

Take, Eat

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[0 : 00] We pray in his name. Amen. Okay, so we are going to turn back to Matthew 26. Let me read again verses 26 to 28. Now, as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it, he broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat.

This is my body. And he took a cup, and when he'd given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Tonight, as we've been saying, as part of our service, we're going to share the Lord's Supper together. That's a very precious and a very important part of what we do as a church. Why do we do that?

What's the Lord's Supper all about? Well, a very helpful summary is in the Westminster Confession of Faith. It has a chapter on the Lord's Supper. If none of you have read the Westminster Confession of Faith before, it's actually a very short document.

You can read it in less than an hour. But it's got 33 chapters. 32, 33, I can't remember. They're all very short. It's got a great short chapter on the Lord's Supper.

[1 : 08] And this is the first paragraph. It says, Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of his body and blood called the Lord's Supper to be observed in his church unto the end of the world for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death, the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto him, and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him and with each other as members of his mystical body.

Now, the language there is a little bit old-fashioned, but it's immensely helpful because it's telling us that in the Lord's Supper we keep on remembering Jesus' death.

And so that's part of just the perpetual, regular life of the church. The bread and wine draws our minds back to the cross, remembering what Jesus has done. The Lord's Supper is also serving to give us assurance of the benefits that Jesus has promised to his church.

So not only is the bread and wine telling us what Jesus has done, it's telling us that he's done those things for us. And so it's assuring us and confirming to us, sealing to us his promises.

We're nourished and built up, so we do want to think of it like feeding. So the bread and the wine, we're just physically feeding on a little bit, but that's a feast of spiritual nourishment where we are being blessed and helped by Jesus as he continues to help us.

[2 : 55] We're renewing our commitment and loyalty to Jesus because we're publicly professing that he's our savior, that we love him. And in all of that, our bonds of fellowship with Jesus are being strengthened and our bonds and fellowship with one another are also being highlighted and deepened.

So all of that is beautiful. All of that's very, very profound. And there's lots to think about in a paragraph like that. At the same time, though, it's so important to remember that the Lord's Supper is also very simple.

Jesus instituted this as a meal. It's a supper. It's not an elaborate, complicated ceremony. It's a supper. And Jesus uses bread and wine.

These are very ordinary. There's nothing fancy or elite or spectacular about them. It's very ordinary food and drink. And in instituting the Lord's Supper, Jesus gives beautifully simple instructions.

For the bread, he says, take, eat. And for the cup, he says, drink of it, all of you.

[4 : 12] But what I want us to see tonight is that behind these simple words of instruction that I've just highlighted on the screen, there lies an astonishing story of how God's grace and mercy is revealed across the whole Bible.

And so as we think about that, our title tonight is Take, Eat. Behind those two words lies the Bible's great revelation of the astounding covenant love of God.

And in order to see that, we need to go from Adam to Noah to Jesus to you. And so that's our four headings. So we're starting with Adam.

Right at the beginning of the Bible, Genesis describes the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the climax of that creation is humanity. The creation of humanity is everything that Genesis 1 is moving towards.

And God provides humanity with a beautiful home, the Garden of Eden. And the description that Genesis gives of that garden is that it's a setting of abundant and beautiful provision.

[5 : 24] The Lord God planted a garden in the east. There he put the man whom he'd formed. Out of the ground, the Lord made to spring up every tree that's pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

So it was stunning. And Adam and Eve had everything that they needed in order to thrive. So there's this beautiful picture of provision.

But alongside that provision, there's what theologians call probation. In that Adam was given a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And that command was a test of his loyalty and obedience towards God.

You see that clearly in verses 16 and 17. Of that tree, you shall not eat. That's the command. Now, it's important to recognize that that probation was not a test of endurance.

It was not to sort of say, you know, oh, you have to hang on, you know, because actually this is the fruit that you really, really need. And you just have to endure a shortage and a lack. It was not a test of endurance because they already had access to every other tree.

[6 : 31] They had the provision of everything that they needed and God allowed them access. It was not a test of endurance. It was a test of trust. There was one tree that was out of bounds.

And Adam's probation was based on whether or not he would trust the goodness of God's command and whether or not he would continue on in obedience.

But as you may know, it was that question of trust, of God's goodness, that became the very point of temptation for Adam and Eve.

And Satan comes speaking through the serpent and sows doubts in Eve's mind. As that happens, Adam is capitulating in his role of authority as the one who's supposed to have dominion over the creatures and he's abdicating his position of responsibility towards his wife.

And so despite all the amazing provision of God, despite all the promises that Adam and Eve had received from him, they listened to the serpent and they disobeyed.

[7 : 44] The woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise. She took of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate.

Now, what I want you to see tonight is that that probation, that temptation and the fall when Adam and Eve disobeyed God all of it is connected to food, to the fruit of this tree.

And what that means is that Satan lured humanity to sin against God, to sin against our Creator by saying two words.

He said, take, eat. Take from that tree and eat. And you can just imagine him deceiving Eve.

God's, has God commanded you about which trees you can eat? Yes, but there's, there's one that we can't. Oh, is there? Why is that? Oh, God said that we can't. And he says, he knows that if you take that tree, you'll be like him.

[9 : 02] You should, you should go to that tree and take and eat. And in doing that, putting these words before Adam and Eve, take, eat.

They fall into sin and they turn away from God. And you can see the words themselves are here, aren't they? She took of it and she ate. And her husband did the same.

And the results are devastating. They knew that they were naked, instantly realizing their shame. They hid from God. The ground was cursed.

Their relationship with, with one another became hostile. Their fellowship with God was lost. And Genesis 3 culminates with them being banished from the garden.

He drove out the man. And by the time you get to the end of the chapter, you discover that the serpent's take, eat promise had done nothing but leave Adam and Eve totally empty and inescapably guilty.

[10:24] I want us to move on now to Noah. Noah's very famous for his ark. We learn about Noah's ark from a very young age if we come along to church and to Sunday club.

And of course, Noah's ark is hugely important. But from a biblical point of view, it's probably even more important, not so much to think about Noah and his ark, but to recognize that the Bible deliberately makes it very clear that Noah is like a new Adam.

And so Moses, who wrote Genesis, makes it very clear that there are parallels between Adam and Noah. And you see this in lots of different ways. The flood, it acts, it's an act of judgment against sin and that's majorly highlighting the seriousness of sin.

It's reinforcing the importance of justice. The ark is a symbol of God's salvation and that highlights God's determination to save his people.

And it's in the aftermath of the flood that we see these parallels between Adam and Noah come across so clearly. Genesis makes it very, very clear that God's purposes are going to continue through Noah and his descendants and that's emphasized by the very deliberate echoes of Genesis 1 and 2 and that you see again in Genesis 8 and 9.

[11:52] So I'm going to show you a few of these. So first of all, the receding floodwaters echoes the original creation where order emerged from chaos.

So in the beginning the earth was without form, darkness was over the face of the deep, the Spirit of God hovering over the face of the waters. And then in the aftermath of the flood as it begins to subside God makes a wind blow over the earth and the waters subside.

Now this would be even more clear to us in Hebrew because the word for wind and the word for spirit is the same word in Hebrew. And you've got water subsiding in Genesis 1, you've got water subsiding in Genesis 8.

The command that was given to Adam in Genesis 1, 28, be fruitful and multiply. Be fruitful Have dominion over the fish, the birds, every living thing that moves.

The same thing is repeated here. You see the emphasis on the birds, the animals, every keeping thing on the earth. And then there's the same command, be fruitful and multiply.

[12:55] The language is very deliberately echoing what God said to Adam. The nature of humanity as image bearers is reiterated. So Genesis 1, 27, we are created in the image of God.

Genesis 9, 6 emphasizes the same thing. God made man in his own image. And the provision of food is repeated. Genesis 2, 16, you may surely eat of every tree of the garden.

9, 3, every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. As I give you the green plants, I give you everything. Now, there are differences and you can see there's a difference there.

It was the fruit of the garden in Genesis 2. Now, there's animals provided as well for food alongside the green plants. But you can see that despite these differences, and of course the differences are there because Noah's not stepping back out into paradise.

It's still a fallen world. But the similarities is what I want to highlight just now. The parallels are very, very clear. The Bible is deliberately emphasizing that what is happening to Noah is connected to what happened to Adam.

[14:07] And that's all emphasizing that the Bible is one great narrative of one great plan of salvation. So there's loads of similarities between Adam and Noah.

There's one more similarity that I want to highlight especially. In Genesis 3, we saw already Adam goes up to the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and he messes up majorly.

He disobeys the command of God. He goes up to the fruit of the tree and he messes up majorly. In Genesis 9, something very similar happens and I'll read it to you.

Noah began to be a man of the soil and he planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside.

Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders and walked backwards and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward. They did not see their father's nakedness. Do you see the similarity?

[15:17] Adam goes up to the fruit of the tree he messes up. Noah goes to the fruit of his vineyard. And he messes up. And you see fruit in both.

You see nakedness in both. You see shame in both. You see sin in both. Noah is supposed to be a new Adam but he's no better than the old one.

And here I want to suggest that the same influences are at work. In Eden the serpent was used by Satan to tempt Adam.

In Noah there doesn't need to be an external serpent because the voice of sin is already in Noah's heart. Every descendant of Adam is born in sin and so from within us these voices come.

For Adam it had to be externally but for us for Noah the same deceiving tempting voice comes from within.

[16:20] and what you see and what I want to suggest to you is that as Noah worked his vineyard as he produced wine from its fruit there was a voice that was saying to him drink of it.

And he did. And he drank to excess and he fell into sin and shame and the destructive power of sin over humanity reveals itself yet again.

and so for Adam the temptation was take eat for Noah the temptation was drink of it and for both of them what went into their mouths was revealing the corruption of their hearts.

And in a thousand other ways humanity has succumbed to the same temptations again and again.

Sometimes it is physical food so we can struggle with food the Bible speaks of that in terms of gluttony sometimes that can be eating to a kind of damaging excess and sometimes it can be abstaining in a way that is damaging and harmful.

Drunkenness the same it tries to offer us a means of escape from the fears and the struggles and the difficulties that we can have in life and yet it only makes things worse and so often whether it is with gluttony or with drunkenness we hurt ourselves we hurt others and we are tempted to do something that is actually so damaging but alongside these literal examples in relation to food and drink the words take eat and the words drink of it these temptations that sin relentlessly place before us they apply to every other aspect of life as well so when you think about revenge when somebody does something wrong and you want to get them back there is a voice that says take eat when you think of something like pornography or sexual immorality there is a voice that says drink of it selfishness and greed there is a voice that says take eat unforgiveness bitterness there is a voice that says drink of it anger jealousy dishonesty take eat pride arrogance power drink of it and the struggle that I have and I'm sure you have is that even though I know all of these things are wrong part of me still thinks that they're going to taste good and maybe for a moment they do but again and again these are the sins that leave us empty and ashamed now I want to fast forward to Jesus and there's a lot that I'm missing out there's more sins of eating and drinking and temptation and failing in the Old

[19:24] Testament there's also many glimpses of God's promises in the feasts and the celebrations and all the provision that God makes for his people in the Old Testament but I want us to move to the new and to jump into the life of Jesus and there's two moments in particular that I want to highlight one at the start of Jesus' ministry and one at the end so first of all I want us to highlight the temptation of Jesus now here I want you to remember a couple of things that we've highlighted from Noah from Adam and Noah so with Adam remember that Adam the first Adam he was created after the earth was brought forth from the water and the next Adam Noah he emerged from the ark after the floodwaters had receded now in the gospels Jesus the second Adam the true second Adam he comes up from the waters of his baptism and it's here you have this magnificent attestation as to his identity as Jesus came up from the water the heavens were opened spirit of

God descends on him like a dove comes to rest in him and a voice from heaven says the father's voice this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased and then just like Adam just like Noah he immediately faces temptation and that's the next verse so we're just going near this that's the end of Matthew 3 into Matthew 4 then Jesus was led up by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil and after fasting 40 days and 40 nights he was hungry and the tempter came and said to him if you're the son of God command these stones to become loaves of bread what's happening Jesus comes to the starving Jesus and he says take eat take eat see these stones make them become bread you're starving take eat it's the same approach it's the same tactics it's the same aim Satan wants to scupper God's plan of salvation for sinners but this time God's new Adam says no chance he says it's written man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God Satan tries more alternative temptations he's equally unsuccessful Jesus resists Jesus stands for him Jesus obeys the voice of his father that's the first instance in the gospels I want to highlight the temptation of Jesus the second is taking us to the passage that we read and it's taking us to the garden of Gethsemane so much has happened in between his baptism and temptation to this moment Jesus has had three years of public ministry he's announced that the

kingdom of God has come that Satan's rule is coming to an end he's attested his identity by the miracles that he's performed he's outlined

God's purposes through his teaching he's revealed God's character through his behavior he's called the weak and the weary and the broken to come to him to be healed and to follow him he's provoked the jealousy and the hatred of the elite and the powerful and the path that God has called him to walk along is moving ever closer to the cross and here in the garden of Gethsemane the full reality of what Jesus mission involves becomes clear and like with Adam like with Noah like with everybody else in between here we are seeing the devastating consequences of sin sin brings crushing implications and as Jesus moves towards the cross where he's going to die in the place of sinners that crushing burden of sin is going to be placed on him and you can see how heavy that burden is when he falls on his face and prays my father if it be possible let this cup pass from me nevertheless not as I will but as you will that cup contains all the implications of the sins of the people that

Jesus came to save which includes you and me that cup is going to involve all the powers of darkness unleashing everything they've got onto Jesus and that cup means moving ahead into the desperate darkness and isolation of the cross and Jesus asks that that cup might pass and he asks it three times and as far as we can see no direct word from the father came but the message is crystal clear the father is saying drink of it you need to drink this cup and this time these words drink of it it's not the words of

[25 : 12] Satan tempting Jesus away from God's plan of salvation no no it's the very words of God that's going to bring about the accomplishment of God's plan of salvation and that plan of salvation involves Jesus dying in our place with our sin upon his shoulders or to use the language in terms of sin we are the ones who took and ate but Jesus is the one who drinks the cup of wrath that our sins deserve and all of this teaches us two crucial things it's teaching us more about the magnitude of what Jesus did on the cross it's just giving us a window into the agony and the severity and the loneliness and the horror and the pain and it's overwhelming to think about that but at the same time

I hope you're already seeing that this is telling us that everything in the Bible is fitting together magnificently it's telling us that this is all one stunning plan of salvation and that plan runs from Adam to Noah through all the generations of the Old Testament and it culminates in Jesus he's the last Adam he's the perfect savior he's the one in whom all God's promises find their fulfillment but that plan doesn't actually stop with Jesus that great plan of salvation runs from Adam to Noah to Jesus to you and what I've been trying to show you is that these words take eat and these words drink of it they're echoing right back to the start of the Bible these are the words that led to the sin of Adam the words that led to the sin of Noah these are the words that were used against Jesus in his temptation yet as we move towards the cross things start to change and these words become the very mission that Jesus has to accomplish these words are running right through the Bible and they continue to run right through to today they continue to run on in the!

Supper! But now these words are spoken by someone else and now these words speak of something beautifully different now these words are spoken by Jesus and in the supper he gives us bread and he says take eat and in the supper he gives us wine and he says drink of it but these words and this bread and this wine is telling us a new message it's telling us that victory has been won that Satan has been crushed and that salvation is here for all who trust in Jesus and what I hope you can see is that the contrast is stunning in Genesis these words of the serpent were a trap! Take eat in the supper these words of Jesus are a gift take eat in Genesis these words of the serpent were a lie you will be like God in the supper these words are a promise this is my body it was broken for you in Genesis these words were a robbery leaving Adam and Noah and humanity empty in the supper these words are a word of nourishment take eat drink of it and be blessed and be fed and be nourished in Genesis these words brought curse in the supper!

[29 : 25] These words pour out blessing into the Lord's people in Genesis these words left Adam and Noah ashamed in the supper these words are a beautiful assurance Jesus is saying take eat drink of it you're mine in Genesis these words led to banishment in the supper!

These words are telling you that you're secure forever in Genesis these words led to desperate sorrow in the supper take eat should fill us with joy and in it all Jesus is reversing the damage caused by sin he's the new Adam he's the perfect Adam the perfect Noah and the perfect

everybody else in the Old Testament he is undoing the damage that sin has caused he is putting everything right and do you see what this means when you think about these words take eat and these words drink of it it means that the very words that the devil tried to use to destroy us are the words that Jesus reclaims in order to tell you how much he loves you and so as we share the supper together if you are trusting in

Jesus if you love the Lord Jesus take eat drink of it and remember everything that he's done for you amen let's pray Lord Jesus we just thank you so so so much for the way in which you have accomplished everything needed for our salvation and in doing so you have fulfilled that perfect plan of salvation that unfolds across the pages of scripture and across the ages of history and that has brought us here together for this moment just now and so we thank you and we love you and we worship you and we pray that your blessing will be upon us all amen in a moment we are going to sing together the wonderful hymn

Behold the Lamb after Behold the Lamb we are going to serve the Lord Supper now as we serve the Lord Supper as Ian said and I'm so glad he said that this is not the free church's table it's not our table it's for all those who love the Lord Jesus so if you love the Lord Jesus normally we serve the supper to the section in the middle if there's anybody who's not sitting in the middle section and would like to take the bread and the wine you can either move into the middle and there's plenty seats here or when the elders are going around with the bread and the wine you can just indicate to them that you'd like to take it and if you're not yet a professing Christian or not sure please that's okay that's absolutely fine we're so glad that you're here and we would just invite you to watch on but please as you watch on remember that every movement that you see every glimpse you see of the bread and the wine all of that is an invitation to you to put your trust in

Jesus so that next time you're not watching those of you who would like to be part of the supper you can either come to move into the middle or you can indicate to the elders as the bread and the wine goes round we're going to sing these wonderful words that just capture the gospel so beautifully and that speak directly about the supper in that we are beholding the lamb who bears our sins away he was slain for us and behold the lamb who bears our sins away slain for us and we remember the promise made that all who come in faith find forgiveness at the cross so we share in this bread of life as we drink of this sacrifice as a sign of our want of peace around the table of the king the body of our savior Jesus Christ born for you eat and remember the wounds that heal the death that brings us life paid the price to make us one so we share in this bread of life and we drink of!

[35 : 32] sacrifice! as a sign! of our bonds of love are at the table of the king!

the blood that enters every stain of sin shed for you drink and remember!

he drank death's cup that all may enter in to receive the life of God!

So we share in this bread of life and we drink of his sacrifice as a sign of our bonds of grace around the table of the king and so with thankfulness and faith we rise to respond and to remember our call to follow in the steps of Christ as his holy here on earth as we share in his suffering we proclaim Christ will come again and we'll join in the feast of hell around the table of the king!

as we share in his suffering we proclaim Christ will come again and we'll join in the feast of hell around the table of the feast well just as we approach the supper together I'm going to read I'm going to go back to the words that we read at the very start of our service in first Corinthians 11 and this is just a beautiful summary from Paul that which he received from the Lord regarding the observance of the Lord's supper in Christ's church so let me read verses 23 to 26 here Paul writes for I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you that the

[38 : 29] Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread and when he given thanks he broke it and said this is my body which is for you do this in remembrance of me in the same way also he took the cup after supper saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me for as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes well we're going to pray to give thanks together let's pray dear father we thank you so much for that great perfect plan of salvation that has come from you from your heart from all eternity and has been unfolded across the ages of history and we thank you Lord Jesus that you came to fulfill that plan and to do all that was required and that even though you prayed that that cup might pass yet you continued on in obedience to your father accomplishing all that was needed for our salvation and

Holy Spirit we thank you that you remain with us now and that as we meet together just now you are present and that by your presence and your power amongst us we are being nourished and fed as

we feed on Christ in this supper and so we pray that you would bless us all here just now thank you for the bread and the wine but thank you also for this church family for this opportunity to be together and we pray!

Amen well just as we've been saying the words that Jesus used in Matthew echo right back to the very beginning of the Bible and we see the unfolding of God's plan of salvation we see the sin and mistakes and failure of humanity we see the forces of evil that have sought to disrupt our relationship with God and we see God's amazing plan of salvation overcoming that and all of it is captured in these beautiful little words take eat and think of it and so as we do that together it's just amazing that we are doing that in these moments and that we are not hearing the voice of Satan saying take eat we are hearing the voice of Jesus saying take and eat and drink of it because I have done everything that is needed for your salvation so

I want you to take and eat and I want you to drink of it and I want you to rejoice in all that Jesus has done for you and so on the night that Jesus was betrayed he took bread and he broke it he said take eat this is my body do this in remembrance of me and in the same way he took the cup he said this cup is a new covenant in my blood do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me and as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup we proclaim the death of our amazing Lord until he comes again Amen Thank you.

Thank you.

[43 : 26] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[45 : 56] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[48 : 26] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[51 : 26] Thank you.

Thank you.