

Sermon 5 (Easter morning): I Will Drink it New with you in my Father's Kingdom, Mark 14:25

Proposition: Jesus' ongoing abstinence from wine is His way of longing with us for the coming of God's Kingdom.

- I. The Context: Jesus Is about to Die, vv. 18, 24
- II. The Promise
 - A. Jesus Will Abstain
 - B. The Kingdom Will Come

- I. The Last Supper Looks Forward
 - A. Jesus Knew He'd Rise
 - B. To Rise He Had to Die
 - C. Since He's Alive, He Will Return
 - D. When He Returns, We Will Feast with Him at the Father's Table
- II. Jesus fasts for now, but feeds us now and forever

Introduction

Dearly beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, we gathered this morning to celebrate the resurrection. Jesus is alive! Yet the meal which we are going to enjoy at the conclusion of this service proclaims His death. Why is it appropriate to preach about the Lord's Supper at an Easter service? Because the Last Supper looks forward to the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb. This is an anticipatory feast. If you want to use the word, it's an appetizer designed to sharpen our appetite to drink wine new with Christ in His Father's Kingdom. But not only is it an appetizer for us; it's an appetizer for Him too. Indeed, what we will see about this meal this morning is that Jesus' ongoing abstinence from wine is His way of longing with us for the coming of God's Kingdom.

I. The Last Supper Looks Forward

The first point I want to make this morning is a simple one: the Last Supper, and thus the Lord's Supper, looks forward. The name "Last Supper" indicates this. It's not a biblical name, but think about it with me for a second nonetheless. To call a supper the last supper indicates a look back — back at all the suppers came before it, back to all the times when our Savior sat at table with His disciples, with Pharisees, with crowds, with sinners and tax collectors. Jesus was a social man. He accepted a lot of invitations. So to speak of the Last Supper is to imply the many suppers that went before it. But to call it a last supper is also to look ahead, to what's coming next — that event that's going to stop there from being any more suppers. That event we know as the crucifixion.

A. Jesus Knew He'd Rise

But though we call this meal with the disciples the Last Supper, Jesus doesn't call it that. He calls it the last *for a while*. He says that it's the last until He drinks with them in the Kingdom of God. In other words, Jesus knew that the ordinary meals they'd been having together were coming to an end. He quotes a bit further on from Zechariah, indicating that God will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. He knew His death was imminent. But He also knew that He would rise. Even in that moment when He swears abstinence, then, He indicates that it's abstinence for a limited time. He will not eat until the Kingdom comes.

But for the Kingdom to come, what has to happen? Christ has to return. He has to come in the glory of His Father, with all His holy angels. And to do that, to do what He promises to do here, He would have to rise from the dead. Of course, He had already told the disciples about His death and resurrection in so many words. He knew He'd rise!

Brothers and sisters, communion is not a meal that knows nothing of the resurrection. Jesus gave us this wine and bread with the full understanding that He would come back to life. His broken body and shed blood are an important part of the story, so important that the wine and blood symbolize and communicate them to us. But they are not the end of the story.

B. To Rise He Had to Die

Indeed, the whole Christian story is concentrated in this feast. The bread and wine tell of Jesus' death, but His death tells of His resurrection. "How do you figure that, preacher?" you ask. It's simple. Jesus' life and obedience in your place exempted Him from death. He did not have to die for His own sins. He was innocent, and death is always and only the consequence of sin. So when you see a perfect man dying, you can be certain that it's temporary. That said, the glory of the resurrection is only possible against the darkness of the tomb. The glory of Christ appears in His willingness to come and die, and then come back to life because death could not hold Him.

Glory follows suffering. That's how God works. Think of childbirth. Think of harvestime. Think of olympic gold. A horse that ran the fastest mile and got a gold medal for competing against human athletes would have no glory at all, because it was easy for that equine to run faster than a human. It was no trouble at all. That would be almost as ridiculous as awarding a gold medal in the 500-meter dash to a Chevy Corvette because it did the 500 meters faster than any other competitor. Of course it did! And in the same way, the Son of God enjoying the delights of Heaven is glorious, but not in the same way as the Son of God bruised, battered, and dying before rising again with glory and returning to the delights of Heaven.

Brothers and sisters, in other words, the message of Easter is the proclamation of death. Yes, it's bunnies and eggs and new life and empty tombs. But those tombs are real. The death is genuine, and brutal. Easter is only meaningful if Jesus was really dead. The Lord's Supper, by contrast, is only meaningful if He is really alive. Hence the connection between the Lord's Supper and Easter morning. His death and resurrection are paired; He lived to die, and died to rise again. He gives us His broken body and shed blood because He died, and through His death He earned resurrection life not only for Himself, but for all of us too.

Do you want to live this Easter? Then come and die. Come and eat the flesh and drink the blood. Take upon yourself the covenant, its curse of death and its promise of life and blessing. Because guess what: In order to live, you too have to die. You have to die to sin. You have to lose your control over your life and hand yourself over body and soul to the one who handed His body and soul over to a Roman cross for you. Give up on living your life for yourself, and start living it for Him.

C. Since He's Alive, He Will Return

Well, not only is He alive; we know that since He is alive, He will return. How can we know that? Because His task is not complete. He was born as a Savior, given the name Jesus — Yahweh saves! He came to save His people from their sins. And that salvation will not be complete until He returns. The meal we eat and call with the apostles the Lord's Supper signifies and seals Christ to us — not just in His first coming, but in His second. That's why even at His first coming He talked so much about His return, why He mentioned it even at the Last Supper. He knew that Easter was coming, and that beyond it lies the triumphant exaltation of His second coming and our reigning in glory with Him.

We will be saved when He returns. Yes, we have been saved, saved to the uttermost. But in His return, He will save us completely, and save the world too.

D. When He Returns, We Will Feast with Him at the Father's Table

And when He returns, we will feast with Him at the Father's table. Why does Christ say that He will not drink of the fruit of the vine until He drinks it new with us in His Father's Kingdom? Because He longs for the moment. He too is waiting for it, anticipating it, longing for it. This is, I suppose, the original reason behind giving up stuff for Lent. If you haven't had any of your favorite food for 40 days, you're probably longing for it right about now. But Christ has not tasted wine in nearly 2000 years. Why? Because He is longing for the coming of the kingdom. When you pray "Your Kingdom come," you are merely echoing the desire of your Lord's heart. When you long for the marriage supper of the Lamb, you are longing for it with the Lamb Himself.

II. Jesus fasts for now, but feeds us now and forever

Brothers and sisters, Jesus fasts for now, but feeds us forever. That's the message of this meal. As always, He's giving us better than what He Himself received. He invites us to sit and eat, even while He fasts. Do you appreciate the reality that you are a child of the Heavenly Father and that you have been invited to sit at His table, where He feeds you with the best that He has to offer — namely, the life-giving flesh of His Son? Brothers and sisters, one facet of the resurrection is the truth that Christ's life has been communicated to us. Because He lives, we will live also. And one way in which He communicates that life to us is through this Supper. Do you eat it, and long to eat it new with Him in your Father's Kingdom? Do you meet Him in it, delight in Him in it, long for Him in it? He longs for you. He is waiting for the consummation, just like us. O, Lord Jesus, come quickly! Amen.