

# Eagerly desired

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Date: 04 September 2016

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's turn to that passage in Luke chapter 22, and let's spend a short time giving thought to the words that we've already highlighted there in our text in verse 15.

To just introduce, I suppose, the subject of desire. Today, for those of you who are interested in these things, Scotland begin another World Cup qualifying campaign, and many seem to be very confident that we'll start with a win. We are playing Malta after all, so you would hope that that wouldn't be too difficult a task, though who knows, I may be tempting fate. As the manager, Gordon Strachan, as he decided on the players who he could count on, not only for the game today, but in the rest of the campaign, I imagine he's been looking for any number of attributes in those players, but I am sure that one that will figure prominently is this question of desire. Do these players have that desire to play for their country, to give their all for their country, and to secure the glory that is out there on the horizon? If desire is absent, then we're struggling. The Olympics have just passed, and successful athletes are invariably marked by intense desire. Just think of some of the interviews that we've heard, so many interviews, the different medal winners of Team GB, and the kind of things that they say. You can imagine one or other, I'm not, these aren't actual quotes, but these are the kinds of things that people have said, I wanted this medal more than anything. Or it was this medal that got me up at five in the morning, day after day, week after week, month after month, that intense desire to secure the objective, or that which was desire. Even in defeat, the message was a similar one. Remember one of the athletes looking forward already, having had a bad day, and not having secure what they so desired, looking forward to Tokyo, and saying, I'm already looking forward to Tokyo. I want this so bad. Intense desire. Well, let me throw something out there and see what you make of it. You are what you desire. Is that true? What do you think of that statement? It's not a verse in the Bible. You know, you're at liberty to say, oh, I don't agree with that. But what do you think of that? You are what you desire. It's certainly a sobering thought, if true, and it's a useful tool or instrument for us to examine ourselves. What is it that we most desire? What is it that you eagerly desire? To use the language of our text.

And be honest in asking yourself that question, and especially in answering that question. Well, in our text, Jesus testifies to an intense desire.

What did Jesus so eagerly desire? And what does that reveal about who He is and what He came to do?

That's really the question that we want to explore this morning. But before we do explore that question and endeavor to answer that question, it is helpful for us to grasp the intensity of the language employed in our text. And very particularly this verb that we're focusing on, I have eagerly desired.

[ 4 : 22 ] And the language that Jesus employs is intense language. The actual Greek words that are translated in the way that they are in our Bibles are something along the lines of, with desire, I have desired.

Now in English, of course, that sounds clumsy. But in the Greek language, it's a way of intensifying what is being said. Well, captured in English with this, eagerly desired. Not just desired, but I have eagerly desired. But not only that, the very word that is employed is a word that is very intense in its character. It's a word that we've come across before.

Oh, it's some time ago now. And, you know, a gold star if you remember. But in Romans chapter 1 and verse 24, we have this Greek word. The Greek word is *epithumia*. And in Romans 1 24, it's used in a very different context, where it speaks of how God gave over humanity to the sinful desires of their heart.

It's the same word. It's the same word. But in that occasion, used to describe those desires that mark our very identity, that which drives us, that which often consumes us. Now in the case of Romans, of course, used in a very negative sense, sinful desires that mark us, that identify us, that almost possess us.

Now that in itself is a sobering thought, how we can become captives to our own desires. Desire, though in itself a good thing, clearly it is a good thing or can be a good thing.

[ 6 : 13 ] It's something that Jesus is able to testify to. He knew what it was to eagerly desire. Of course, the issue, the crucial matter is, what is the object of our desire? Well, that's simply to try and emphasize the language that's being used and the intensity of it. But back to the question, what did Jesus eagerly desire? Well, he tells us it's no great puzzle.

I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you. Now there is nothing unusual or surprising for a pious Jew, using that word pious in its very positive sense, nothing surprising that a Jew like Jesus would desire to eat the Passover. All Jews, indeed many Jews who weren't particularly religious, no doubt would have shared that desire to eat the Passover, that annual remembrance of God's deliverance from Egypt. Jesus had desired to eat the Passover on many occasions. As long as he could remember, he had desired to eat the Passover. From the family celebration with Joseph and Mary and his brothers when he was a small child to the more recent past in his experience when he would have celebrated the

Passover with these very disciples on at least a couple of previous occasions, we can reasonably imagine. Nothing unusual in that desire. But this is different. This occasion is a different occasion, and there's a key word in the very verse that identifies us to that difference. You see, Jesus says, I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover. And that word this really is crucial for us to notice that there's something different here. This Passover. Not any Passover, but this Passover. Why did Jesus eagerly desire to eat this eagerly desire to eat this Passover? Well, I think we can identify four strands in the answer to our question. And they have to do with the occasion of this Passover, the significance of this

Passover, the company with whom Jesus celebrated this Passover, and then finally the victory announced on the occasion of the occasion of this Passover. Let's think about these four strands in the answer to the question posed.

First of all, the occasion of this Passover. Well, in our text, we can identify two time references, and both are significant.

[ 9 : 26 ] The words that verse 14 begins with, when the hour came. Now, the question that comes from that statement is, well, what hour is being referred to?

And the simple answer, and the correct answer, is that it's the hour of the Passover. There's already been discussion about the matter. Preparations have been made. So when we read, when the hour came, the most natural way of taking that language is, well, the hour of the meal, the hour of the Passover.

And I'm sure that is what is intended in the first instance. And yet I can't help but think that the language is also pointing to something much more solemn and significant.

This is language that we repeatedly encounter in the gospel that points to the mission of Jesus, very especially in John's gospel, but not only in John's gospel.

Remember the first miracle at the wedding in Cana, when Jesus is speaking to his mother, and he is reluctant for his identity to be revealed, for people to know too much of who he is.

[ 10 : 43 ] And he gives an explanation. He says, my hour has not yet come. Later on in John's gospel in chapter 7, there's a record of his enemies being mysteriously prevented from arresting him.

Though that was their intention, we're given the explanation. And the reason is because his hour had not yet come. But perhaps most revealingly, again in John's gospel in chapter 13 and in verse 1, we read, and I'll read the whole of the verse.

And it relates to the very time that we're thinking about here in our text. Now, before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come, to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

When the hour came. Surely, as Luke uses this language to identify what is about to take place, he has in mind that deeper, broader significance of the language he is using.

His hour had come. Jesus lived with an intense sense of destiny. His life and ministry was marked by a focus that would not be diverted.

[ 12 : 06 ] He was moving with a fixed determination to the hour, the appointed hour. Perhaps nowhere is this focus more evident than in the same gospel.

In Luke chapter 12 and in verse 50, Jesus says as follows, I have a baptism to be baptized with. And how great is my distress until it is accomplished.

He was looking ahead to the day, the hour that is now coming. His appointment with God's destiny for him.

And now, here in the upper room, as Jesus gathers with his disciples to eat the Passover, the hour has come. His baptism is imminent, and so he eagerly desires to eat this Passover.

And the hour that we're speaking of is, of course, the hour of his suffering and death.

[ 13 : 25 ] And that, of course, is what is confirmed in the second time reference in our very text. And he said to them in verse 15, This is the significance of the occasion.

This is the Passover that he will participate in before he suffers, before he dies, before he is crucified. As believers for whom Jesus suffered and died, I would encourage you to pause and consider this reality.

He eagerly desired to die for you. This was his intense desire, to die in your place.

And he fulfilled that desire. He accomplished that which he so intensely desired. As you gather around the table, even this morning, remember that as you eat the bread and drink the wine.

So, in answer to the question, why did Jesus eagerly desire to eat this Passover, the occasion of the Passover gives us great insight.

[ 14 : 46 ] But also, and it's very related, of course, the significance of this Passover. Now, there's much that could be said, but let's focus on two aspects of this.

The aspects of fulfillment and of preparation. This Passover was what we might call a fulfilling Passover. The Passover meal that he was about to participate in with his disciples didn't just happen to coincide with the eve of his death.

The death of Jesus was the fulfillment of the Passover. Passover, he was the true and final sacrifice to which every Passover lamb had pointed to for well over a thousand years.

Remember what the Passover celebrated. On the eve of deliverance from Egypt, the angel of death, the final plague, was to visit every home in Egypt with the death of their firstborn.

But there was protection. Protection afforded by the blood of the lamb or goat painted on the lintels of the doors of each believing home.

[ 16 : 01 ] Over such homes, death would pass over and deliverance would be secured. Jesus came to provide that ultimate protection from death and secure for his people, for us, everlasting life.

He is our Passover. What does Paul say in his first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 5 and verse 7? For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

And so the very language that Jesus employs in what follows in our passage, this is my body given for you. This is my body broken for you.

This is my blood poured out for you. Our Passover lamb. Jesus eagerly desired to eat this Passover, for he knew that this Passover was one in which he was fulfilling his date with destiny.

The destiny graciously determined for him in eternity. A fulfilling Passover. But I think we could also call this Passover a preparing Passover.

[ 17 : 18 ] The Passover that he ate with his disciples served not only to point to his identity for the benefit of his disciples, if only in retrospect, perhaps at the time they didn't grasp the significance of it.

You don't even need to qualify it by saying perhaps they didn't understand the significance of it, but they would look back and understand. So in that sense, it was for their benefit.

But not only for that purpose. Jesus ate this Passover that he might be in that way prepared for his death as the Passover lamb.

The very Passover feast was a visual reminder and preparation for Jesus for what lay before him. And so Jesus eagerly desired to eat this Passover as it served to prepare him for the atoning death that awaited him.

As we move on to the third strand and the answer to our question, why did he so eagerly desire to eat this Passover? We can notice the company present at this Passover.

[ 18 : 33 ] Again, this is explicitly highlighted by Jesus himself. I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you. And he's speaking to his disciples.

And these words, with you, are surely significant and serve to provide further explanation for Jesus eagerly desiring to eat this Passover. These are the disciples loved by Jesus.

And Jesus wants to be with those he loves. At this time, more perhaps than at any other time, Jesus eagerly desires to be with those he loves and those who love him.

There we would do well just to pause and ask ourselves the question, is this true of us? Is the fellowship of believers that which we eagerly desire in good times and in bad, perhaps especially in bad times, in times of trial and distress, is the fellowship of believers what we eagerly desire?

Is it a desire that overcomes the inconvenience, perhaps, of gathering as we'll have to do in another location, in more limited circumstances, perhaps in a way that we'll be uncomfortable with for one reason or another?

[ 20 : 00 ] That's the way we are. We're human. That's the way it is. But the desire to gather with God's people overcomes such temporary and fleeting difficulties.

His desire is to eat this Passover with his disciples, those he loves. But, of course, these disciples not only loved by Jesus, but these are the disciples redeemed by Jesus.

These are the disciples for whom he is about to die. Again, Jesus makes this abundantly clear in the language that he employs. This is my body given for you, as he addresses these words to his disciples.

This cup is the new covenant of my blood, which is poured out for you. How fitting that he should eat this Passover with the very men for whom he was to go to Calvary to die for.

But we can maybe just say one more thing about the company he kept at this Passover feast. These are disciples needed by Jesus.

[ 21 : 13 ] Now, I think, quite rightly, we would shy away from this language of Jesus needing the disciples. But is it not the case that in his humanity, Jesus sorely needed the company and support of his disciples as the hour began and the agony of the cross loomed large?

Is this not what we see and hear so vividly in the garden just a few brief hours later? Then he said to them, Jesus said to these very same disciples, My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.

Stay here and keep watch with me. Is this not Jesus declaring his need of their company and of their support as the hour advances?

And so too at the Passover feast. Disciples loved by Jesus, disciples redeemed by Jesus, but disciples in a measure, in a very true measure, needed by Jesus.

If Jesus needed his disciples in the midst of trial, how much more do we, in the midst of our lesser trials, need each other?

[ 22 : 35 ] He eagerly desired to eat this Passover, and he eagerly desired to eat this Passover with his disciples. But then finally, let's notice a fourth strand to the answer to our question, and that is the victory announced at this Passover.

And I'm thinking especially of the words there in verse 16, For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God. Notice there both the confidence of Jesus and the explanation given by Jesus with regard to this victory.

Jesus facing death is in no doubt as to what will follow. He will rise again. Resurrection will follow crucifixion as surely as day follows night.

He will eat again with them. Jesus is able to declare that simply as a given. He doesn't need to explain it. He doesn't need to justify it. It is so clear to him that that is what will come.

Yes, he will die. But yes, he will rise again and so be able to eat with them again. His certain confidence in the face of his imminent death.

[ 23 : 56 ] He knew that he who would die would rise triumphant from the grave in vindicating victory. But the victory that he speaks of grounded in his death and resurrection will be consummated in a future that Jesus points forward to.

A Passover meal that will find fulfillment in the kingdom of God. And here Jesus, in very few words, begins to explain this victory of which he is speaking.

What is he speaking about? What is this meal that will find fulfillment in the kingdom of God? Well, this is surely the wedding supper of the Lamb that we read of in Revelation chapter 9.

This is the messianic banquet that will gather all those delivered by the blood of Jesus, our Passover Lamb. This is a victory banquet that will be marked by a glorious beginning, but that will know no end.

And this is a banquet to which you are invited. This morning we gather at the table to remember the victory of Jesus over death, but also to look forward to another table, another banquet in the kingdom of God.

[ 25 : 15 ] And so even as we eat the bread and as we drink the wine, we whisper, even so come Lord Jesus. Jesus eagerly desired to eat this Passover as the occasion when he could contemplate and announce his victory over sin and death and the grave and look forward to the dawning of the new heavens and the new earth.

But, and with this we end, what does Jesus eagerly desire now? He eagerly desires to eat this Passover with you.

Come to the table. Jesus, your Savior and friend, has prepared the table. He is at the table and he is here to fellowship with you and to feed your soul.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we do thank you for your Son. We thank you for Jesus. We thank you for the mission that he came to fulfill.

We thank you for the manner in which in his own mind and heart and soul there was this fixed conviction concerning what it was that he had come to do.

[ 26 : 41 ] We thank you that as the hour approached, he embraced death. We cannot begin to understand the pain that it involved at so many levels.

And yet we thank you that he did not shy away from it. Indeed, he can use this language that we've been giving some thought to this morning as he eagerly desired to eat this Passover with his disciples.

So we can draw from that the conclusion that he also eagerly desired to fulfill and to obey his Father's will and to die on the cross in the place of sinners.

We thank you that as we look back to that occasion, we can also think of our present reality and the present reality that in Jesus we have a Savior who eagerly desires to meet with us and to fellowship with us and to feed us even this morning.

And we pray that that would be our experience. And these things we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.