

# Communion

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Preacher: David MacPherson

- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Now, as I was commenting this morning in anticipation of the start of the marriage course on Friday, the sermons today both have a marriage theme.
- In the morning we were considering the call in Hebrews chapter 13 to honor marriage and giving some thought to what it is that God teaches us in that verse particularly concerning marriage.
- Well, that was this morning. What about this evening? Well, this evening, as I've already indicated and as is evidenced by the bread and the wine here at the front, this evening we're going to be celebrating the Lord's Supper.
- And it might not be immediately apparent how celebrating the Lord's Supper could dovetail with the marriage theme that's already been announced.
- But it can, and not in some forced or artificial way. Let's now read, we've already read from Revelation, but let's now read from Matthew chapter 26.
- [ 1 : 0 4 ]     And the words of institution of the Lord's Supper as they're recorded for us there in Matthew chapter 26 and reading from verse 26.
- Matthew chapter 26, reading from verse 26. It's on page 996 in our Bibles.
- And there we read, And then very particularly what Jesus says in verse 29 or recorded for us in verse 29.
- In these verses just read, we have recorded the institution of the Lord's Supper by Jesus.
- And in His words of institution, Jesus directs the gaze of His disciples in different directions. But the direction that we're interested in this evening is the manner in which He directs them forwards.
- [ 2 : 3 6 ]     The disciples then, and indeed disciples this evening gathered here. He directs our gaze forwards to a day when Jesus would again drink of the fruit of the vine with them, as He explicitly says there in verse 29.
- Now the question is, to what day is Jesus referring? I think it seems clear enough that He is referring to the day of His return in glory, but more particularly, He is pointing forward to an event that will take place on that day, namely, the wedding supper or banquet of the Lamb of which we have read in Revelation chapter 19.
- Now the theme or the imagery of a great banquet at the consummation of God's great work of redemption in and through history is one that we find elsewhere in the Bible, indeed on a number of occasions.
- If I can just direct your attention to one of those occasions and the words of the prophet Isaiah in chapter 25 and from verse 6.
- Listen to what we read there. On this mountain, the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine, the best of meats and the finest of wines.
- [ 4 : 0 6 ]     On this mountain, He will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations. He will swallow up death forever.

Very clear, the occasion that has been spoken of, that future gaze. The sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces. He will remove the disgrace of His people from all the earth.

The Lord has spoken. In that day, they will say, surely this is our God. We trusted in Him and He saved us. This is the Lord. We trusted in Him.

Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation. So God, through the prophet Isaiah, looks forward to that great day, a day of fine foods and of fine wines. And Jesus, when He's gathered with His disciples, and He directs their gaze forward, to a day when He would drink of the fruit of the vine with them again.

It speaks of that same great day, of that same great event, the marriage supper of the Lamb. Indeed, that this banquet spoken of in Isaiah is to be understood or anticipated as a wedding banquet, though not explicit in the passage we've just read in Isaiah, is suggested also by Isaiah in chapter 61 of his prophecy, a chapter replete with messianic allusions.

[ 5 : 30 ] Let's just read one verse, verse 10 of Isaiah 61. And then when we move into the New Testament, we're familiar, of course, with the imagery of Christ as the groom, and the church as His bride.

It's a common and repeated picture that we find in the New Testament. But the bride must, at the appointed time, become the wife.

And for this, she has been prepared for that great day. So as we are about to participate in the Lord's Supper this evening, let's do so as directed by Jesus and direct our gaze forward to that day, to the wedding supper of the Lamb.

Now we've read the chapter there in Revelation chapter 19 that speaks of that occasion. And one helpful way of securing an overview of the first ten verses of Revelation chapter 19, which will occupy us this evening, one way of, as I say, securing an overview of that passage is to consider the four occasions in which we hear the heavenly cry of hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah, of course, is a word or a cry of praise we're very familiar with. It identifies in many ways Christians, sometimes in a rather mocking way, that Christians have been known as the hallelujahs.

[ 7 : 17 ] given that that's the case, it's curious, intriguing, that certainly in the New Testament, this is the only occasion that we actually find. The word, if we can call it a word.

In the Old Testament, of course, the Hebrew words that are transliterated to create this word or this cry of praise, hallelujah, praise the Lord, praise the Lord.