



Christ Reformed Community Church

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“The Last Passover” Mark 14:12–21

Last week, we entered our study in the Gospel of Mark in chapter 14. The next two sections of Mark chapter 14 really detail for us on the one hand, the last Passover, and on the other hand, the first Lord’s Supper. Now, of course, these are not really two separate events. They consist of the same event. It’s Jesus sharing a meal with the disciples in celebration of the Passover, which was a commemoration of the Israelites and their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, but we call it the last Passover and the first Lord’s Supper because it’s here that Jesus institutes the new Passover for the new covenant people of God. And at the heart of this transition from the old covenant to the new covenant is a most sad and tragic portrayal of Judas betraying our Lord. It is actually Judas’ betrayal of Jesus that leads Him to institute this new feast built upon the old feast in which He points to the bread and the cup as being emblems of His broken body and His blood poured out at Calvary.

Up to this point in Mark’s narrative, we’ve already observed as we’ve gone through the text in prior weeks that Judas has made up his mind to betray Jesus. He has already, in fact, met with the Sanhedrin; that is, the religious establishment, even agreeing for a certain price to hand over Jesus. We saw this last week in verse 10: *“Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. And when they heard it, they were glad and promised to give him money.”* And so, Judas *“sought an opportunity to betray”* Jesus. Matthew, in his account, tells us that Judas told the Sanhedrin or asked the Sanhedrin, rather, *“What will you give me if I deliver [Jesus] over to you,”* and it says according to Matthew 26:15 that *“they paid him thirty pieces of silver.”* That really started us on this journey of identifying Judas as the one who would betray our Lord, the irony of which is pointed out by the fact that Judas was not an outsider but was an insider to the company of Jesus. Again, a reminder to us of the age-old distinction between the visible people of God and the invisible people of God. The visible people of God are the people of God as we see them, but the invisible people of God are the true people of God, the true elect people of God. And there is a reality undergirding this very passage regarding the betrayal of Judas that reminds us of the reality of religious hypocrisy.

Religious hypocrisy is alive and well in the church today just as it was alive and well even in the company of Jesus and the apostles. Of course, the apostle Paul is clear this shouldn’t make us worry. It shouldn’t make us fear. It shouldn’t make us tremble at the outcome of religious hypocrites, for we know that God knows who His true people are. Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:19: *“But that God’s firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are his.’”* But then there is a warning, Paul says, *“Let everyone who names the name of the [Christ] depart from iniquity.”* There’s comfort in that statement: *“God’s firm foundation stands, bearing this*

seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are his.’” But there is the warning that everyone who names the name of Christ must “*depart from iniquity*” lest they prove that continuing in their iniquity, continuing in their sin, continuing in an unrepentant state reveals that they never truly were part of the people of God. It is clear as we study these verses that Judas willingly hardened his heart against Christ, the one he claimed to follow, and so God literally gave Judas over to Satan. In fact, in Luke’s account and in John’s account of Judas’ betrayal, it even says that there was a point in which Satan entered Judas to convince him to betray our Lord.

In a twist of divine providence, we could say by Satan inciting Judas to betray Jesus, the devil really brought upon himself his own demise. The serpent’s apparent victory in the garden, his apparent victory at the betrayal, his apparent victory at the cross actually promised his total defeat. You remember Genesis 3:15, the seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. I John 3:8 tells us “*The reason the Son of God appeared,*” the reason that Jesus was born into this world, was for one reason and that “*was to destroy the works of the devil.*” What were the works of the devil? It was for Jesus to be crucified. It was for Judas to betray Jesus. And really, Satan first used Peter, another insider, one of the Twelve but one actually committed to Christ. You remember all of the way back in Mark chapter 8, Satan influenced Peter to try to convince Jesus to not go to Jerusalem because there He would be arrested. And you remember Jesus said to Peter, “*Get behind me, Satan!*” because Jesus understood it was really Satan who was inciting Peter in that moment, and Peter eventually would deny our Lord with his words, but then he would repent of that. He would repent of that, so restoration is possible even when grave sin is committed, and that is my warning to you this morning. If you are fearful of apostasy, if you are fearful of, “Well, I’m one who identifies with the people of God, but there’s some sin in my life and there’s no hope,” look to the gospel, look to Christ. It is never too late to repent, but “*Behold, [today] is the day of salvation.*” Today you must repent of your sins and find refuge in Jesus.

That’s the story of Peter, but that wasn’t the story of Judas. Judas never repented. And Satan is already at work in the heart of Judas. He’s at work in the hearts of the religious leaders who Jesus called in John 8:44, “*the children...of the devil.*” They’ve already attempted to overturn the Father’s timetable. Do you remember last week we saw in verse 1 and 2 of Mark 14 that “*It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest [Jesus] by stealth and kill him, for they said, ‘[we don’t want to do this] during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people.’*” So, the Sanhedrin were attempting to arrest Jesus in a fashion that wouldn’t cause an uprising or cause a protest, and so they determined that would arrest Him after the feast, and yet the Father overruled that. It was the will of the Father that Jesus be arrested at this point—not before, and not after. Jesus was the final Passover Lamb, and so it’s only appropriate that He would be arrested and crucified during the Passover. What’s the point of all of this as we speak about God’s sovereignty and then the willful betrayal of Jesus by Judas? Here’s the point: as Satan gets to Judas, God takes advantage of that betrayal by sovereignly determining that Jesus will be arrested during the Passover so that even Judas’ betrayal is part of God’s perfect plan, a reminder to us this morning that the devil is always at work in the hearts of hypocrites. There are always hypocrites in the church. There are always religious hucksters and charlatans and even false teachers. There are always deceivers that will always mark this period on this side of heaven. There will always be fakes. There will always be those who name the name of Christ but don’t really know Christ, professors of Christ but not possessors of Christ, and yet in this story of the betrayal of Judas we are also reminded that God

will win in the end. Judas was eventually exposed for who he was, and Jesus did not lose at being betrayed, but He won by willingly being arrested and dying upon the cross, rising again the third day. We learn all of this from the next two sections of Mark’s Gospel.

Now, we just want to look this morning at verses 12 through 21, this last Passover that Jesus has with the disciples, which is really the first Lord’s Supper as we’re going to see next time. There are three observations that we want to make. Number one, we want to speak about the anticipation of the Passover feast in verses 12 through 15; secondly, the arrival to the Passover feast, verses 16 and 17; and then third, the announcement at the Passover feast, verses 18 through 21. The anticipation of the feast, the arrival to the feast, and the announcement at the feast. First of all, then, note with me, number one, verses 12 through 15, what we want to call the anticipation of the feast. Mark provides a timeline at the beginning of verse 12. He says this occurred “*On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb.*” This would have been Thursday, what we call Thursday, and I’ll speak more about that a little bit later, but what we call Thursday, the fourteenth day of Nisan, the last week of our Lord’s life, the day in which Passover lambs were sacrificed in Jerusalem at the temple. On this day, it was natural for the disciples along with the rest of Israel to turn to their master for instructions on where to celebrate the Passover.

Notice the rest of verse 12: “[*The*] disciples said to [*Jesus*], ‘Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?’” The issue was where were they going to celebrate this? The issue at hand was an issue of Jesus’ security. Where are they going to celebrate it so that Jesus is not found by the religious leaders? Now, this was a favorite holiday of Israel—the celebration of the Passover. In fact, we just celebrated Thanksgiving this past week, and that’s appropriate because really the closest holiday we have to anything like the Passover would be Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving has a rich Christian history to it, and even for Americans goes all the way back to the Puritans, all the way back to the celebration giving thanks to God for our religious liberty, giving thanks to God for our deliverance from tyranny, giving thanks to God for the ability to worship Him as the Bible prescribes. That is included in the American understanding of the celebration of Thanksgiving. Now, we eat a turkey, and Israel ate a lamb during their celebration of Passover, but it was a period of thanksgiving to praise God for their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. And so, the disciples are anticipating this celebration because they’ve waited all year for it, all year to eat this wonderful feast, to share a time of fellowship around the table and around a good meal. But behind this question, more importantly, is the anxious anticipation of the disciples to find a place where Jesus cannot be found.

In fact, prior to this day, earlier after Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, we read that the chief priests and the Pharisees in John’s Gospel had given orders that if anyone knew where Jesus was, he should let them know so that they might arrest Him. Judas has already agreed to betray Jesus. The disciples don’t know Judas has done that, but the disciples out of anxious anticipation asked Jesus where it is they’re going to celebrate this Passover out of a desire for secrecy so that the religious leaders can’t find Him. Now, on Jesus’ part, He wasn’t afraid of dying. He wasn’t afraid of being arrested. He knew that that was exactly what was going to happen, but from Jesus’ perspective, He was operating according to the Father’s timetable. And so, Jesus gives some instructions here in verses 13 and 14, which ensure that nobody will know where Jesus and the disciples are going to celebrate the Passover. Notice, beginning in verse 13: “*And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, ‘Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you.*”

Follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, ‘Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’” Now, Mark doesn’t tell us, but Luke tells us that the two disciples that were sent, as verse 13 says, were Peter and John, two of the three that were part of Jesus’ inner circle. These instructions are a little bit bizarre, you have to admit, at least on a first reading of them. They are filled with elements of vagueness while also filled with elements of clarity. They’re vague enough on the one hand to keep the location hidden, and yet clear enough for Peter and John to find this particular man; vague because the specific names of the people, the specific locations are not given but clear because of the bizarre circumstances that Jesus Himself had evidently prearranged.

Jesus speaks here about a man who is carrying a pitcher of water or a jug of water, which was very bizarre. It was customary in Jesus’ day for women or for young girls to carry jars of water. This would not have been normal, but Jesus prearranged this because a man carrying a jar of water would stick out like a sore thumb in a crowd. He would be the man who would be the point of contact to lead these disciples to the place that Jesus and the others would celebrate the Passover together. There is similarity between these detailed instructions, this prearrangement, that Jesus makes regarding the celebration of the Passover with what we saw earlier in the week during His triumphal entry. You remember all of the way back in chapter 11:

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, [verse 1] to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’”

The same sort of sovereign prearrangement of the colt is now done by Jesus in arranging a guestroom where Jesus and the disciples can celebrate the Passover, and Jesus says here in verses 13 and 14 that after they find the man carrying the jar, they’re to follow him to the house that the man leads them to where the master of the house will meet them, and what are they to say to this master? They are to say, verse 14, notice your Bibles, *“The Teacher says, ‘Where is my guestroom, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’”* And so, I believe that this individual, this master of the home was a follower of Jesus. He viewed Jesus as his teacher. He was a disciple of Jesus—not one of the twelve disciples—but he was a follower of Jesus, a believer in Jesus. He was more than happy to allow Jesus to use his guestroom, just as the man who owned the colt was more than happy to let Jesus ride on it into Jerusalem for the triumphal entry. Now, some speculate because names are not given—we don’t know—but some speculate that the master of this house was the father of John Mark. Now, there’s no way that we can know that for sure, and I’m inclined to believe that’s not the case because there’s no names given in the text. There’s no names given in the text whatsoever, but what we know is that the owner agreed to this. He warmly opened this room. It’s what we call the “upper room” for Jesus and the disciples, and in verse 15, notice your Bible, Jesus says, *“And he will show you a large upper room.”* That’s where we get that tagline, the “upper room.” *“He will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us.”*

It was customary and we could even say obligatory during the time of the Passover when all these pilgrims, these Jewish pilgrims are converging on Jerusalem. There weren’t any hotels, and so you

had to find a place where you could celebrate the Passover with your family, and so it was customary, we could say obligatory, that if you had an extra room that you weren't using, you would provide it for a Jewish family if they asked for it. And so, this is a room that's provided free of charge for Jesus and the disciples, the famous “upper room,” perfect for Jesus and the disciples, a free room on top of a house, secured, away from everything from being disturbed, a place for private fellowship and prayer; a place for Jesus to give further instruction to the disciples before he's arrested, some room that is already furnished with tables. And now, the disciples just need to go get the necessary supplies to celebrate the Passover.

I want to stop just briefly to remind you that God's sovereignty is involved in this scene, and yet Jesus still plans it out. I don't know if you've noticed that as we've read through the text. It's clear that Jesus would be delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, Acts 2:23. Jesus knows that, and yet Jesus is still controlling the environment and planning ahead and prearranging all of this in spite of God's sovereignty, which leads me to ask the question to you, “What does this say to us about our view of divine sovereignty and human responsibility?” I know a lot of good Calvinists that have a perverted understanding of divine sovereignty, and what I mean by that is that they never plan, and they never pray. They use an excuse, that is God's sovereignty, to never pray that the Lord's will be done, to never seek the Lord's face that He might show them what they ought to do. They use the excuse of divine sovereignty to never plan ahead. Well, that wasn't the way of our Lord. He trusted in the sovereign timetable of His Father, and yet He planned all of this. He prearranged all of this so that it in a nice, neat way fell in place just as God had planned. Do we plan, do we pray, or do we use God's sovereignty as an excuse not to be prepared? We ought to be prepared in life. We ought to plan ahead. We ought to build for the future. God's sovereignty is not an excuse not to do that.

But I really want you to see under this first point, the anticipation of this feast, is the question: Why Jesus would undergo this sort of bizarre clandestine plan? And as I said earlier, it's because He was hiding the location from Judas, who would not know where they were going to celebrate the feast until he arrived with the other disciples and Jesus to the place later on. This is important because Jesus does not want to be arrested before those lambs are sacrificed in the temple because, as we had seen, the Old Testament throughout pointed to Jesus Christ as the Passover Lamb *par excellence*. He is the one who would deliver His people from their bondage to sin. Israel's deliverance from their bondage to Egypt was only a type of the fulfillment of Jesus delivering His people from their bondage to sin, their tyranny under Satan. And so Jesus wants to control the situation, control the environment, control the setup, get the disciples alone to a secret place whereby He can institute the Lord's Supper, which is the Passover of the new covenant by which He can point to that wine and say, “This represents My blood that's getting ready to be shed,” by which He can point to the bread and say, “This points to My body which is given up for you.” He needed this private place to explain to the Twelve what was getting ready to happen.

Everything that they had been looking forward to in Old Testament times was now being fulfilled, and also, Jesus wanted the disciples to be on watch for the events that were getting ready to transpire, to have a proper perspective of the reality that Jesus needed to be arrested and Jesus needed to be crucified. It's interesting that in the Old Testament in Exodus chapter 12, speaking about the Passover, it refers to it, the Passover of Israel from Egypt. It refers to it as a “*night of watching by the Lord*” and “*a night of watching kept to the Lord,*” a night of watching by the Lord

because the Lord was watching over Israel, right? As they smeared the blood of the lamb on their houses, God delivered their firstborn and delivered them out of Egypt. But it was also a night of watching kept to the Lord by the Israelites. They were watching to see with staff in hand, sandals on their feet as they ate the unleavened bread, as they ate the lamb, as they looked at that blood smeared on the doorposts of their homes, they were watching and waiting for God’s deliverance, trusting that He would deliver them. In fact, one Jewish commentary says of the Passover, and I quote: “That in that night,” in Exodus, before they were delivered, “in that night of the Passover they were redeemed. And in that night,” this Jewish commentary says, “they will be redeemed in the future.” Every single Jew anticipated that that past Passover pointed forward to a greater Passover, and so this was a night of watching.

Does it surprise you, then, later on, a few hours later that Jesus would tell the disciples in the garden, “*Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation.*” You see, Jesus is not avoiding the cross by prearranging the upper room secretly. He wants the disciples to know that the Passover pointed to His shed blood. He did not want to be arrested prior to the sacrificing of those lambs because all of those lambs pointed to His own sacrifice on Calvary. It fit nice and neat into the sovereign timetable of God. He did not want to be arrested or crucified prior, but He wasn’t fearful of dying. In fact, skip down to verse 22:

And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.”

The fact that He knew He was to die did not mean that He should simply abandon Himself to His foes. Again, going back to the tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility, Jesus was not going to give up ground to the enemy unnecessarily. He was going to follow the will of the Father. He was going to follow the word of the Father. He trusted in the sovereignty of all things working out, and yet He plans in very—we could say in an extremely detailed way—to avoid being arrested prior to the appointed time of the Father. Well, how did this detailed plan of Jesus work out? Well, that takes us, number one, from the anticipation of the feast, verses 12 through 15; secondly, to the arrival to the feast. The anticipation of the feast, verses 12 through 15; now the arrival to the feast, verses 16 and 17. Notice your Bibles. Verse 16 says, “*And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.*” So here, they see the fulfillment of Jesus’ plan coming to fruition. This plan actually worked. They found the guy with the water jug. They followed him to the master’s house. They were shown the upper room. They could have, at this point, folded their hands and said, “Well, it’s worked out this far. Let’s just wait for Jesus to show up and somehow maybe the meal will magically appear.” They didn’t do that. It said they followed Jesus’ instructions, and they prepared the Passover, verse 16. The plan worked. The room was ready, but the disciples still went to prepare for the Passover, which by the way would have involved a lot. At some point, they would have to go to the marketplace and select a lamb, like all the other Jewish families. They would have then, after selecting that lamb and taking that lamb to the temple, and they would have waited in line.

As I said, there were some two million Jews in Jerusalem during the Passover. And so, they’re slaughtering these lambs in a relatively short period of time. The line would have went out of the temple. Peter and John would have found their place in the line, perhaps conversing about the events of the day, conversing about the celebration of the Passover, their anticipation of it, what all of this might mean. They would have then kept part of that lamb for roasting. They would have gone to the marketplace and bought wine, unleavened bread. They would have bought dates and figs to create this sort of mash along with salt and vinegar, the bitter herbs that they would eat which was prescribed in the Old Testament. The room was already partially prepared, but they would have arranged the tables there in a square and then they would have put low-lying couches surrounding the table. All the Jewish families were doing this exact thing at this hour, and so verse 17 says, “*And when it was evening, he,*” that is Jesus, “*came with the twelve.*” Jesus and the rest of the disciples, including Judas, arrived to the upper room. Everything is prepared. The feast is ready to get started. They had obeyed Jesus. Everything was prepared just as He had asked them to do, and yet there is no way they could have fully been prepared for what was getting ready to take place in that upper room.

We move from the anticipation of the feast, verses 12 through 15; the arrival to the feast, verses 16 and 17; now, number 3, the announcement at the feast, verses 18 through 21 where we want to spend the rest of our time. Notice verse 18, and we’re going to slow down a little bit. It says, “*And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said*”—here’s the announcement—“*Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.*” Shocking announcement in once sense. In another sense, maybe not all that shocking because if you remember back in chapter 10, Jesus says, “*See, we are going up to Jerusalem*” verse 33, “*and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles.*” So, the surprise wasn’t so much that Jesus would be delivered up. The surprise was that one among them would betray Him. Now, Mark is careful here to denote the time this announcement took place. We already looked at verse 17, but just skip back to it for a moment. “*And when it was evening, [Jesus] came with the twelve.*” That’s when they celebrated the Passover. It was evening. By the Jewish reckoning of time, it would have been about 6:00 p.m., somewhere around there, sunset.

Now, for us, and this is where it gets a little bit complicated, but I trust if you stay with me, you’ll understand where I’m going. For us, this is still Thursday, the fourteenth day of Nisan, the day before Friday, the fifteenth day of Nisan. But even though it’s Thursday from our vantage point, Thursday at sunset, by the Jewish reckoning of time, it was already Friday. So that interestingly, the Passover was celebrated on Thursday and Friday, on both evenings. And you say, “How did that happen?” Well, somewhere along the line, the Jews from the northern part of Israel, which by the way Jesus was from the northern part—it’s where He grew up in Galilee—they measured time and counted days as beginning from sunrise and going to sunrise. Many of the Pharisees also calculated time this way. On the other hand, the Sadducees and most of the people in and around Jerusalem, the southern part of Israel, even south of Jerusalem counted days from sunset to sunset. So, there was two different ways to count days. Since Jesus and the disciples were from the northern part of Israel in Galilee, it was natural for them to celebrate the Passover on what we call Thursday evening, but for them was considered Friday because they saw sunrise Thursday to Friday sunrise as actually all of Friday. I know that’s complicated. And then those in the South

celebrated the Passover on the fifteenth day of Nisan, what we would call Friday, but what they saw as also Friday because they saw Friday beginning at sunset Thursday to sunset on Friday.

Here’s the point: all Jews from the north and the south viewed sunset on what we call Thursday, the fourteenth day of Nisan, as actually part of Friday, so that you had lambs being sacrificed on the fourteenth day of Nisan, and you had lambs being sacrificed on the fifteenth day of Nisan, the very day that Jesus was crucified because this fulfills all the pictures and shadows in the Old Testament of Jesus being the final Passover Lamb. This also eased the line going into the temple for this slaughtering because some did it on Thursday, the fourteenth; some on Friday, the fifteenth. In fact, in John’s account of all of this, he actually points this out. He says in John 19:14: “*Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, ‘Behold your King!’*” This is when Jesus is already taken away and arrested, and John says it was the day of preparation of the Passover. That is because these religious leaders had yet to eat the Passover meal. They were waiting until a few hours later. But verse 18, back to our text in Mark, says, “*And as they were reclining at table,*” and so Jesus and the disciples are celebrating Passover. Many others in Israel were doing that as well, that he made this announcement.

If you turn with me over to John chapter 13, it indicates to us that Mark is really picking up in the middle of a whole bunch of stuff that has already happened. Mark is abbreviated in his account, and he just jumps right in and says when they were reclining at table, Jesus makes this announcement. But there was actually a plethora of activity that had occurred beforehand. Verse 1 of John 13:

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. During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, do you wash my feet?” Jesus answered him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.” Peter said to him, “You shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.” Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” Jesus said to him, “The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean.

Notice this at the end of verse 10: “*But not every one of you [is clean].*” This is an indirect announcement before the official announcement that one among their company was not fully cleansed—referring to Judas. Verse 11: “*For he knew who was to betray him,*” Jesus knew, “*That was why he said, ‘Not all of you are clean.’*” And then verse 12:

When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done

to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

Why is Jesus washing the disciples’ feet? Well, we know from the other gospel accounts that there was an argument then ensued among the Twelve, another argument as to who was the greatest, and in the midst of this argument, Jesus raises up to show who the greatest is; the one who washes the feet of others. It’s in the midst of all of this that Mark then picks up and says, “*They were reclining at table.*” Reclining meant that with their feet facing out from the table, they were reclining on their left elbow. And as was customary, they would have sat around the table, and here was the lineup, at least in part. John would have had his head at Jesus’ chest, and Jesus also leaning on his left elbow, would have had His head—listen to this—at Judas’ chest. Judas was in a seat of honor, and since Jesus was considered the host, remember back in verse 14: “*The Teacher says, ‘Where is my guest room?’*” This is Jesus putting on the Passover celebration. Since He is the host, He would have also led the disciples in the singing of the Hallel psalms: Psalm 113, Psalm 114, Psalm 115. He would have pronounced the blessing over the feast. He would have presented the first cup of wine to be drunk. And after they drank it, Jesus would have recited, as every host of the Passover did, they recited the story of the Exodus and their redemption from Egypt, after which Jesus would have directed them to the second cup to drink. And following that, He would have blessed and broke the bread, handed it to the disciples, who would have dipped it in a mix of bitter herbs and fruit that would have been placed in bowls around the table for people to share.

They ate these bitter herbs to remind them of their past bitter bondage. And yet on this night, these bitter herbs would remind them of the bitterness of one among their company who would betray them because it’s in that instance after the drinking of the second cup and the passing out of the bread that, like a lightning bolt, the announcement comes. Notice it again in verse 18. Jesus says, “*Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.*” Betray—it’s the Greek word *paradidōmi*. It means “to give over,” used to describe criminals being delivered over to punishment. Quite fitting really because Jesus would be delivered over and be punished for the sins of His people. “*Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.*” Now, you wouldn’t know it, but the disciples knew it. Jesus was quoting, or at least alluding to, two separate psalms. If you turn back with me to Psalm chapter 55, we see one of the psalms that Jesus is referring to, indicating that this is a prophetic psalm pointing to the betrayal of Jesus when David wrote it. In verse 12 David says of Psalm 55:

For it is not an enemy who taunts me— then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me— then I could hide from him. But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. We used to take sweet counsel together; within God’s house we walked in the throng.

This is David speaking about one who was a familiar friend, one that he trusted, who betrayed him. When Jesus makes this announcement about one among them who betrays Him, He’s alluding to Psalm 55 and what David prophetically spoke about in Psalm 55. He’s also alluding to maybe a psalm you’re more familiar with. That’s Psalm 41:9, which is also written by David in which David says: “*Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.*” Psalm 41 is describing there the infamous treachery of Ahithophel who had joined David’s son Absalom in rebellion against David, and it’s as if now the son of David on this night of the

last Passover and the first Lord’s Supper is saying in verse 18, “There is an Ahithophel among us. There is one who is eating bread with us tonight, one of our company of familiar friends, who is lifting his heel up against me.” This was an act of high treason. In Jesus’ culture, eating together was a sign of close friendship, a sign of close fellowship. So, to betray the very one you ate with, to betray the very one you were currently eating with was the height of treachery, and yet Jesus makes this announcement to the utter astonishment to eleven of the twelve disciples because Judas already knew who Jesus was speaking about. Notice verse 19. Mark says, “*They began to be sorrowful and to say to him,*” that is, to Jesus, “*one after another, ‘Is it I?’ ‘Is it I?’*” All around the table. Not all hypocrites can easily be identified, and apparently, Judas was a professional fake. In fact, the others trusted him so much that when Jesus announced the betrayal, they looked inward, not outward. They didn’t point their finger at Judas, the one that they had so trusted, they handed the money bag to; the one that they had said would be their treasurer to hold the money for ministry. They didn’t know he was syphoning money out of the treasury, pilfering as he wished. So, one by one, verse 19 says, they appeared sorrowful and said, “*Is it I?*”

I believe they’re all genuine in this question, except for Judas. He’s already met with the religious leaders. But one by one, they are profoundly pained to think that it could be them. Remember, they were at a point of vulnerability because they had just argued who among them was the greatest, and Jesus had risen and washed their feet, humbling them, saying, “You want to know who the greatest is? I’ll show you,” giving them a lesson on humility, so they are cut to the quick in their conscience. They are vulnerable to conviction—listen to this—because they were true believers. Judas wasn’t. Satan had already entered him. His heart was already hardened. He wasn’t bothered by this announcement. The faster he could do it, the better, but they are bothered in their conscience. A good lesson for us. True believers are genuinely struck with feelings of guilt. They quickly know their depravity, their tendency to sin, even in unimaginable ways. They are: “*Prone to wander, Lord, [we] feel it, Prone to leave the God [we] love.*” True Christians are humble. True Christians are penitent. True Christians, when they are confronted about sin, don’t balk. They don’t balk. They don’t say, “Ahh, I could never do that,” or “You just misread that. You were wrong.” True Christians are struck with grief and conviction, so much so that these eleven disciples, minus Judas, actually are beginning to think that maybe it’s them. Maybe it’s them in their own hearts. I want to read to you a section from the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 19, because it speaks about the importance of true believers being convicted when confronted on their sin, either by the Word of God or by another well-meaning Christian. It says this:

Although true believers be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified, or condemned;

In other words, we don’t earn our salvation by obeying the Law of God.

yet is it [the law] of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life informing them of the will of God, and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives; so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin, together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of his obedience. It is likewise of use [the law is] to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin: and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve; and what afflictions, in this life, they may expect.

Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely, and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done.

For all true Christians, they are like the eleven apostles, struck with the reality that, “Yes, maybe I am guilty of this.” And yet, you could cut the tension in half with a knife in this upper room because Jesus lets them sit in that anxiety. As a matter of fact, He exacerbates their individual concern they may be guilty of treachery, the very treachery He announced, because, notice your Bibles in verse 20. It’s at this point after they had asked, “Is it I?” that “[Jesus] said to them ‘It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me.’” Now, that’s not clear at all. Every single one of them were dipping morsels of bread into the dish and eating. Jesus says this. He’s vague enough in order for them to sit in reflection as to whether or not they are guilty of treachery; a very tense and fearful moment for everyone except Judas. Remember, Judas is sitting next to Jesus in the seat of honor; John, his head is against the chest of Jesus; and then Jesus and Jesus’ head is against the chest of Judas. Jesus is purposely vague, but He’s going to make the announcement crystal clear, and it’s not until Peter—of course it would be Peter, right? The one who lacks a lot of patience, who would finally bring a little bit of clarity to the situation.

Before we go to John chapter 13 to get that clarity, just on a side note, we talk about Peter a lot because he comes up a lot, right? He opens his mouth a lot. Jesus was a master at developing leaders. Jesus saw the strong and abrasive personality of Peter as something that He could use to His advantage. If Jesus wasn’t careful, Peter could have been detrimental to Jesus’ mission. Remember, Peter tried to convince Jesus not to go to the cross, but instead of writing Peter off, Jesus uses that strong personality to His advantage; and at this point, we see Peter stepping up, finally, as a leader. He can’t sit still. He has to know at this moment who it is that has betrayed Jesus. And I don’t know because the Bible doesn’t say, but in the back of my mind, I’m thinking that Peter intends to beat up whoever this person is that Jesus identifies. But turn back with me to John chapter 13 because it is Peter who helps melt the chill of the room, the ice of the room. John 13:24, it says: “So Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking.” Now, he’s motioning to John who was sitting next to Jesus to ask Jesus of whom He was speaking. “So that disciple [John], leaning back against Jesus, said to him, ‘Lord, who is it?’” In other words, he’s just close enough to Jesus’ ear because he’s leaning on His chest to be able to whisper, “Who is it, Jesus? Tell us who it is.”

Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.” Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor.

In other words, at this point they still, the majority of them, don’t know, but I think Peter knew. He’s the one that’s motioning to John, “Ask Him, ask Him.” And so, John and Peter, I think, are aware at this point that Judas is the one who has betrayed our Lord. Back in Mark 14, Jesus said, “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me.” John 13, as I read it, indicates that Jesus actually dipped a morsel and gave it to Judas, sort of a last statement to Judas of his highhanded betrayal, as if to say to Judas, “Are you actually going to follow through with

this? You’re going to betray the one who is offering the right hand of fellowship, the one that you’re eating bread with, your familiar friend; the one who offers you even at this moment forgiveness and fellowship?” Judas would have none of it. At that point, his heart was hard, and from my perspective, this is the saddest scene in the entire Bible. Judas not only took the bread without repenting, but he went to the religious leaders to then take the money and to take them to where Jesus was. Again, John helps us out back in John chapter 13. We read in verse 27, “*Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, ‘What you are going to do, do quickly.’*” Verse 30: “*So, after receiving the morsel of bread, [Judas] immediately went out. And it was night.*” It was night in a couple of different ways. It was the darkest night of Jesus’ earthly existence, the highhanded betrayal and treason.

Now, William Hendriksen in his commentary offers four reasons why Jesus handled the betrayal this way. I mean, as you read it, you might think, “Why doesn’t Jesus just point him out? Why go through all of these games?” Well, Jesus isn’t playing games. He’s operating according to His Father’s timetable, number one; and number two, He’s trying to make a point out of this whole thing. Hendriksen says, first of all, “Jesus does this because it serves as a warning to Judas.” In other words, as Jesus hands this bread to Judas, it allows Judas, at least for a moment to ponder the sinful depth of his actions, and it’s almost as if Jesus is extending an opportunity for Judas to repent. You know, Scripture is replete with warnings even to the reprobate. It doesn’t matter who you are this morning. You don’t know who the elect are. You don’t know who the reprobate are, who the non-elect are, those for whom salvation and repentance is impossible because of the hidden decree of God, and there are many places in Scripture where reprobates are warned. Jesus is warning Judas by giving him this piece of bread as if to say, “Are you really going to follow through with this?” You remember all the way back in Genesis 4, God warned Cain not to do what God knew and had ordained that Cain would do. What about Proverbs 29:1? “*He who is often reproved, yet stiffens his neck, will suddenly be broken beyond healing.*” I mean, we do this with our kids. We don’t always know if our children are elect, but we warn them and we reprove them. We do it with people in the church that profess the name of Christ. We warn them and reprove them when they’ve committed some sin that is an open scandal upon the church. We don’t use God’s divine sovereignty or the doctrine of reprobation or the doctrine of predestination as an excuse not to warn the wayward. The church is called to warn the world that they must repent of their sins. The Bible calls us to command all men everywhere to repent. We don’t know their hearts. And here Jesus is warning Judas an opportunity to repent, so that’s why Jesus hands the bread to Judas this way.

Secondly, Hendriksen says, “It not only serves as a warning to Judas, but secondly it highlights the depth of Christ’s sufferings by the fact that Judas takes this piece of bread.” It points to the humiliation of Christ, that the very one who was eating bread with Jesus would betray him. He would leave that feast at that moment to betray his Master. It highlights the treachery against our Lord because remember the passion or the suffering that we see in the Bible, the passion surrounding Christ is not about what Judas suffered as the son of perdition but what Christ suffered as the Son of God. And everything the gospel writers tell us and everything that Jesus puts in place for us to see is meant to highlight the depth of the sorrow and the suffering of our Lord.

Third, Hendriksen says, “That the way Jesus handles this reveals how Jesus was in full control even at the moment of betrayal.” It wasn’t until Jesus told Judas to leave that he left. It wasn’t until

Jesus identified Judas that he then had the liberty, we could say, to then go to the religious leaders to take them to Jesus. Jesus said, *“I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.”* Jesus willingly gave up His life. He was in sovereign control of the circumstances of His death.

And then, fourth, Hendriksen says Jesus handled the situation this way, not only because it served as a warning to Judas and because it highlighted the depth of Christ’s suffering and because it revealed how Jesus was in full control of all the events, but fourth, “It allowed the disciples themselves to examine their own hearts.” Every single one of them at the table were left in that tension of wondering, “Is it I?” It’s a good warning to the church today. There is a reason that church discipline is a comforting thing and a fearful thing. It’s comforting to know that as a member of a church you’re being held accountable from going off the straight and narrow, but it is also a warning. And every time someone is excommunicated from the church, every time there’s an example of a Christian who publicly commits a sin and refuses to repent, is that not a warning to the rest of us to examine our hearts, to see whether or not we are in the faith, to see if there’s not something we must repent of? This was a sanctifying thing for the other disciples. For Judas, he’s the son of perdition. It was too late for him, but for the others, for the true disciples and followers of Christ, it was a chance for them to say something like this: “There but for the grace of God, go I.” And all of them would be tempted to forsake the Lord, and in some sense, they forsook him. They scattered when He was arrested. Now, ultimately, they came back around, but Jesus handles it this way for the others that are looking to say to the other disciples, “You don’t want to become like Judas.”

Well, after the announcement, the fate of Judas is sealed. God’s sovereign control over really what we would describe as the worst night, Jesus assures us fit according to the plan of the Father. Notice verse 21. Jesus says, *“For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him.”* It’s almost as if He’s saying, “Judas goes as it’s written of him, but the Son of Man goes as it is written of Him.” *“But woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.”* Jesus says, “This betrayal and this suffering doesn’t undo God’s sovereign decree. It establishes it.” *“For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him.”* The Scriptures wrote about this, that He would be *“delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God,”* Acts 2:23. Everything foretold about Christ in the Old Testament was being fulfilled. Every prophecy that David wrote, whether he knew he was writing it or not about Christ is fulfilled: Psalm 55, Psalm 41. What about Psalm 22? What about Isaiah 52 and 53? What about Zechariah 12? What about Isaiah’s words in 52 and 53 that He bore our griefs, *“[He carried our sorrows,”* He was *“stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities...and with his wounds,”* the wounds of Jesus, *“we are healed.”* What about 1 Corinthians 15:3? *“That Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures. And that he was buried and he rose the third day according to the scriptures. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him.”* It was God’s will that Jesus be betrayed. Jesus did not go to the cross as a helpless victim but as the obedient Son of God, obeying both the Word of God, what was written about Him, and the will of the Father at the moment the Father wanted Him to be arrested and crucified. *“The Son of Man goes as it is written of him.”*

Even Jesus’ life was governed by the authority of God’s Word. Have you ever thought about that? Jesus believed the Bible, Jesus preached the Bible, and Jesus obeyed the Bible no matter the cost. Jesus was in full submission to the Father, a reminder to us that we should not view Scripture in a minimalistic way, a minimalist sort of fashion but in a maximalist fashion. That was the style of Jesus. No matter what the Word said, no matter where the Father told Jesus to go, He went. If the Word said it, He obeyed it. If the Word said it, Jesus declared it. And the church today must not be afraid to declare God’s Word, God’s truth, God’s gospel, God’s Law. Forget the windy, trendy, wishy-washy ways of evangelicalism. True Christians stand for the Word. True Christians submit to the Word, even as Jesus did. Jesus is more than an example because He’s our expiation for sin, but He’s not less than an example. He obeyed the Word. And yet though it was determined by God’s sovereign decree that the Son of Man goes, Jesus says in verse 21: *“But woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!”* Here we see divine sovereignty, human responsibility working in tandem, working in tandem. God’s sovereign determination always overrules man’s sinful decisions, and Judas is culpable. I mean, he’s not let off the hook. Jesus says, *“But woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.”* *“Woe to that man.”* This is pronouncement of deep condemnation. Judas was culpable for rejecting Christ and stood condemned in his sins. No salvation for Judas. Jesus said, *“While I was with them, I kept them in your name,”* Father, *“which you have given me. I have guarded them and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.”* It was God’s will that the Son of Man goes. It was God’s will that Judas be the son of perdition, and yet, *“Woe to that man by whom”* committed that treason.

In his commentary, R. C. Sproul imagines Judas on the final day of judgment arguing the way many might argue today who believe in predestination. “Lord, I was just carrying out Your will. In fact, if it weren’t for my betrayal, the atonement would have never taken place. Your people would still be in their sins, but You used me to bring Jesus to the cross, and through that cross, Your people were redeemed. Therefore, I think I deserve,” Sproul says, “a heavenly medal of honor.” Of course, he goes on to say that would be a very bad argument because if any human being ever had a reason to curse the day of their birth, it was Judas. Jesus even says that at the end of verse 21: *“It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.”* The strongest of language. I mean, Job, he wished he wasn’t born. George Bailey wished he wasn’t born. None of that pales in comparison to the reality that that was actually true of Judas. Jesus said it: *“It would have been better if he [wasn’t] born,”* which means woe, condemnation, judgment.

You say, “How does this divine sovereignty and human responsibility work out?” I don’t know. It’s the mystery of sovereign concurrence. God works out His sovereign will to the willful choices of His creatures. God, in His sovereignty, on the one hand never forced Judas to do what Judas wanted to do, and on the other hand, God had ordained that to happen. You can’t figure it out. I can’t figure it out. Both are true. If anything, God restrained Judas, didn’t He? The religious leaders wanted Jesus to be arrested after the Passover. Judas probably wanted to get to that money quicker. Jesus made him wait longer. It’s like Joseph’s brothers who sold him into slavery. What does Joseph say? *“You meant evil...God meant it for good.”* Same thing here. God’s sovereignty is worked out through the willful choices of His creatures. And what is true of Judas is true of all willfully hard-hearted Christ-rejecters. Their eternal punishment is so severe it would be better for them, to borrow the words of Jesus, “If they had never been born.”

In fact, turn with me over to Hebrews chapter 10. The author of Hebrews brings this out. We’ve been speaking about the fact that the church is arranged under the concept of a covenant. Israel was in covenant with God. They were the tree of God, right? Romans 11, some wild olive branches are grafted in. That’s believing gentiles. And Paul’s point in Romans 11 is that this this tree of God, this covenant of God will always have limbs that will eventually be broken off because they don’t bear fruit. Well, what is this? Does this mean that one can lose their salvation? No, Judas never had salvation, and there are some that are attached to the covenant. They’ve been baptized in the church. They’re full-fledged members, but they’re not a true member of the body of Christ. They’re going to be chopped off, and Paul makes that warning in Romans 11. God’s already removed some natural branches. Don’t think He’s not going to do it again in the new covenant. And the author of Hebrews speaks about this in Hebrews 10:29: *“How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God?”* If there was ever one who trampled under foot the Son of God, it was Judas, right, betraying Him. But the author of Hebrews is saying there are others who trample underfoot the Son of God, who have, notice the language of verse 29, *“profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?”*

Sanctified and set apart through baptism, which is the sign of the covenant, puts you among the visible people of God, but even Judas was among the visible people of God. And Hebrews 10 is warning us it doesn’t mean you’re a true believer just because you go to church, just because you read your Bible, just because you’re born in a Christian family, just because you’ve been baptized. If you *“trample underfoot the Son of God,”* if you *“profane the blood of the covenant,”* this *“has outraged the Spirit of Grace,”* and what does verse 30 say? *“For we know him who said, ‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay.’”* *“The Lord will judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”* Nowhere does Scripture say predestination cancels out human responsibility. If you’ve been born into a Christian family, you must repent of your sin and look to Christ as your Lord and Savior. If you’ve grown up in church your whole life, the same obligation is for you. It’s only those who trust in Christ who can be forgiven. There will be no such excuse on the day of judgment that says, “I didn’t have to do anything because I just assumed I was elect.” There’s nothing in the Bible that speaks that way. The doctrine of election is an assuring doctrine because it confirms that if we are bearing fruit—if for example, we have been born in a Christian family and been baptized, if we have grown up in church, if we have heard the gospel and responded to that and there’s fruit in our life, we can have assurance that we are one of the elect of God. But woe to that person who profanes the covenant, who walks away and disobeys the Law of God and treads underfoot the Son of God.

So, this passage of Judas’ betrayal, Mark 14, is both a warning and a comfort, as I said, at the beginning. It’s a comfort because the miseries of Christ’s passion, including His betrayal, worked in accordance with God’s will to provide salvation for you. If Jesus wasn’t betrayed, He wouldn’t be arrested. If He wasn’t arrested, He wouldn’t have been crucified. If He wasn’t crucified, He wouldn’t have been resurrected. And if He wasn’t resurrected, He wouldn’t have ascended to rule and to reign, victory over sin and Satan. So, it’s a comfort, but it’s also a warning because on the judgment day, we cannot blame God for rejecting him. We cannot blame the doctrine of predestination. We can’t blame the doctrine of reprobation, we can’t blame the doctrine of election, we cannot blame God. We either stand before Him in the righteousness of Christ, or we are exposed in the nakedness of our willful rebellion against Him. So, if you’re concerned of treachery

and apostasy, don't keep asking, "Is it I?" like the disciples. Repent, turn to Christ, confess your sin, come clean, seek refuge in Jesus Christ. That is evidence that you want Him when you seek it, for a hard heart walks away and says, "That message did nothing for me. So what? One of the Twelve betrayed Jesus. So much for the validity of the gospel and the Word of God. Even one among Jesus' company betrayed Him. Some God this is." That's the mark of an unbeliever. That's the mark of the skeptic. That's the mark of one who is not indwelt by the Holy Spirit. No conviction of sin, no recognition of divine sovereignty and human responsibility, but a complete rejection of the authority of God's Word, discounting it or viewing it apathetically, walking away and saying, "So what?" A true believer studies this passage and says, "Dear God, help me. Help me to never look beyond Christ for my salvation. He is my only hope. Keep my eyes on Christ. Keep my eyes on Jesus. Help me to repent of my sin." *"But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are his,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.'"* Repent from sin, look to Christ, rest in Him, and receive His free salvation.

Father, thank You for the clarity of Your Word, which instructs us in the truth. It reminds us of the realities of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. We don't understand how these things work together and the complexities of how they work together, but we do recognize that, Father, You have ordained the death of Your Son from before the foundation of the world, and all the events leading up to that. You even ordained the fall in the garden because in the infinite complexity of Your vast wisdom. You determined that a world with a Savior would be a better world. A world with sin, yes, disgrace, grief, but a world of sin brings about the opportunity of a world with a Savior. We can't imagine this world without Christ, the one who died according to the Scriptures, the one who was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. Your Scriptures say it, we believe it. It was all ordained. It worked out in a beautiful, detailed, intricate way, confirming in our hearts Your sovereignty over this universe, solidifying within our spirits that our only hope is Christ, His shed blood upon the cross of Calvary. We thank You for Christ. We thank You for this gift of salvation. May it ever be special and precious to us, and we pray that this would also serve as a warning to God's people not to walk away, not to be tempted with sin, not to be tempted with treachery and apostasy, but Father, to continue looking to Christ, the one who preserves the faith of all the truly elect. We thank You for this. We thank You for Your Word. We pray these things in the blessed name of Christ. Amen.