

Matthew 26:26-28 (New International Version)

²⁶While 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." ²⁷Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸This is my blood of the^[a] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

One of the most popular channels on cable TV these days is the food network. Have you ever watched that? Shows like "Emeril Live," "Country Cooking with Paula Dean," and "30 Minutes Meals" with Rachel Ray feature famous chefs who seem to perform magic in the kitchen and try to teach home viewers how to cook those same meals. One of the more recent shows has to do with "miracle meals." It's a show about people who have absolutely no talent for cooking and after some quick culinary lessons, they have to cook a meal for judges. That any of them are able to cook a meal with any degree of success is a miracle.

The reason I mention these things about the food network is because today is Maundy Thursday, the day that we commemorate the most important meal that anyone has ever prepared. Obviously we are not talking about some meal that a famous chef or amateur whipped up in a kitchen, but the sacred meal that our Savior instituted for his people to eat till the end of time. It's the "Lord's Supper," or "Holy Communion." What we want to consider tonight is that unlike the meals on the home cooking shows, this meal truly **is a miracle**.

THE LORD'S SUPPER IS A MIRACLE MEAL

I. It's a miracle meal because of what it is.

II. It's a miracle meal because of what it does.

One of the things you quickly learn from the cooking shows about preparing good meals is that you have to start with good, or fresh ingredients; The better the ingredients, the better the meal. Did you ever stop to think that that's what makes the Lord's Supper such a miracle? It's the ingredients. Now I don't mean to be trite and we don't call them ingredients. We call them the elements. And do you recall what four elements there are in the Lord's Supper? When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper he used some of the elements that were used in the Passover. He used unleavened bread and he used wine. And taking these elements he invited his disciples "take eat, this is my body..take drink this is my blood." By these words, Jesus was telling them and us that in this special meal we eat bread and drink wine, but we also partake of the very body and blood of the Lord Jesus, himself. Bread, wine, the Lord's body, and blood--these are the ingredients, elements in this meal.

"But how?" we and others quickly ask. How can it be that when we eat that little wafer and drink that cup of wine, we are also receiving the very body and blood of the Son of God? How can one explain that?

The answer is simple. We can't explain it. But we know it's true, because Jesus says so. He didn't say, "Take and eat, this represents or becomes my body," or "take and drink this represents or changes into my blood." He simply said, "this is my body," and "this is my blood." And if Jesus said it is so, we believe that it is so. One of our communion hymns puts it beautifully: "Though reason cannot understand, yet faith this truth embraces; Your body, Lord is, everywhere, at once in many places. I leave to you how this can be, your Word alone suffices me. I trust its truth unailing."

Speaking of chefs and whipping up a "miracle" meal, we all know someone who is a good cook and can whip up the most delicious meals. No matter how often they make that signature dish, amazingly it always tastes great. Well, we have something that's even more amazing. In the Lord's Supper Jesus comes to us and through the bread and wine, given to us in this meal, we receive his very body and blood. It's ordinary bread and wine. But it's no ordinary meal because Jesus is there too! May we always approach this meal with reverence and humility knowing that we are sharing in a miraculous meal.

II. Another thing they often talk about on the food network is making meals that are comfort foods. By comfort foods they mean food that makes you feel good or brings back fond memories. If you're having a bad day, miss someone, or you just want to pick up your spirits, you're suppose to eat food like a sinfully rich chocolate cake or one of your favorite casseroles that your mom use to make, or when all else fails, a happy meal from McDonalds.

Now, I don't mean to be trite in any way, because we are talking about serious matters here, matters of life and death, forgiveness, and heaven itself. But it can be said very properly of the Lord's Supper that it is the greatest comfort food for God's people. That's

what makes the Lord's Supper a miracle meal too. Just think of what it does. First of all, it's a meal that brings us into blessed fellowship, communion. As we already mentioned, eating that bread and drinking that wine brings us into a very intimate fellowship, communion with our Savior. When you receive that meal, Jesus, comes just to you at that sacred moment, and in a very intimate way you are joined to him and he to you. And it also brings us into an intimate fellowship, communion with our fellow believers. This meal joins us together as one. That's why God's Word insists that we have a common union of faith before we share in the common union of his Supper. Paul put it this way: "Because there is one loaf, we who are many, are one body, for we all partake of that one loaf."

But there's more. This meal is a miracle meal because it gives to us the blessed fruits of our Savior's work. When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we receive the forgiveness of sins. Jesus said, "take and eat for the forgiveness of sins...take and drink this is the blood of the new covenant poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins." Just think of that. When we come to this table, we come burdened with the load and guilt of sin. But when we leave, that burden is lifted because through this supper we receive forgiveness. No other food can give you that kind of comfort.

But there's still more. Sometimes when we eat something that is so good, we often say things like "that was divine, or "that was heavenly." That's just an exaggeration we use to describe our pleasure in eating some Boston Cream pie or some rich chocolate dessert. But it's not an exaggeration when we talk about the Lord's Supper. When we eat that bread and drink that cup we do get a taste of heaven. That supper is a miraculous foretaste of the feast Jesus has awaiting us there. And that's what its all about isn't it. That's why Holy Week is so precious to us. What we are observing and celebrating this week is the work of salvation that Jesus did for us. He died for our sins. He rose for our justification. Through his work we have eternal life. How do we know this? Jesus let's us taste it in the Lord's Supper. It is a miracle meal because of what it is and what it does. Tonight Jesus invites us to eat that miracle meal again. Amen.