

If you have your Bibles, let's go to Luke 22. How many of you have been able to leave the country? How many of you have ever left the United States of America? There are certain things that happen to you when you leave the States, specifically when you leave what's known as the Western World. Like if you go Europe then you miss some things about this country, like ice in your glass. If you're in Europe, you're like, "Put an ice cube in there already. And you miss simple things, ice, air- conditioning, things like that. But if you'll get out of the Western World and head down into Africa or to parts of Asia, you really see how blessed we are as a nation. Now, I am a staunch believer that the wealth and the influence given to us in suburban America was given to us, not so it would terminate on ourselves, but so that we would push back what is dark in the world. If you've ever thought to yourself, "Why do we keep adding services? Why did we just spend a couple thousand dollars putting a Band- aid on a gaping wound?," it's because I refuse to spend \$20-30 million on a building at the expense of what we feel called to in other parts of the world. And so, we'll continue to add services, we'll continue to be creative and you'll continue to have to park 18 miles away because you walking and sweating a little bit in June is worth it to me if we can continue to do the things that we've been doing. In the last year and a half, you and your money have built a school, have built a hospital, have built an orphanage. A large portion of the money that you've given to here leaves this place because I am a passionate believer that the moment the resources God has given us terminate on us, then the things we really desire and hope for will stop happening, which is men and women coming to know Him in a powerful way. And so I've been overseas the last month, just looking at what else we can do, looking at how else we can give back to push back what is dark in the world. And just to be completely honest, we don't play that game where we're like, "Okay, we're going to feed you and we're going to build a hospital if you read the Bible." That's not our game. I am a believe that we do those things not to convert people but because we are converted and while we do that, the light of Christ shines clearly and people come to know Him. So when you're in those places where people are afraid of their government and when things like this, things like what we're doing right here in opening the Scriptures and teaching them with no fear of the government coming in an arresting me, the government coming in and shutting this down, somebody in here getting beat up or imprisoned for how they believe, when you're in that environment for an extended period of time, you begin to be very, very grateful for what we have here in the states. Because whether you know it or not, the majority of the world does not live like you live. In the project that we've been doing in Liberia, if you went to the U.N.'s website, and read up on Liberia, the first sentence is "...no effective police force." Now for the majority of us, we can't even get that through our heads. Now I know the great old song, "911 Is a Joke" by Public Enemy...I've just dated myself there. But you've got a country where it's hard for us to even getting our heads around not having the freedoms and the things that we've been given. Now we've been taught about where we've come as a country and where we are now.

In fact, the moment you enter pre-school, they begin to teach you history of this country and this democracy and this thing we live in. Like I shouldn't have to explain the image behind me. Almost everyone knows the image behind me. There are thirteen stripes on this flag representing? The thirteen disciples! No, golly no. You've got fifty stars representing the fifty states in the Union. And everybody in this room to the man, or the woman, to the human, to the individual knows "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands: one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all." If you don't, you're a Communist. So you've got the flag and from pre-school, back in my day, you stood at the beginning of every day and you started it with the Pledge. Now I know in our day and age, the Pledge can be highly offensive and damaging to young souls, but we did it back in my day. And I think we ended up alright. But on top of this flag, you're taught imagery and history because this

teaches both history and imagery, there are also these icons within American culture that teach our value system, what we value, what we exalt. Like I shouldn't have to introduce the Statue of Liberty to you, right? A marginally attractive woman who has invited men and women into this country since 1886, ironically enough a gift from the French. And this icon is known worldwide as a symbol for political democracy and liberty. It's why if you watch the news, sometimes when there are anti-American rallies going on, they burn not only the American flag but the Statue of Liberty. They build a little Statue of Liberty doll and torch her. And they do that as a way of saying, "This is not what we value." And this stands as an icon to American liberty. In fact, over the next three or four days, you will see Lady Liberty selling a lot of Nissans and other cars for the Fourth of July sales. But she stands there and says, "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." And then you've got the Great Seal of the United States of America. I know some people know the Seal; some people don't. This is an eagle holding in its beak a banner that says E Pluribus Unum which means "Out of many comes one." In the right talon is an olive branch which represents our preference for peace. In the left talon are thirteen arrows that says, "If peace can't be had, we will war for liberty." This is yet another symbol, another reference point for "This is who we are and this is what we value." In fact, if you'll look above the crest, you've got thirteen stars all forming one constellation at the top of everything, and it was their way, when the Seal came out, of saying, "We're taking our place among other sovereign nations."

Now, on top of these icons that teach what we value and where we come from, you have memorials that get across what it cost for you and I to enjoy the freedoms and the liberty and the democracy that so few of us think very little of. Like this one would be a controversial one because the war was so controversial, this is the Vietnam War Memorial, but it does not change the fact that 58,000 young American boys went over to Southeast Asia died defending and fighting for liberty and our way of life. I believe there were 168,000 wounded. The names of the dead are on this wall, and it is a memorial that is set there to remind you and me that what we enjoy was paid for not by money but by blood. Here's another one. There are dozens more, but this one's one of my favorites. I'm a huge history buff and I know that makes me lose cool points but I'm married to an attractive woman and don't care anymore. This is the Iwo Jima Monument. Iwo Jima was one of the bloodiest battles of World War II. In fact, in less than a month, on a mass of land smaller than Highland Village, 6,800 American boys were killed. And just for a bit of history, this monument was taken from a picture that was snapped as they got the flag to the top of Iwo Jima. Only one of those boys survived the battle. The young man putting the flag into the ground was the only one of the four who lived and got off of Iwo Jima. The three other young men were killed on Iwo Jima. It's another monument trying to remind you that what you and I enjoy was given to us by the generations before us. And this is the country that we live in, the country that gives us the right to stand up in front of this place and preach the gospel, the government that gives us the right to complain about the government. If you haven't been in some harsher places, just the fact that we get to complain about our President, just the fact that we have approval or disapproval rates. I mean, do you remember joke that was the Iraqi elections right before we invaded? I'm not making a political statement; I'm just saying they polled all of the people and everybody was like, "We love him." It was 100%. Because you get killed if you don't vote that way. And so just the freedom to complain was purchased for you and for me by the blood of others. The right to pay \$3 for a cup of coffee was given to you and me by the blood of others.

And this is the country we find ourselves living in and pledging allegiance to. It is now however our kingdom. It is our country, God shed His grace upon thee, but we belong to a greater kingdom. And that kingdom has its own symbols and that kingdom has its own banner to be waved. And that's what we'll chat a little bit about tonight. Luke 22, starting in verse 14, "And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." Before we go on, I want to chat a little bit about Passover with you because it's going to take a turn here for us. Passover is when God asked Charlton Heston to go back into Egypt and to grab the people of Israel and to take them out. And so he got there and said, "Let my people go," Pharaoh argues and the plagues come. And all the water turns to blood and Pharaoh has his heart hardened by God. You've got to deal with that; it's there. In fact, He does it to more than just Pharaoh. There are at least four occasions where He

hardens a guy's heart and one occasion where He hardens a whole nation's heart. But He hardens Pharaoh's heart and Pharaoh refuses to let them go. And so God through Moses says, "Okay, here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to kill the firstborn among all of Egypt's sons." So the firstborn son of every Egyptian man was going to be killed unless they took the blood of a lamb and wiped on their door post. And so the Jews slaughtered lambs and took the blood and wiped it on their door post so when the Angel of Death came, he passed over their homes and just killed the firstborn sons of the Egyptian men. And from that moment on, Israel, the Jews celebrated the Passover meal. How many of you have been part of Seder meal before? It's great. We probably need to do one here this next year right before Easter. They celebrated the Passover.

Now I want you to watch this because I'm always trying to get you to think more Eastern than Western. And if you've been here for a while, you'll notice that I preach out of the New Testament and then I almost always refer back to the Old Testament. And I do that because Scripture does that. Over and over again the New Testament points back to the Old Testament as the fulfillment of what was being taught in the Old Testament. We're about to see the same thing happen. Verse 16, "For I tell you I will not eat [the Passover] until [the Passover] is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Here's what Jesus just said. Jesus said that what happened in the Passover was a picture of what He was going to do on the cross. So the Passover lamb, the Lamb of God that we see happening in the Exodus is simply a picture that they were going to celebrate for the next couple thousand years and understand in its fullness when Jesus died on the cross. Let's keep reading because we're going to get to what our banner is. "And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." So He takes the cup and He says, "Drink with Me tonight, but here's the deal. I'm not drinking with you tonight, but I will drink with you again." And what we're going to find is this is going to be a lot of encouragement later on. Because what He's saying is, "Listen, I'm going to go die, but don't you fret. We'll drink together again. I've got to go suffer, I've got to go die, but we will drink together again." Now, here's where we start to see our banner. "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." So Jesus, right before His death, installing the new covenant that we've spent a billion weeks on in Hebrews, is sitting there going, "What I want you to remember, the banner I want you to wave, what I want to be the umbrella, the overarching theme, the central focus of what you are to be about is My death." The cross of Christ alone stands as central to all that we are. And if anything else replaces it, it gets perverted, tainted and makes man boast in man. Let me give you a few examples. I am a closet Charismatic. Well, I guess I'm not in the closet anymore. I believe in all the gifts of the Spirit, all of them. I am not a cessationist, I do not believe they ceased with the death of the last apostle. I think you have to play games with the Bible to make it say that. And the only good argument I've ever heard comes out of 1 Corinthians when it says, "When the perfect comes the gifts will cease," and they say the perfect one coming is the Bible. My problem with that is the very next line that says, "Then we will fully know as we are fully known." And I've got the Bible here and I do not fully know as God fully knows me. In fact, I've read this thing a lot, I feel still dumb. So the gifts will cease when the perfect one returns. There's one who is perfect, Christ. All that being said, my problem with Charismatic theology is that it will remove the cross from center and it will replace it with the Day of Pentecost, it will replace it with the gifts. It will remove the all-powerful, sustaining death of Christ as the central truth of Christian life and it will replace it with the Day of Pentecost, it will replace it with the gifts. And when you've done that, then all of a sudden it's not about what Christ has done in His atoning death but rather about how powerful your gifts are. And then all the glory is pushed away from Jesus and on to you. And the more supernatural the gift and the more powerful the gift, the more exalted you become. And then you've got a hierarchy that occurs and the message becomes, "Are you not filled out there? Do you not have all you ever wanted in Jesus? Then you need to do what I've done. You need to have the gift that I've had. And if you did that, there'd be no more doubts, no more fears..." which is absolute garbage. The great theologian Bono said, "I still haven't found what I'm looking for." And that is not an indictment against Jesus Christ; he is referring to the process of sanctification that occurs over the long haul. There was

a beautiful Christian artist that I like who took that song and said, "I finally found what I'm looking for." No, you haven't, because you're not dead. If you were dead, you've found it, you're finally there. If you're not, you're still pursuing. And the problem with putting the Day of Pentecost or the gift as central is that it perverts the gospel. My problem with a lot of the emerging church is that they put the kingdom of God at the center. Now, I'm a big believer in the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God should pervasively be saturating culture, but it doesn't stand at the center. It's good, but it's not center. The cross and the cross alone is center. My problem with liberal theology is they want to make social justice the center. "Well, feed the poor...do this...do that..." Yeah, you're right, but it's not the center. Do you know how I know that? Because Jesus is going to say through the prophet Isaiah, "All of your righteous works are as filthy rags." "I fed the poor." "Oh, thank you for your boogery napkin." So social justice doesn't stand at the center. If you place anything other than the cross at the center, then you have merit to boast, and no one will ever boast in front of Christ. In the same way, you don't think about how great you are when you're standing in front of the ocean or the Grand Canyon. Nobody ever stares at the Grand canyon and goes, "Man, I am handsome." Nobody goes, "I feel powerful right now." No, you normally feel terrified. No one boasts in front of God. That's why I always laugh when people would say, "What would you say if you stood in front of God and He said, 'Why should I let you into My heaven?'" Because you don't get to talk about you. Your best bet is to fall on the ground and just start saying, "I plead the blood of Christ" over and over and over again. That's your best bet. The death of Jesus Christ stands at the center of all we are and all we hope for. And He's going to say, "Not only do I want you to celebrate My death and resurrection, but I want you to remember," not just the death of Christ I think, but the life of Christ.

Okay, I do some things in purpose. Like if you've been here three years, then you've probably heard me reference the woman at the well six or seven hundred times. You've probably heard me reference Zaccheus, you've probably heard me reference the woman who walks in and cries all over Jesus' feet. You've heard me reference those stories over and over and over again because I have begged Christ to burn them on your soul. Because remembering the actions of Christ reveals the character of God, so that in your darkest moment, you'll still believe that He loves you. Remember. "Remember" He says. "Do this, this broken body, this shed blood. Remember what I did. Remember Me in the garden. Remember Me crying over Jerusalem. Remember My patience with sinners. Remember the lack of patience I had with religious, empty zealots. Remember My compassion. Remember My healing. Remember My invitations. Remember. Remember where you've come from." And something I've noticed as I've been here is that people who get saved later in life remember what life was like before Christ. But then you've got this whole other group of people that like got saved when they were four days old, and they have a harder time remembering. And this is where Scripture becomes so important. It's where it becomes so important for you to understand that you were born dead in your trespasses and sins, Ephesians 2. Just because you said one curse word and smoked half of one cigarette out behind the barn doesn't mean that you're better or in some way more right before God Almighty. Remember. Remember the price that was paid, remember the things that He taught, remember who He is and what He's called us to. Remember. Don't forget.

And then I love here that He does this at dinner. Here's why. There is something holy about supper. Not you cramming a Double Big Mac into your face in your car. There is something holy about getting together with people that you love and having dinner, slow, methodical dinner. There's something holy that occurs. If you study the Scriptures, think how often Jesus references food and drink. "I am the bread of life...You will be invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb...A man wanted to throw a banquet..." Think of how often Christ references dinner. There is something very holy that occurs when people get together. My sister is on the other side of the world right now and we had a chance to see her over there. The first night in, jet lagged and all, we went to dinner and they threw it on a Lazy Susan.. I don't know who Susan was and why they named this thing after her, but it's a bum deal. It's this glass thing and if you're a germophobe, you would hate it because you don't get your own plate. You just get chopsticks, which was great for my three year old. And we sat there and we ate food and we told some stories and some lies and just enjoyed each other. There is something holy that

happens there. So it's not surprising to me that Jesus says, "I want this instituted and here's what we'll call it. We'll call it My Supper." It's His invitation to feast upon Him. "This is My body, eat it. This is My blood, drink it. Find your sustenance in Me."

Now, I know some of you are here because it's Sunday and this is what you do on Sunday. And I've racked my brain trying to figure out church as a hobby since I got here. It just seems like a really, really lame hobby. And here's what I mean by that. Like, this is the extent of your spiritual experience. Like, you leave here and you have not relationship with Christ and you're not connected at all and this is just what you do. I've never really understood that. You weren't designed to nibble, you were designed to feast. Maybe I can explain it this way. I hated being engaged. I might need to spend the night at one of your houses after this, but I'll use it. I loved dating Lauren. I had a great time. I have loved being married to her. It has been a redemptive thing. Being engaged was an absolute nightmare. Let me try to explain why. I don't care what color the plate is. So to be stuck at Dillard's for five hours trying to pretend like I do just got me in all kinds of trouble. Like, I was never going to look down on the plate a year later going, "Wow, we should have got the green." I'm just going to go, "Mmm, meat!" I don't care. I don't care what the comforter looks like. It can have flowers on it or a flag. I don't have a preference. For me, it's warm or it's cold. That's how my brain works. But when you're engaged, all of a sudden you're thrown into all these deals where everybody gets confused. I mean, "If I don't care what the plates look like, is that an indictment on our relationship? That doesn't mean I don't care about you, I just don't care about forks." And here's what I found. We didn't fight a whole lot when we were dating, but that six months of engagement we were fighting all the time. And here's what I learned about being engaged. When you're engaged, you have all the difficulties of marriage with none of the benefits. It's just the truth. I mean, you've got all the fights, you've got all the complexity, you've got confusion, you've got all of the frustration that can occur in marriage and absolutely none of the sweet, tender, beautiful things that make those hard times worth it. And so, being engaged is difficult. At least it was for us. I mean, some of you are like a romance novel, but for us, being engaged was difficult. And I think this is what happens when the extent of your relationship with Jesus Christ revolves around this. Because here's the thing. Church people are jacked up; they always will be. It's a bunch of sinners, saved by grace, hanging out for each other. But here's the thing. As I've talked with people, as I've built friendships outside of these walls, I've found so many people who have tried church but never tried Jesus. They got engaged and never got married and they walk around complaining about being married. But they never got married, they never tried Jesus. They look to the church to be this perfect reflection of who He is and we're not there yet. Now, "He who started it is going to be faithful to complete it," but we're not there yet. You've got this invitation to feast on Him. That means find your daily sustenance in Him. Everything else is chasing your tail anyway. Okay, so you've got wealth. So when you die and leave it to your kids, they'll be grateful. We'll get into this pretty heavily in two weeks. We're going to preach through the book of Ecclesiastes, so we'll get into this pretty quick. Vanity, vanity, vanity, everything's vanity. It's like chasing the wind. Feast on Him is the invitation. Come, find sustenance for your soul.

So on Tuesday, we're going to get together with friends and family and fire up the barbecue pit, watch some fireworks, we might even illegally shoot off some ourselves and we're going to celebrate freedom and independence and grace, the absolute grace shed on this nation by God Almighty. And if you don't believe that or if you don't have your head around that, I'll encourage you to sign up for the next trip to Liberia and you'll come back grateful, I promise you. I didn't want us to get lost in it this week to be honest. Because it's our country, but it's not our kingdom. I wanted us to remember the kingdom we belong to. I wanted us to remember this weekend that, although God has shed grace on the United States of America, what He has done for His church is beyond that. He has saved her, calls her perfect, views her as spotless. And so, tonight I just want us to remember. Tonight I want us to wave the banner of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ and maybe just in the next few moments, feast on Him. Would you do me a favor? Would you just bow your heads and close your eyes? If you are a believer in Christ tonight, I want to invite you to do communion with us. We practice open communion, which means if you're a believer in Christ, we would love to have you. If you're not a believer, I can't tell you how glad I am that you're here tonight and just always want to tell you you're welcome in this

place and loved. And you can come all the way in. You can join a small group, come schedule a meeting with our pastors. We love you, we're glad that you're here. We don't have anything to hide. Ask your questions, have your doubts, even bring your anger. We'll take it. But the Lord's Supper is for those who do believe, and so I'll ask you to abstain if you're not. I want to give you a minute or two because the Scriptures say that you can do this in an unworthy manner. And I think what that means is not that you had a good week or that you lived perfectly this week, but that you are in honest standing with God. Which means that an unworthy way to take the Lord's Supper would be to have sin in your life but pretend it's not there or to have unconfessed sin between you and the Lord and you take the Lord's Supper as if that's not there. I think that's what the Scriptures mean when it says you can take it in an unworthy manner. And so I want to give you a minute or two to just be honest with the Lord. I want to give you just a minute or two to confess some sins. I want to give you a minute or two to just think about and remember the memorial of the death of Christ. I want you to think about the banner of His death and His resurrection. I want you to think about where maybe you would be right now without Him, what life would look like without Him. I want to give you just a minute to remember.

Let's pray. "Father, I thank You for freedom, freedom that goes well beyond what any government can establish. And I thank You for an independence that goes well beyond the political process. And so we celebrate You tonight and we celebrate what You've done for us and who we are in You, and we remember. We remember Your broken body and Your shed blood and how it was spilled and spent for the glory of the Father and the salvation of many sons and daughters. And so be exalted in our hearts and stir in us gratitude and an understanding of what we found ourselves caught up in and, if You wouldn't have intervened, where we might be. And so, Father, I pray that as we pass around the bread and wine that those thoughts would be in our heads and in our hearts and we might find our souls welling up in gratitude. It's for Your beautiful name. Amen."

The Scriptures say on the night that Jesus died, He took the bread and He blessed it. Will you pray with me? "Father, we thank You for the cross. We thank You for Your death; we boast in it. We boast not in our morality, we boast not in our accomplishment, we boast not in who we are at all. We boast in You and You alone. We profess to know just one thing: You and You crucified. And so Father, where there have been things added to our faith, where there have been things pushed into it, I pray that You would refine it and put in our hearts Your death and Your resurrection. We don't want to boast in our gifting, we don't want to boast in our morality, we don't want to boast in our social activity, we don't want to boast in our mission; we want to boast in You and who You are and what You are, in Your redemption and Your salvation. It's not our salvation, it's Yours. And You give it and own it and it's Yours. And so we praise You tonight in Your broken body that made us a people. It's for Your beautiful name. Amen." And after He blessed it, He broke it and said, "This is My body. Do it in remembrance of Me." And after that, He took the cup and He blessed it. Let's pray again. "Father, we praise You for Your shed blood. Jesus, we praise You for the blood that atones for all our sins, the blood that shut down the offering camp, that You're no longer taking offerings for sin, that this sacrifice was once and for all for those being saved. I pray for Flower Mound and I pray for Lewisville and Highland Village and Plano and all that's represented in this room. I pray that the men and women of these cities would come to know Your blood. It's for Your beautiful name. Amen." After that, He passed the cup and said, "This is the blood of the new covenant." The Scriptures say that when He had finished this, they sang a hymn and went into the night. So we will do the same tonight. We're going to sing an old Presbyterian hymn, "I Boast No More." Would you stand with me as we sing?