wait for and find out. It will be new and something we have never experienced before. No longer will we have to examine ourselves and confess our sins. We won’t have any. We will be wearing the white robe of Christ’s righteousness. If we are saddened by the fact that we cannot commune with a family member or friend because we are not united in faith here on earth, we won’t be sad in heaven because we will enjoy perfect unity with all our fellow believers. No longer will Jesus only be with us in the bread and wine of Communion, he will be right there physically with us. We will see him with our own eyes. We will be sitting with him and talking to him and enjoying the wedding feast at his side. No longer will we need to look ahead and wonder what heaven is like because what is now our future will be our present. It will be real and breathtaking and an unbelievable joy that will never end. This will not be the last supper, but a lasting supper for all eternity. We know that without a doubt because Jesus tells us. ***I tell you the truth.*** Amen.