



June 11, 2023

Abounding Grace: Belonging Spiritual Nourishment

Matthew 26:26-29

For Discussion and Reflection

1. Scripture speaks often of God providing for or feasting with his people: Exodus 5:1, Deuteronomy 11:13-16, Psalm 22:25-27, 23:5, Isaiah 25:6-8. The Passover itself was a meal to be consumed after the blood was applied to the door posts. Why does God use this imagery of caring for his people by dining with them?
2. Consider the picture of a marriage supper of the Lamb, Revelation 19:1-10. What is the context of this supper? What is the condition of those who are invited? Why does Scripture reveal this celebration to God's people?
3. Consider these lyrics: "We will feast in the house of Zion, we will sing with our hearts restored. 'He has done great things,' we will say together. We will feast and weep no more." What does that chorus and song communicate to you?
4. At the end of the Passover meal Jesus was sharing with his disciples, he gave them wine and bread, two of the most common consumable items in the country. The bread pictures his body and the wine his blood. What is he saying to them about their need to constantly feed on him?
5. Read John 6:25-59. Jesus has just fed the 5000 and now speaks to the disciples about bread of God from heaven. He's referring to himself and their need to partake of his gift by faith (faith is the work God requires). How does this communicate our need of regularly being nourished by his grace? What does the text say about our need for faith and the one who gives us the grace of faith?
6. Some Christian traditions (Catholics and Lutherans) believe in some form of trans- or con- substantiation. The simplest contradiction to this is that Jesus is still alive when he feeds the disciples their first communion. The bread cannot be his body and the wine cannot be his blood, literally (transubstantiation) or spiritually (consubstantiation). Jesus has to be speaking allegorically.
7. The Lord's table is a meal for Jesus' family. This is why we put boundaries around the table, warning non-believers not to partake (1 Corinthians 11:17-34). The warning extends to believers who abuse the table by excluding the poor believers, not "discerning" the body of Christ. There were divisions in the church and Paul mockingly says, "No doubt there have to be differences...to show which of you have God's approval." If the meal is for God's family, how should the meal be practiced? Should the meal be private, eaten at your home or with a few friends?
8. God wants to nourish you on the sacrifice of Christ. How often should you eat that meal? Do you think that we eat it enough as a church?
9. How did the Holy Spirit minister to you today? What can you do to grow in God's grace?