

Brentview Baptist Church  
'Half Time Talk



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We have all been to a football or soccer game when both teams keep marching up and down the field, at times our team is ahead by just a little, then the other team pulls ahead. They battle back and forth and then the gun sounds to end the first half of the game. You sit back in your seat, wishing you could be a fly on the wall in the team dressing room as the players and coach take their ½ time break. This is the time when the coach, in order to win the game, needs to make that speech which will place that one idea in his team's mind which will turn the game around and inspire them to win. It is the time when he needs to leave words which will ring in their ears through the next half of the game that will turn the game around. And will give those who will have to keep going, keep fighting on, that 'special something' so that a victory can be won.

Jesus in *Mathew 26:17* pulls his key players aside for one last pep talk; it is that one last chance to place in their hearts pictures and words which will carry them along through the years which will follow. The bible calls this half time pep talk the "Last Supper". For at this supper, Jesus takes one last opportunity to pull all his disciples together before he will walk to the Cross. For Jesus knows that these very disciples will be forced to wage battle for the souls of the world. They will have to do that without his physical presence being with them. And so like a coach, he pulls his disciples aside in the midst of the struggle and speaks into their lives.

What has just happened in the first ½ half of the game? To this point the disciples have been chosen, traveled with Jesus in his 'itinerant training school', had opportunities to lead their own weekend revivals and then be pulled back in, to sit at Jesus' feet and be given more practical insight. And now they find themselves in Jerusalem, hearing Jesus speak about his upcoming death, not knowing how to process his words. Words like the ones found in *Matthew 16:21* "from that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, and chief priests. That he must be killed and on the 3rd day rise again" (this was said almost 1 full year before his death). But, don't forget that lately Team Jesus has been on a roll. They have seen numerous miracles, 100's healed and Lazarus rose from the dead. Even on this very day, as Jesus road into Jerusalem on a colt, this same Lazarus is leading the procession causing the crowd to cheer for the very person who with a word brought him back to life after 3 days in the tomb. On this very day the disciples heard the crowd go wild yelling 'Hosanna in the highest' and welcoming Jesus as the next king into Jerusalem. Despite the fact that they are heading into their locker room 20 points up, Jesus knew this feeling of success would soon disappear.

Also, today they have walked with Jesus and stood in line at the temple with the sheep they had bought. They have watched as their lamb (like the 1000's of other lambs) on this Passover day was killed and its blood poured upon the alter in the temple (as the 600 priests performed this mass sacrifice) on this holy weekend. Then, they took the lamb home and had Mark's parents prepare the Passover meal for them in the Upper Room of their hotel.

Now, this is important, for while they think this is just another evening meal, another Passover meal, Jesus knew that the second half of the New Testament story was about to begin and that within hours the entire game was about to change. So he sets the stage by wrapping a towel around his waist and taking the place of a servant and washes their feet so they could partake in this special meal.

### *Matthew 2*

Jesus begins by first clearing the room of the traitor, Judas. *Matthew 26:21-25*. It strikes me that this was a secret about Judas' upcoming betrayal was a secret that Jesus had carried for too long. So as Jesus is about to place his most intimate words and precious pictures in the hearts of his disciple's minds he needed first to do business with the betrayer from within. And *John 13* says that all Judas could handle was the bread and he had to leave and go out into the night.

Then, in picture form, Jesus lays out his game plan by saying this is my body which will be broken and my blood which will be "poured out for the forgiveness of sins". While they may have struggled with what was being said the allusion would have been easy to catch. Because just a few hours ago they had stood in line at the temple holding a lamb, laying their hands on the head of the sheep (identifying it as the one who would pay for their personal sins) and then they had seen the lamb's throat slit, the blood drained unto the altar, and watched as this poor lamb's body went still in death.

While they may have struggled to understand what Jesus was saying, in a few days they would have realized that this was about a game plan that had been devised 1000's of years before they were born. For the book of Isaiah had declared that this Messiah would be "...led like a lamb to the slaughter" *Isaiah 53:7* "that he would be...cut off from the land of the living..." *Isaiah 53:8* "He would be pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities, and the punishment that (would bring) us peace was upon him and (it would be) by his wounds we are healed." *Isaiah 53:5*. Isaiah described the coming Messiah as being a sacrifice for our sins, just like the Passover Lamb had always been for the Jewish people.

Jesus began in vs. 26 by 'giving thanks' I always find that an amazing thing to read. For here was Jesus contemplating his own horrible death and his first thought was to be thankful. Why? Because he looked ahead to how, what he was about to do would transform lives, change families, change eternities and give hope to so many people including you and I. And then Jesus holds up the Matzo loaf and breaks it, tearing off pieces for each individual around the table, saying take and eat this, for it is my body (and Luke adds the words 'given for you'). Don't miss the fact that Jesus makes sure each person gets a piece of bread, 'a piece of him' to hold in their hands and then he added that this was given for you (as a person/ an individual). But before that could happen, his body would have to be broken. Jesus foretells and then promises that he will be willing to allow his body to be broken for us and out of love for us.

And then he hands the cup of red wine around the room and adds these comforting but chilling words “this is the cup of the new covenant in my blood poured out for you”. And every man in the room would have flashed back in his mind to earlier in the day when they laid their hands on the lamb and watched the priest kill it and spill its blood on the alter. And they caught that the forgiveness as amazing as it was, came at a very high cost, a cost that found its payment in the death of the Lamb. I wonder if any of the disciples remembered John the Baptist’s first words about Jesus, “behold the Lamb of God who comes to take away the sins of the world” (*John 1:29*) Jesus promises that he would shed his blood and give his life so we could experience what none of us could do for ourselves, earn forgiveness and freedom for sins we have committed and then the gift of eternal life, at a cost, the very life of Jesus.

“So, as Jesus holds up the bread and raises the glass of wine he is saying that he is the sacrificial lamb.”

Have you ever thought about the fact that because the disciples had traveled with Jesus for 3 years this would have been the 3rd Passover meal he would have had with them. But it was only now as they are about to face the greatest challenge in their lives that Jesus stopped to tell them it is by his body and blood that the world will find its salvation.

Why, now? Because it is half-time. Jesus is sitting between the Old Testament promises and the birth of the church. It is half-time and they are about to face the darkest days of their lives when they will think Jesus has died and couldn’t rise again. It is half-time and Jesus is about to face the battle at the cross and they are about to face the darkest moments of their lives because of his death. It is half time and the battle to tell the world about what he has done needs to happen. It is half time and Jesus sees the need to give them ‘the talk’ which will motivate them for years to come.

The purpose of the Last Supper was to drive home to the disciples the fact that Jesus’ death was not in vain. His crucifixion was not an accident. Jesus wasn’t going to get caught by surprise with what was about to happen. It WAS the game plan. And when he held up the bread and said this is for you, those words would comfort them for the rest of their lives and be the very words that would give people hope for centuries to come for every part of our world. When he raised the glass and said this is for the forgiveness of sins” he placed in their hearts hope for forgiveness, new beginnings and second chances for everyone from Peter to you and I, because every week we fail and every week we need a Savior to save us. And as Steve McCready said last week, that line To Know Jesus and touch the world should still get us out of bed every day with Joy and Purpose. For, we offer hope to the world, and we offer a chance to walk with Jesus during life right into eternity.

One final thought. Have you ever seen the missionary emphasis of the Lord’s Supper? The other day a simple question struck me, it was ‘what was the very next thing Jesus did after the Lord’s Supper?’ He walked to the Mt. of Olives where he would be arrested and eventually walks toward the cross. He walked from the Lord’s Supper into his primary Mission which was to die on the cross so he could save the world. That means that it was at the table as he held the bread and said this is for you, and offered the cup and said this is my blood, poured out for

the forgiveness of sins. He set the course for what was to happen next. It was while looking at the bread, looking into the cup he set his face toward your heart by way of the cross. He said out loud what he was called to do and then he went out and did it. He went from the communion table right into saving the World. For the very last thing which Jesus did before going on his mission to save the world was to stop and have communion with his closest friends. So he could draw strength from them and so he could share his heart with them. To give them and he the kind of ½ time pep talk. That would place in himself and his disciples, words which would first, help him, step out to finish his task of wrestling to win the game of salvation for which he had come. Words that would resound in the disciple's minds and our minds through the centuries, so that as we sit around the communion table, as we are about to go out into the tough stuff of our lives, the wrestle for the eternal souls of our neighbors, our children and our world that we would hear our coach say 'this broken body is FOR YOU, and this blood was spilled so you can be forgiven and begin again. So we would leave this table time after time, re-invigorated, renewed, and powered up to take on that which lies ahead in our lives.

It was while taking this ½ time break at the communion table, after fortifying himself with his friends, he steps back unto the field and begins his missionary work to save the world. To this day Jesus is on a Mission to change the eternities of all those who will listen to his words and accept his gift of Salvation. That is why we thought it would be fitting as we talk to a career missionary who will be going back out into making a difference in people lives in Jesus' name and to a group of 6 going out in the next week to Ireland to do the very same thing in a shorter period of time, to connect it to the communion meal where Jesus spoke truth and placed pictures in the minds of his disciples that would keep them on mission for the rest of their lives.

So, can I invite you to come with us for a ½ time break in your week, to sit around the Lord's table and let Jesus encourage and challenge your soul and empower you for next weeks mission.