

*The New Covenant of the King*

Luke 22:1-23

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We are now in Luke 22 and only a few chapters away from the end of his Gospel. We have been plowing through the Gospel of Luke since August 19<sup>th</sup> of last year. If the Lord wills, we will wrap up this sermon series on September 8<sup>th</sup> and that will be the 48<sup>th</sup> sermon in this series. When I began preaching through the Gospel of Luke, I had not planned this many sermons but the Lord had other plans.

We often do not have complete knowledge of the Lord's plans, do we? We pray and make as wise decisions as we can trusting in His wisdom, reading His word, praying, seeking the Spirit's leading, and seeking godly counsel from faithful believers in our church. Then we lean into the grace of God as we move through moments and seasons of our lives and then we look back at those moments and season and see the sovereign hand of God leading us and caring for us.

Back in 2005 Stacy and I began to seek the Lord on whether to move to the Middle East. I took a trip there and that was where I first met Tim Lubinus in Istanbul, Turkey. Then Stacy and I kept seeking the Lord's will on this move and we became convinced that moving was not what He wanted for us but He wanted for us to be mobilizers. Not long after that, we moved here. I began to do what I usually do, disciple young men and one of those young men is who I will call Ray<sup>1</sup>. Ray, through that discipling relationship of reading the word, reading good books, and taking him on a couple of trips with me was called to the very place where Stacy and I thought the Lord was leading us. I had no idea when we moved here that was God's plan to take a typical discipling relationship and call someone to the Middle East to do His work we thought God had planned for us to do, but that's what God did.

The Lord always has a plan. He always knows what He is doing and what will happen because He is in control. Even in our most painful situations, He is working. He has a plan. We most likely do not know all the details of His plan. We may only know one thing but we can trust that God is doing a thousand different things in every "one thing" that He is doing. We simply do not see the big picture. This is where we need faith to trust Him.

Consider our salvation; God has a plan to save sinners and it has been unfolding since the Garden of Eden. Think about how Abraham left Ur and traveled to Palestine, a place where the Lord would lead him. Then he and Sara have a son, Isaac, in their old age and Isaac marries Rebekah. Isaac and Rebekah had twins, Jacob and Esau. The promise did not pass to the oldest, Esau, but to the youngest, Jacob. Jacob flees the wrath of Esau and while he is away, he marries two women: Leah and her sister Rachel and he also had sons with two of their handmaids as well. This whole crew moves back to Palestine and then they move to Egypt because of a famine and this move preserved the promise to save the people of God and multiply them. Then 400 years later they left Egypt in the exodus. This was God's great salvation that He sent through Moses. Then after they left Egypt, there was the sin of the people of God at the edge of the Promised Land. They did not trust God to take them into the land and they complained against the Lord so they spent 40 years wandering in the wilderness. Finally, Joshua, not Moses, led the people of God into the Promised Land. Then there was the period of the Judges, the Kings, which included David, and Solomon, and all that time the prophets were continually calling of God's people to faith and repentance.

Woven through all of these many years of history was God's redemptive thread that we know as the promise of the Messiah who is the true King that would come and bring the ultimate salvation that was actually first promised in the Garden of Eden.

Finally, Jesus was born and after that nothing was really heard of Him until He was about 30 years old. Then He came preaching the gospel of repentance and faith. Luke tells us that his Gospel is an orderly narrative of Jesus' life and ministry so that we may have certainty that Jesus is the promised Son of God, the King who has come to save His people from the death sentence that is upon them for their sins against God.

Wow! It is amazing! God has been working His plan since the beginning and now we are at Luke 22 and Jesus is just hours away from His death on the cross, which is the whole purpose for which He left Heaven and came to earth. Everything that I just walked through has been leading up to this moment.

Of course, when we read the Gospels we can read it and be very grateful that Jesus came to die on the cross for sinners but when we take in the vast panorama of God's redemptive plan to save sinners since the Garden we are not simply grateful—WE ARE

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<sup>1</sup> Named changed for security purposes.

STUNNED! Like the Apostle Paul, we proclaim, “*Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!*” Friends, God has kept His promise to save sinners in Jesus and not even the spiritual forces of evil that were working against God could stop God’s redemptive plan from being fulfilled in Christ.

We should marvel at the sovereign grace of God to save sinners and Luke 22 is just another example of the stunning sovereignty of our Savior.

### I. The King’s Sovereign Control (vv. 1-13)

First, we see the King’s sovereign control as a wicked but providential plot begins to unfold against Him in vv. 1-6: “*Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. <sup>2</sup> And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people. Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. <sup>4</sup> He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. <sup>5</sup> And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. <sup>6</sup> So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd.*”

When we read a text like this we might be tempted to think that these events are out of Jesus control. It sounds like Jesus is about to be ground up in the gears of culture, politics, and religious history. After all, the Pharisees, the scribes, the chief priests, and the elders were looking for a way to put him to death. The religious establishment of the day had conspired against Him to commit a great evil.

Immediately in Luke 22:1-2, we see how someone in the place of spiritual leadership is capable of great evil. These religious leaders should have been leading the people to follow Jesus and worship Him as the long-awaited Messiah but instead they conspired to kill Him. So, instead of getting ready for the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, instead of leading the people in worship, instead of preparing the sacrificial lamb for the Passover, they were planning to murder the Lamb of God.

These men most likely did not begin their careers with the intentions of being liars, corrupt leaders, and leading the people of God to kill the Son of God but over time, pride, control, power, lust, corruption, lies, deceit, and abandoning the word of God led to a new mission in life—killing Jesus!

Then in v. 3, Satan enters Judas, who was part of the twelve. Now, finally, Satan has someone on the inside working for him. Judas leaves the twelve and then conspires with the religious leaders to betray Jesus.

Notice what v. 5 says, “*And they were glad.*” Imagine that. These men were about to commit the greatest crime in the history of the world, the murder of the sinless Son of God, “*and they were glad*” to do it. Can’t you hear them cackle with evil delight as their plan comes together?

But Jesus was not being ground up in the gears of history, He is in control of history because history is his-story. The Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Passover Feast were His feasts. These religious leaders worked for the One who designed these feasts, designed this religious system and He set this date. Everything was about Him, the Bread of Life and the Lamb of God. These feasts had been in place for hundreds of years and were designed to be acted out predictions of Jesus death on the cross.

The plan to kill Jesus and the betrayal was a *sovereign moment* designed by God since before time began so . . . what looked like a coup against the Son of God was actually God’s divine, providential plan. Not even the sin of evil people is out of His control and has been accounted for in His divine plan. Not even the plan of Satan can thwart the plan of God. I want to point out four quick things:

**1. God is sovereign over the evil plans of men so we should trust Him.** In other words, what men mean for evil God means for good (Genesis 50:20). Do not believe for one moment that the plans of these wicked leaders and Satan’s involvement was out of God’s control and that He was caught by surprise. God is never caught by surprise. He never scratches His heads and says, “*Well I didn’t see that coming!*” or wonders what to do next. That is how we think but it is not how God thinks.

However, dark moments are filled with light when you see with the eyes of faith. Just because we rarely know God’s plans in any given situation does not mean He is not in control. We only see in part and understand in part. This is the reason on the heels of explaining the sovereign salvation of God’s people and the suffering of God’s people, the Apostle Paul writes in Romans 8:28, “*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*”

May the word of God give us confidence that God is working things for our good and His glory even when we do not see how it can possibly work for our good. The situation you are in right now may be very painful. *Evil people and the powers of Hell may have conspired against you but God is still in control.* Stand firm and trust God and live in His word. He is working all things for your good if you are born again. He working to shape us into the image of Jesus.

## 2. God is sovereign over the evil plans of men that seek to stop the growth of the gospel and the church so trust Him.

Evil, wicked men and governments cannot stop God's plan to save the lost. These religious leaders in this text thought they were ending Jesus' influence and ministry but instead they actually carried out the will of God. Their sin was part of God's sending.

The Apostle Peter preached to these very people only weeks later and said in Acts 2:22-24, "*Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—<sup>23</sup> this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.<sup>24</sup> God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.*"

We may look at what all is going on in the world today and see how Christianity is under threat in our nation and all over the world and we may lose hope. We may be tempted to think that the church will not last. Yet, God always uses these kinds of persecutions to send His people where they should go. Jesus sufferings ended in Him losing His life and many of God's people lose their lives in these kinds of sufferings but that is not without God's sovereign hand being on His people. These things do not happen outside of His control.

The Apostle Paul says in Romans 8:35-39, "*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?<sup>36</sup> As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."<sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.<sup>38</sup> For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,<sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"

How can Paul say that they are being killed all day long but that nothing will separate them from God? It is because of what God has done in Christ. Just as Jesus' sufferings were part of God's plan to save sinners and not out of His sovereign control neither are the sufferings of God's people. God has a plan in our suffering. *When suffering comes, and it will, press hard into the grace of God that is provided for you in His word, in prayer, and in the body of Christ, your local church.*

The story of the hymn *I Have Decided to Follow Jesus*.<sup>2</sup>

1. *I have decided to follow Jesus;  
I have decided to follow Jesus;  
I have decided to follow Jesus;  
No turning back, no turning back.*
2. *Tho' none go with me, I still will follow,  
Tho' none go with me I still will follow,  
Tho' none go with me, I still will follow;  
No turning back, no turning back.*
3. *My cross I'll carry, till I see Jesus;  
My cross I'll carry till I see Jesus,  
My cross I'll carry till I see Jesus;  
My cross I'll carry till I see Jesus,*
4. *The world behind me, the cross before me,  
The world behind me, the cross before me;  
The world behind me, the cross before me;  
No turning back, no turning back.*<sup>3</sup>

## 3. God is sovereign over the sins of sinful religious leaders.

Friends, I believe there is a subtle warning in this text about wicked, sinful spiritual leaders. However, in Luke 20, Jesus is loud and clear when He said, "*Beware the scribes and Pharisee.*"

Friends, we live in a day where celebrity Christians commit very public sins. It seems almost daily celebrity pastors and Christians are falling prey to their sinful lusts and appetites. In public and on social media, they seem to be the very gift of God to the cause of the gospel and to the church but when you get up close and personal you realize something is not right.

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I\\_Have\\_Decided\\_to\\_Follow\\_Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Have_Decided_to_Follow_Jesus).

<sup>3</sup> Songwriters: Traditional / Leslie B. Tucker, *I Have Decided to Follow Jesus* lyrics © Nw Royalty Consulting, LLC.

And, yet, Christians flock to them and are surprised when they fall. However, these men and women do not just fall away by themselves. They do not sink in the sea of their private sins. No, they grab as many people as they can to take many people down with them. They destroy whole churches and harm the work of the gospel.

Just this past week another celebrity pastor walked away from his faith in Christ. He walked away from his faith, his wife, and the church. His only grief was that he had called sinners to repentance and faith in Christ and that he called same-sex marriage a sin. In many ways, he was like the Pharisees and he was glad to walk away.

Friends we must beware of idolizing high profile, gifted speakers. In this day and age of social media, we must keep exercising wisdom and caution. There is nothing wrong with people listening to the public proclamation of the gospel from gifted people.

**4. We are the visible people of a sovereign God so let's stay low before our Lord.** It is easy to point our fingers at high profile pastor and religious leaders who fail. However, what about those of us who are not high-profile leaders or celebrity Christians?

Consider this, in v. 6 Judas sought to pull off his sin of betrayal quietly and avoid the crowd. *What he failed to realize is that what is done in private rarely if ever remains private.* There is a danger as we consider the sins of pastors and religious leaders.

People often think they are not visible or as visible as a pastor or some spiritual leader. Your temptation is to think that Pastor Eric and I are very visible and in your temptation you are not. I know because I have sat where you sitting right now. It is easy to think that as you sit in a large crowd you are not visible but the truth is you are visible.

Brothers and sisters, we join a church so that we may be visible. That is what we want. This is the reason we covenant together publicly. This is the reason we read our church covenant out loud. We want to unite with a local body so that our voice rings loud and clear so that we are not hidden anymore.

I love how Pastor Ray Ortlund says it, *"You might have only two followers on Instagram, one of whom is your mother. But you and I, every one of us together – we are all public figures now, standing together, side by side in sacred covenant before the Lord, for his glory. The whole point of it all is to become high-profile, to make the real Jesus non-ignorable."*<sup>4</sup> Let's be faithful, public, followers of Christ.

Brothers and sisters, we stay low before the Lord. May we be gentle with one another and stay humble. Never allow your success as a Christian to inflate your ego, your pride, your heart, and your head. Stay low before the Lord.

The next thing we see in vv. 7-14 is the King's sovereign control is a providential Passover meal:

*"Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.' <sup>9</sup> They said to him, 'Where will you have us prepare it?' <sup>10</sup> He said to them, 'Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters <sup>11</sup> and tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' <sup>12</sup> And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there.' <sup>13</sup> And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover."*

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was held on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Nisan. Usually, on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month the family would secure the lamb that would be sacrificed for Passover on the 14<sup>th</sup> somewhere between 2:30 pm and 5:30 pm that evening and then they were to share the meal of Unleavened Bread together. The next thing they needed a place to have the meal together. So, He sends His two leading disciples to find the Upper Room.

In vv. 9-13, we see Jesus sovereign control over the Feast of the Passover/Unleavened Bread. Peter and John are told to enter the city and they will meet a man carrying a water jar. Carrying a water jar was usually a woman's responsibility but here they met a man. Just as Jesus said, they met the man and he led them to the place we know as the Upper Room.

Friends, there is nothing outside of Jesus' sovereign control over the sacrifice that He was about to make. Neither angels nor demons nor Satan himself, nor corrupt religious leaders, nor a disciple turned traitor will thwart His sovereign plan to die on the cross for sinners. All things must be fulfilled as it has been written. The word of God will be fulfilled. Jesus is in control, not man. We can trust Him no matter what.

## II. The King's New Covenant (vv. 14-23)

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<sup>4</sup> Ray Ortlund, *My Favorite Psalm 2: Psalm 51*, preached at Immanuel Church in Nashville, TN on July 21, 2019.

*“And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. <sup>15</sup> And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. <sup>16</sup> For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” <sup>17</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. <sup>18</sup> For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” <sup>19</sup> And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” <sup>20</sup> And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. <sup>21</sup> But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. <sup>22</sup> For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!” <sup>23</sup> And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.”*

We now come to the transformation of the Lord's Passover to the Lord's Supper. What was the Passover meal? The Passover meal was the celebration of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. The first Passover occurred during the last plague of the ten plagues God brought on the Egyptians so that Pharaoh would let God's people go. In the tenth and final plague the angel of death moved through the land of Egypt killing the first born of every household unless that house had the blood of the lamb smeared on the door posts.

God told the people through Moses to take a lamb with no blemishes, kill it and then wipe its blood on the door posts. After that, they were to roast the lamb and eat it all along with unleavened bread and with their sandals on their feet ready to leave the land. This was the first Passover meal.

After that it became an annual celebration and feast where they were to remember the Passover so they could pass along their faith in God to the next generations. At the meal they would recite Exodus 12:26-27 says,

*“And when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ <sup>27</sup> you shall say, ‘It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.’ ” And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.”*

However, when Jesus began the Lord's Passover, His disciples must have been completely astonished because He did not recite the words from the traditional Passover ritual. Verse 16 tells us that He did NOT look back at the past but instead looked to the future, *“For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”* He began to talk about something that was about to happen.

First, He gave new meaning to the bread. When He began the Passover, He did not say the traditional statement, *“This is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the wilderness.”* Instead, He shocked them all when He referred to the bread as the bread of HIS affliction. In v. 19, Jesus said, *“This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”*

This was not some subtle transformation of the Passover meal. It was a radical transformation and fulfillment of all that it pointed to. The sacrifices in the temple were *acted out predictions* of Jesus afflictions and sacrifice on the cross. The ultimate Moses had come and the ultimate exodus was about to occur as the people of God would be delivered from their sin as the angel of death took the life of the first-born Son of God on the cross.

Next, Jesus gave new meaning to the wine (blood). Instead of explaining Exodus 24:6-8 which says,

*“And Moses took half of the blood [of the sacrifice] and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.” And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.”* But that was not what He did.

In v. 20, Jesus transforms the meaning of the blood when He said, *“This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”* The blood is the establishment of the new covenant.

Instead, Jesus wanted them to see that it was and is His blood shed on the cross and is directly connected to the blood that was thrown on the altar and thrown on the people. He wanted them to see that the blood that marked the doorposts of the Israelites during the Egyptian exodus actually predicted to His blood shed on the cross. It was His blood that saved the people because it is His blood that is sprinkled on the hearts of sinners so that the wrath of God is turned away from us.

I want to point out a couple of things here and then I will close and then we will take the Lord's Supper. First, if you are a Christian, the Lord's Supper is a beautiful picture of what it means to be in covenant with Christ. The Lord's Supper does not save us but it is a picture of what it means to be in covenant relationship with God. If you are a Christian, when you take the Lord's Supper you are proclaiming to the world that you are in covenant with Christ. You are saying Christ's body was broken for you and that the

afflictions He endured should have been your afflictions and that they really were your afflictions because He suffered in your place for your sin. You are proclaiming to the world that His blood has been sprinkled on your heart and He has cleansed you of your sin and that you are in covenant relationship with Him. You are as the old hymn says, *washed in the blood of the Lamb*. We may also call this our remembrance of what Jesus has done for us and we take the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Him.

Second, if you are a Christian, the Lord's Supper is a beautiful picture of what it means to be in covenant with Christ and His church (in particular a local church). Just like the Passover meal was a corporate meal for the nation of Israel, likewise, the Lord's Supper is a corporate meal that unites a church together.

The Apostle Paul helps us here in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, *"The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? <sup>17</sup> Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."*

In v. 16, Paul applies the Lord's Supper in the vertical relationship that we enjoy with Christ. The body and the blood are participation with Christ. It points to our union with Him but then in v. 17, he moves from the vertical relationship to the horizontal relationships that we share in the church when he says *"because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread."* He is saying that the Lord's Supper actually makes many one into one body. So, in the Lord's Supper we renew our covenant with Christ through our faith and repentance and with one another.

The Lord's Supper is so important. Never, let allow this ordinance become a meaningless ritual. Fight the temptation to let this be a dull meaningless ritual by contemplating the sacrifice of Jesus as we take this meal. Pray for renewal and refreshment. Pray for the unity of our church body. Ask God to strengthen our oneness with one another.

*The remembrance of the Lord's Supper reminds us to continually repent and believe in Jesus.* As we remember Christ's perfect, sinless life that kept the Law on our behalf and His death that paid the penalty for our sin by receiving the wrath of God in our place and how His resurrection from the death broke the power of sin and death over us we are reminded of our response to the person and work of Christ that we see in the Lord's Supper—repent and believe in Jesus.

You see, the Lord's Supper is not for perfect people it is for sinners who practice a life of genuine repentance. The gospel doesn't remove the need to repent but it provides for it in Jesus. You and I can confess our sins to Christ because He died for us. You see the gospel does not create people who think they are better than everyone else or who have it all together. The gospel creates people who trust Jesus enough to face themselves honestly and own their sin before a Holy God and repent and trust Jesus.

Verses 22-23 remind us of our need to repent and believe. Verse 22 reminds us that even those close to Jesus can fall but if we live a life of continual repentance and faith we press into the gospel. Then in v. 23, the disciples, except for Jesus, began to question each other. One gospel says they said, *"Is it me."* The answer is—yes! They and we are all the betrayers and we are too if we do not repent and trust Christ. Woe to us if we do not repent. The Lord's Supper reminds us that we need to repent and trust Christ.

Scottish theologian, William Arnot, wrote, *"The difference between a converted person and an unconverted person is not that one has sin and the other does not, but that one takes part in and with his cherished sins against a dreaded God, and the other takes part with a reconciled God against his hated sin."*

The question is not, do we sin? The question is do we repent and flee to Jesus? Friends, God is saying to every one of us here today (Matthew 11:28-30), *"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

Friend, if you are not a Christian, then we urge you this morning to turn from your sin and turn to Jesus Christ. Trust in Him as the payment for your sin and only hope for salvation. I ask you to read the portion in the Service Guide on the Lord's Supper and then talk to a Christian after the service and let him or her help you understand the gospel.