

The Lord's Supper

Remembering Christ as He Told Us To

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The Lord's Supper

You have invited me to come and meditate with you on that delightful topic that goes right to the heart of every believer in our Lord Jesus Christ, and that is the Lord's Supper. I begin with two apologies. In the time available to us this evening, I cannot possibly touch on all the nearly infinite significance of this memorial feast that our Lord has left for us. I must make my own selection. Apology number two is that if my selection doesn't happen to be the selection that you yourself would have made then I pray your tolerance and forgiveness.

But let us begin by listening to our Lord himself as he repeats in our ears the words of institution that he first spoke with his disciples the night before he was crucified. We read from the Gospel of Matthew 26:26. There our Lord says as follows:

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.' (vv. 26–28 ESV)

Then let us read one more passage that records the words of our Lord Jesus. It is found in 1 Corinthians 11, and here Paul is reporting the words of the Lord Jesus. We begin at verse 23:

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (vv. 23–26 ESV)

May he who spoke those words originally speak them again to our hearts personally this evening.

The words of our blessed Lord Jesus are obviously very moving to the hearts of all true believers in him, but the words he spoke on this occasion are, if possible, doubly sacred because of the time at which he spoke them. This was on the very eve of his crucifixion, where he must suffer the penalty of our sin and, by the giving of his life, redeem us and reconcile us to God. But not only so, it was on that night, says Paul, when he was *betrayed*. And that cuts deeply into our hearts, surely. To think that our Lord was, as he soon confessed, deeply moved in soul and spirit by the prospect of Calvary (vv. 37–38), and at that very time he had to contemplate the disloyalty of one of his supposed apostles. It was the very night in which he

was betrayed that he took the bread, and he took the wine and said, 'Take it, eat it and drink it in memory of me.' As we remember it again, the very mention of his betrayal surely moves our hearts with a determination that, by God's help, we shall never betray our Lord or be disloyal to him!

The primary purpose of the Lord's Supper

We ask therefore, first, what is the purpose of the Lord's Supper as given us by our Lord Jesus. Twice over in the passage in 1 Corinthians 11 we are told Christ said it was that we were to do it in memory, in remembrance, of him. It becomes exceedingly significant therefore, for us to observe what exactly it is that he has asked us to do in order to remember him.

Let's think for a brief moment of all the wonderful things he did in his life of thirty-three years, and in his ministry of three and a half years. What should we remember most? What would be most typical of him? He could, I suppose, have told us that whenever we meet we should take the Sermon on the Mount and solemnly read it in the ears of all his people so that we might remember his moral teaching and our responsibility to conform our lives to it. That would have been very useful and exceedingly important, but then we should have remembered him primarily as a moral teacher. He was more than that.

He could have ordered us to take the Gospels and select from them an account of his miracles so that whenever we met we might remember the marvellous grace and the divine power by which he did his miracles, thereby illustrating a lovely message of salvation. But he didn't do that either. Important as they were, if he had asked us to remember him by his miracles, we should have thought of him primarily as a worker of miracles.

What is it then he asked us to remember him by? It was this. He took bread and said, 'This is my body, which is given for you,' and taking a cup of wine he said, 'This cup is the new testament, the new covenant, in my blood, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins.' And with that, he lays down what he wished to be central to our remembrance of him. We remember him primarily for the fact that he came to give his life as a ransom for many. Oh, here is the heart of the gospel, and here is the heart of God told out! 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son' (John 3:16). Or, in the words of our Lord Jesus: 'The Son of Man has come, not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for our souls' (see Matt 20:28). We cannot remember him in this way but that he comes directly to our hearts as the blessed Son of God who, as Paul would put it, 'loved me and gave himself for me' (Gal 2:20 ESV).

Other doctrines essential to the Lord's Supper

Of course it involves a whole host of other exceedingly important doctrines, not least the sinless humanity of our Lord and his absolute deity. For had he not been sinless, he could not have offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins. Had he not been truly human, he could not have identified himself with us as our Saviour and intercessor before God. No angel, however exalted, could have stood between us and God and borne our human sins. Christ did because he was human, because he was sinless. But simultaneously, as we remember him giving his body and blood for our sakes, we perceive he must have been God incarnate. Dear Wesley,

by poetic licence, talks in one of his hymns as follows: 'That Thou, my God, should die for me!'¹ We are not criticizing Wesley for his poetic genius, but we know Scripture doesn't actually use that term, that God died for us. But while that is so, he who died was God, and if he were not God then none of us is saved. How could a mere man die for the sins of the whole world?

What wonderful things crowd into our minds and hearts as we come to the simple ceremony of remembering our Lord Jesus in the bread and in the wine! It would be good for Christendom if Christendom had put it central. You can't deny the deity of Jesus and then say he died for your sins. You cannot imply that he was not sinless and then claim he died for your sins. Central to our remembrance of him is this institution whereby we remember he gave his body for us; he gave his blood, that we might be reconciled to God.

The symbols

We ask then what we have to do with these symbols. Our Lord's command is so clear that we need not stay long over it. He said that we were to eat the bread and drink the wine.

Pray notice he didn't say, 'Take this bread and wine and offer them to God.' That has been a sad perversion of the Lord's Supper. We don't offer them to God. Why not? Because Scripture declares to us quite plainly that whereas the priests in ancient Israel 'offered oftentimes the same sacrifices that could never take away sin. This one man, after he'd offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God' (see Heb 10:11-12). Therefore, because his offering is complete, there is no other offering to be offered. But more than that Hebrews 10 says the Holy Spirit is witness to us of God's gracious, unbreakable promise: 'Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more' (vv. 15-17). Now where there is forgiveness like that, says the Holy Spirit, where you have the guarantee that God will never rake up the guilt of your sin and pronounce his judgment upon it and the penalty to be endured, where you have a promise like that, there is no longer any process of offering (v. 18).

Forgive me using an analogy far distant from such a sacred topic, but take the way people have to pay off their mortgages. Oh, what a bind they are, aren't they, struggling to pay off the mortgage? Every month it comes round, and as the day gets nearer, the worse the anxiety gets maybe: 'Where shall I find the money to pay this mortgage?' And when you have paid it, you have a sense of relief, enjoyable for the first week thereafter, but very soon the thing has to be paid again, and perhaps the need to pay goes over many decades. At last comes the moment when the thing is finally paid: done, sealed and settled! And then what? Does a husband say to his dear wife, 'Now, my dear, I know we've paid, but just to make sure, let's go down to the old building society and pay another instalment'?

I never met anybody who reasoned like it! Of course not! Once it's paid, it's paid, isn't it? And there isn't any longer any payment! So says the New Testament: 'Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.' Since Christ has paid the price for them, there is no longer any process of offering, no process of paying, because the debt has been paid.

¹ Charles Wesley (1707-1788), 'And Can It Be That I Should Gain?' (1738).

Symbols only

Then let us be clear, as we introduce ourselves to the topic, that the symbols—the bread and the wine—are only symbols. Now, I know this has been a matter of great dispute all down the centuries within the Christian church. Some have felt that when our Lord said, 'This is my body . . . this is my blood', he must have meant more than that they are just symbols. Some have quoted our Lord's words from John chapter 6 where he said, 'If anyone does not eat my flesh and drink my blood, then he has no life in him' (see v. 53). People have said that this is an explanation of the symbols at the Lord's Supper; our Lord is inviting us to eat his flesh and drink his blood, and that is the way we nurture eternal life, or indeed receive it.

That isn't so really, is it? Because if you notice, the words spoken by our Lord in the story recorded in John 6 are spoken on a completely different occasion, some many months before he spoke in the Upper Room. And secondly, we may notice the difference in terminology. He didn't say, 'Unless anybody eats my body and drinks my blood he has no life in him.' Notice the difference. He said, 'If anybody does not eat my *flesh*', not 'my body'. And we must ask, did he mean it literally? What, eat his literal flesh as he stood among them? Drink his literal blood? We have his own answer subsequently in that very same chapter, for he says, 'The flesh profits nothing. The words I speak unto you, they are spirit, they are life' (see v. 63). Even if it were possible to eat the very literal flesh of the Son of Man, listen to our Lord: 'The flesh profits nothing.'

The point of the metaphor

Yet we are told we must come and eat that bread and drink of the cup. Why the metaphor? For it is a very simple metaphor telling us that when it comes to the benefits of the death of our blessed Lord Jesus, then each one of us must personally appropriate those benefits and make them our own, which we did when we first repented and trusted the Saviour, and which we continue to do, and nowhere more readily than when we come to remember him and take the bread and the cup of wine from his hand. We appropriate them and by faith, as the ancient phrase has it, we 'feed on him' in our hearts.

The basis of Christian unity

Starting therefore, with the words of our blessed Lord, we must next ask who is to eat the bread and drink of the cup. Who are they who are told to do that? And of course, originally the word is clear: 'All of you eat this bread. All of you drink of this cup.' That remains the word of our blessed Lord Jesus, doesn't it? This institution and these symbols are for all God's people. It is the common basis of our approach to God, is it not? It is the basis of our unity. In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul observes to this effect:

The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not a communion [a sharing in] the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? Seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread. (vv. 16–17)

The basis of Christian unity is our blessed Lord and his sacrifice on our behalf.

I am aware that the term 'the table of the Lord' is very extensive in its meaning and not to be confined to the Lord's Supper. It tells us of all those many benefits that come to us through Jesus Christ our Lord, but of all those benefits none is more important or fundamental than those benefits we think of when we remember him at the Lord's Supper.

Imagine an occasion when believers are gathered together to remember the Lord Jesus and, as the bread goes from hand to hand, each takes his and her part of it. And suppose when all have taken his and her part, no bread remains over, and in that moment I was to say to you, 'Where is the bread?' your answer would be, 'All of them are the bread.' That would be physically true at that moment, wouldn't it? But at the deeper spiritual level, all who have partaken of the living bread are not just the symbol thereof; all are one in Christ. That is the glorious fact, and that famous and delightful hymn writer, J. G. Deck, wrote (and I hope we sing it often as we meet together at the Lord's Supper):

We would remember we are one
 With every saint that loves Thy name;
 United to Thee, on the throne,
 Our life, our hope, our Lord the same.²

It seems to me we need to make the effort to see things in their due proportion. If I were to ask you, 'Which is the more important, the symbol of bread and wine, or the great reality of which it speaks—our Lord's great sacrifice for sin?' I am sure you would have no doubt or hesitation in answering it: 'Why, the reality is greater than the symbol.' Suppose then I met a man or woman whom I knew to be a true believer, with their godly life exemplifying and validating their claim to be a believer, and I said to that person, 'My dear, I know you have faith in Christ and your godly life shows it, but I'm sorry, you cannot have part in the great *reality* of our Lord's sacrifice and the shedding of his blood.'

'Why not?'

'Because you hold a different view of church principles than I do.'

Why, if I said that, Paul would chase me round the North Pole and down by the South and pronounce some very serious words against such a denial of the gospel!

Suppose I take the *symbols* of that great reality, and I say to a brother and sister in Christ, 'Yes, you are my brother, my sister. I know you to be a true believer. You do have part in the great reality that is our Lord's sacrifice for sin, but we cannot allow you to share the symbols of that great reality with us because you hold a different view from what we do on what the building you meet should be called, or whether people should or should not use music in some of their meetings of the church, or because people have a different view on prophecy or some other thing.' I fear that if I did it and Paul were around, he would read me once more a very severe lesson from his Epistle to the Galatians.

As we come to that memory and to the symbols of that sacred body and that blood, we do well to say to ourselves what Deck expressed in his hymn: 'We would remember we are one | With every saint that loves Thy name.'

² James George Deck (1807-1884), 'Lord, we would ne'er forget Thy love' (1841).

So it is a remembrance of our blessed Lord Jesus, and how important it is that we fulfil his word, because we love him, because he has asked us.

Necessary for the journey

Our Lord instituted this remembrance feast on the Passover and while the Lord's Supper is not another Passover, yet Scripture does tell us that 'Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us' (see 1 Cor 5:7). Now, in ancient Israel, Israel were required every year to hold the memorial of the Passover, and a very practical thing it was. For instance, in the book of Numbers, when Israel are about to set out on their journey from Sinai to the promised land, various provisions were made for them, understandably. Going through the desert was a dangerous procedure. They needed to be provided for with everything to meet all the eventualities on their journey. And when it came to the actual journey, this was the first thing that God reminded them of: 'Now you shall keep the Passover, and if you can't keep it on the first month of the year, as you should, you shall keep it nonetheless, and keep it every year' (see 9:1–14). For it was absolutely vital, as they journeyed through their desert way to their promised inheritance, that they should remember how they got out of Egypt, how they were redeemed, why they got out of Egypt and why they were redeemed. If they forgot where they came from, they might forget where they were going!

Well, it happened, so the book of Numbers tells us, that they hadn't been many months on the journey when they got to their promised inheritance. And they put their noses across the border and had a look at it and they said, 'Oh, no, no! No, we wouldn't have come if we'd known what it was like. There are giants in the land, and the fighting will be too hard!' It wasn't only that. They were dissatisfied with God's provision of food for them as they journeyed. 'We despise this manna,' they said. 'We'd never look at it again if it were up to us; our souls loathe it! We remember the onions and the cucumbers and the garlic that we used to eat in Egypt, and how we ate it for nothing' (see chs. 11–14). That was a trick of imagination, wasn't it? They ate it for nothing? What, in Egypt, when they had to slave every day to get enough to survive on? So they proposed to make themselves a captain and go back to Egypt. Surely they'd forgotten why they came out of Egypt in the first place and by what means they came out.

My dear brothers and sisters, our Lord has not left us this memorial feast for nothing. We are on our way to glory. As we keep it, we are told we keep it 'until he come' (1 Cor 11:26). That is where we are going to—journeying to the daybreak—when the Lord Jesus shall come and we enter upon our heavenly inheritance. It is vital we don't lose our way! And to stop us losing our way, we are asked to remember where we came from: we were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. Oh, let me not forget it! He died to save me from this present age with all its wickedness, and if I forget his death for me, who knows how disorientated I shall get, or even lose my way on the way home to glory.

The cup of the new covenant

Now we come to what is a very substantial part of the Lord's Supper. We heard our Lord say it in the Gospel. His words repeat it in 1 Corinthians 11. As he took the cup he said, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.' Thus he handed it to his apostles.

Now, it is the fact that some theologians have decided that the new covenant really has nothing to do with the church of God and that the new covenant is a covenant that God will one day make with Israel when Israel repents but, strictly speaking, it is nothing to do with the church of God. I say it humbly, but on the basis of Scripture, that interpretation is not true.

The new covenant is not a covenant that God 'will make one day'. According to Hebrews 8, the new covenant has already passed into law. Oh, how glorious that is! It *has been* founded and enacted on better promises than that old covenant (v. 8). It is in the words of that covenant that we get the forgiveness of our sins: 'I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins will I remember no more' (v. 12).

It is, however, the *new* covenant, as distinct from the old. When Moses, under God, was inaugurating the old covenant based on the Ten Commandments, he took a basin and filled it with blood and, in the hearing of Israel, he read the terms of the law, and he took the blood and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant' (Exod 24:8). Can you visualize him with a basin in his hand and with his fingers, or some hyssop maybe, sprinkling the blood upon the people and saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant'? It is vivid, isn't it? How much more vivid it was when the Lord Jesus took a cup of wine and, handing it to his apostles, he said, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.'

This is not said merely once in the Gospels. It is said in Paul's Epistle, to the Corinthians of all people: 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.' As he hands that cup to me as I sit at his table; as he hands it to you, he has not changed the wording. He says to me, and he says to you, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.' What does it mean?

The difference between the old and the new

Well first of all, we should notice the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant. The old covenant was chiselled, or written, by the finger of God (Exod 31:18). It expressed his law, his commandments, and it was written with the finger of God on tables of stone. It was easy to be read therefore, for when God writes, he writes clearly. But it was not easy to keep, for it is one thing to write the commandments clearly on stone, but the stone gave you no strength to keep the commandments and no strength to go against their prohibition. How sorry we should be if we were under that old covenant, for God said in Jeremiah, 'The days will come that I will make obsolete that old covenant and I will make a new covenant' (see 31:31–34). And the newness is in this, that he writes his laws, not on tables of stone, but he writes them on the very tables of our hearts! And that is worth a 'Hallelujah' in anybody's language!

Paul says, writing to the Corinthians, 'Do you not remember? Have you not realized what happened when I brought the gospel to you and you heard the very voice of God and felt the power of God's Holy Spirit searching your hearts and illuminating your minds, and pointing you to Christ? Don't you realize what was happening? It was this: God was taking me—Christ

was taking me—as a man might take a pen in his hand. And the equivalent of the ink from the pen would be the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. Christ took me, his servant, and used me in the power of his Spirit to write Christ's commandments on your very heart! That is what is meant by being born again of course: it is to have, not just the law, not just commandments written externally, not even on a page of Scripture, but the very laws of God written by Christ on our inward heart. It is marvellous! Conveying all the potential and the new life, and we are able to learn to keep those commandments and to do them.

Of course, when we are born again, we don't become perfect overnight, do we? We have to say with James 'in many things we all still stumble and offend' (see 3:2). And God knows it. Ah, but see the wisdom of our blessed Lord Jesus in asking us to come, constantly and repeatedly, to remember him and to take the cup and, as we take it, he says to our hearts and in our ears: 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.' That surely is an invitation to remember the promise that goes with it. What is the new covenant? 'I will write my laws on their hearts' (see Heb 8:10). And when I take that cup I have to say, 'Blessed Lord, I still come short, but you know my heart. Blessed Lord Jesus, carry on writing your laws ever more deeply on my heart!'

Its practical importance for our growth

That is why, says the Apostle Paul, we have to prepare our hearts as we come to remember the Lord Jesus (1 Cor 11:28). Is that not so? We must not come lightly. We are to discern ourselves. We are not merely to judge ourselves but discern ourselves. I must know, as I stand before you, that not all is totally well with my attitudes. I have not progressed as I should have progressed in the keeping of our Lord's commandments. Have you? Does it matter? If I don't know it, you do anyway! You can see that not all my attitudes are right.

So what about it then? Here I am coming to the Lord's Supper, the new covenant by which he promises to write his laws on my heart. How could I possibly come saying it doesn't really matter whether I keep his laws or not? For as he hands us the cup he expects our cooperation, doesn't he? He expects that we will discern ourselves and, where we have failed and come short, we shall confess our sins before him and, as we take the cup, come in that attitude that says, 'Lord, please carry on writing your laws on my heart.' And oh, the wonder of it as we so come and take the cup! For that very cup is the covenant that adds: 'and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more' (Heb 10:17).

I confess to you, my brothers and sisters (and I don't wear my heart on my sleeve) how many times there have been in life for me when, after a difficult week and much failure, I have come to that gracious supper and heard our Lord's determination: 'My child, don't give up. I have promised I will write my laws on your heart.' And as I confess my sin, 'he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1:9 ESV). And with that cup in my hand, I hear again his gracious promise, 'And their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.'

Are we obliged to come?

Do we have to come? Somebody will say, 'We're not under law, my dear brother; we're under grace.' So we are.

I was once in America. I've been many times, but I was on this particular occasion giving some seminars and there were present a couple of gentlemen—believers in the Lord Jesus. They came up to me afterwards and asked me if I would consider going to their church. They said, 'We have recently become elders in this church, and we want our church progressively to become more like the churches of the New Testament. Would you consider coming?'

So I said, 'Yes, of course, my dear brothers,' and I went. And in the morning, I found I had to preach twice. There was the Lord's Supper and, after that, I had to preach. Then there was a break and there was another meeting, a rather larger meeting, and I had to preach again. So that happened and passed by and, at the end of the day, they drove me back some many miles to where I was staying. And they were very anxious to know what I thought of them and of the way they were conducting their church. I said I was delighted to see how they kept the Lord's Supper and the interest they had in his word. And I said, 'I was particularly impressed by the number of unconverted people that you got out to your second meeting.'

'Oh,' they said, 'well, no. There weren't many unconverted people there. They were our church members.'

I said, 'What, multitudes more at the second meeting who didn't come to the Lord's Supper?'

'Oh,' they said, 'but you can't compel people to keep the Lord's Supper, can you?'

Well 'compel' would be a funny word, wouldn't it? I quoted Acts 2 to them, and what happened when the people in Jerusalem were convicted by the Holy Spirit after hearing Peter's sermon that pointed out their involvement in the death of Jesus of Nazareth. They had murdered the Christ!

'What shall we do?' they said. So they already believed he was the Messiah.

Peter said, 'What you'll do now is to repent and be baptized.'

I can imagine in my own mind a young gentleman coming up to the Apostle Peter afterwards and saying, 'Sir, may I talk with you?'

'Yes.'

'You said we've got to repent and be baptized.'

'Yes.'

'But of course that bit isn't really necessary, is it, not the baptism bit? Because, you know, my father is a member of the Sanhedrin. It would be socially so difficult for my family if I were to get baptized publicly.'

What do you suppose Peter would have said? I think he might have said, 'You publicly stood with the crowd, calling for his crucifixion, didn't you? Now you say you repent, but you don't want to do it publicly. Really?'

Well at any rate, I quoted to my American friends what the next verses go on to say, that many did repent, and they were baptized. And what then? Well, they continued 'in the apostles' doctrine' and this and that and the other and 'in the breaking of bread' (see v. 42). They did indeed for they had repented! They didn't merely keep the Lord's Supper (or the breaking of bread) after they repented. They kept it *because* they had repented and now had

accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour! And when the Lord said, 'Come and do this in remembrance of me,' they felt under an obligation, because it was the Lord's express wish and command.

But let me not make it seem to be an ugly duty. Let me finally remind you that in Luke's account of our Lord's last days, he tells us that our Lord made two very deliberate entries into Jerusalem. Of course, in the week, he came into Jerusalem many times each day and went out, but there were two occasions that were very deliberately planned and executed.

The first was when he sent two disciples and told them to go to such and such a place and they would find a donkey there, standing, and they were to loose it and bring it, and if the owners of the donkey said, 'What do you do, loosing our donkey?' they were to say to these owners, '*The owner, the Lord has need of him*' (see 19:29–31).

So they went and found it as he said, and they brought the donkey and our Lord sat on it, and they spread their garments in the way as our Lord came riding that donkey to Jerusalem City with amassed thousands of the people to watch, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah: 'thy king cometh to thee' (9:9). It was the first official coming of the King to Jerusalem.

Ah, but Jerusalem as a whole rejected him. 'We will not have this man to reign over us,' they said, and slung him out of his capital city, to die on a gibbet. Did that mean the Lord gave up the city as his capital? Well, certainly not. Prior to his crucifixion at the end of the week, once more he sent two disciples, very deliberately, and said, 'Go into the city and there a man shall meet you carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him into the house where he goes and you shall say, not to him, but to the master of the house: "Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?"' And once more they went and found it exactly as he said. And there, in the night, our Lord came, with Jerusalem City not only dark but bristling with hostility against him, when you never knew whether the betrayer would emerge from this street or that alley, or where or how. But there in that hostile city, by his gracious command, they prepared the place (Luke 22:7–13). He kept the Passover and instituted the Lord's Supper, and there he set up the terms of his kingly kingdom: 'I will write my laws on your heart.'

Oh, what you would have given, wouldn't you, to have been that man? To have said to the Lord Jesus: 'Lord, this city is hostile to you, but I own you as my king. Here's my room, a few square feet on earth, where I invite you in to set up your kingdom and to celebrate your royal promise to write your laws on my heart.' What a magnificent privilege it is for us who know him, in a world that is basically enmity towards God, to come together, here on this earth and afford our Lord Jesus a place where he rules and reigns, and we celebrate his dying for us, his promise to write his laws ever more deeply on our hearts, and the wonderful promise of his coming again.

Conclusion

The Lord's Supper—one day we shall not need it anymore, and it will be a thing of the past. But oh just now, my brothers and my sisters, how much we need it! Let us all give due diligence as often as we may, to come together and celebrate him and remember him who, giving us bread and wine, said, 'This is my body, given for you. This is my blood, the cup of the new covenant shed for the forgiveness of sins.' And as we do so, we remember in our

hearts the promise, and say with the long tradition of the Christian church: 'Maranatha! Our Lord, come! For we long to see you.'

Shall we pray.

Blessed Lord, we have spent these moments, lovingly, in our hearts and with our minds, to remember thee and to think about the gracious provision thou has made for us all down the centuries, by which we may remember thee. And therefore now, convinced that thou hast heard us and our deliberations we come to thee. Lord, each one of us in his or her own heart own thee as Lord and Saviour. Help us by thy grace never to forget thee. Help us to do as thou has said, regularly, as often as we can, and take the bread and drink the wine in memory of thee, and thus show our loyalty to thee, our willingness to obey thee, as we look forward to the fulfilment of thy gracious promise; and do it until thou shalt come.

Be thine evening blessing therefore upon us, we pray, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

About the Author

DAVID W. GOODING is Professor Emeritus of Old Testament Greek at Queen's University, Belfast and a member of the Royal Irish Academy. He has taught the Bible internationally and lectured on both its authenticity and its relevance to philosophy, world religions and daily life. He has published scholarly articles on the Septuagint and Old Testament narratives, as well as expositions of Luke, John, Acts, Hebrews, the New Testament's Use of the Old Testament, and several books addressing arguments against the Bible and the Christian faith. His analysis of the Bible and our world continues to shape the thinking of scholars, teachers and students alike.