

# These Holy Mysteries - Eucharist, 1 of 2, Sacred Meal

by Michael Flowers

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*Michael Flowers explores the significance of the Eucharist as a sacred meal and its deep roots in biblical sacrifice and reconciliation.*

**Duration:** 29:25

**Scripture:** Mark 2:5, John 1:29

**Topics:** "Eucharist"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the significance of the Eucharist in the New Covenant. They emphasize the connection between the blood and water that flowed from Jesus' side and the sacrifice of the high priest in the Old Testament. The speaker also references Exodus 12, highlighting how the meal of the Passover lamb brought God's people together and formed their identity. They discuss the temptation of Adam and Eve and how it led to a breaking of communion with God, drawing a parallel to our attraction to junk food and worldly desires.

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## Transcript

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart and the thoughts of all of our heart, may we hear your word, your living word, Lord Spirit. Your words are spirit and are life. And so, send your word to bring healing to us.

Deep within, your word brings healing. It delivers us from all destruction, David says. So do that today.

In the undoing of all that is wrong and disease and disorder, Jesus Christ our life of bread. Some powerful scriptures this morning, eh? Yeah. We're going to embark upon probably a couple weeks trying to get our hearts around what we call the Eucharist.

Something we do every day of the week, actually. We offer the Eucharist Monday through Friday, inching our way there. But the reason that we do that is because of these scriptures today.

So we all like to eat, right? We get hungry. Are we hungry for the bread of heaven? Are we hungry for Jesus? We have to be hungry. And so, if you look at the title there, there's a little subtitle there, the Eucharist, These Holy Mysteries.

You know where that comes from? That phrase, These Holy Mysteries? It's in the sending that we normally don't do. Okay, so we're going to do a different sending today, so don't let that throw you off. But first, you get fed up on your spot.

And that's more of a Western sacrament. And in the prayer book, they try to play both East and West, which I like that. Because we're right in the middle of East and West, and we're reading with both lungs.

We receive both, you know. And we pray for the communion of all of us. And so, in the second sending, it's more of the Eastern variety.

The Eastern Church calls, they use the word sacrament, but they typically call the sacraments Mysterions. And so, rather than saying sacrament in that second sending, This is going to be the first probably of two talks on the Eucharist. The type of the Eucharist.

Proclaiming and prophesying. Jesus said, This is my blood. The New Covenant.

He calls his blood. Now, the New Covenant Scriptures are the New Covenant Scriptures. But those letters are not the New Covenant.

Jesus is the New Covenant. Right? Amen? There is a difference. Yeah.

Amen. And that's not always obvious. So, I just feel like we just need to clarify that all the time.

Thank you. The Sacrifice. Yeah.

And so, we're going to try to cover three headings, and probably we'll get through these today. I have more notes. I'm just going to stop at a certain point, and it's going to be abrupt.

Come back! Come back next to me. So, we're going to look at the New Covenant. We're going to look at the New Covenant.

We're going to look at it as Sacrifice. Sacrifice. I'm talking to you, Crystal, straight out of the Scripture.

Let's consider real. You know, right in the first chapters of Genesis, from the very beginning of creation, we are given a picture of God. Created in the image and likeness of God, man and woman, are given dominion over creation.

As stewards of creation. As stewards, they are led to tend to the gifts of the garden. The garden is in all of its treasures.

It's full of its presence. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. As Isaiah saw in the presence of the Lord.

Human flourishing was in the mind of God. A light and unbroken communion with God, taking care of the good gifts. And then he said this.

You may need of all the trees of the garden, except for one. Oh no. What do we fixate on? We don't fixate on all the trees of the garden and all of the human flourishing that the Father is offering us.

For some reason, we fixate on that one thing that he says was a prohibition. God seems to be withholding something. He doesn't really care about it.

He knows that reality will become real. So the symbol of the serpent, later interpreted as Satan by Paul and Romans, began to reason, to draw away from God and his set boundary. And ever since this internal break in communion, we so junk, right? Everybody likes junk food.

Why? Because it tastes good. It's full of fat, salt, and sugar. And so, sensual.

Attracted to the senses. Well, it's a bad meal that derails the human. Now, this is all deeply metaphorical.

And it's meant to be because it's meant to represent the core of your being. And so we fast forward through to the calling of Abraham and the forming of a holy people. Why? To deal with the problem of sin.

To deal with the problem of junk food. And so the exile into Egypt and the events leading to their exodus, their deliverance, their Passover, out of Egyptian bondage, begins to shape them. He begins to shape them according to a sacred meal.

We read it this morning in Exodus 12. He begins to shape their lives around a ritual, a liturgy, and a meal. Sound familiar? What we do every day, basically.

Exodus 12, today's reading, is now connecting the dots. Forming a people around how to deal. Now, that would be a long, arduous journey.

A lot of ups and downs and many exiles. It seems like it's really, really... Until the dawning of Jesus, that voice crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way. Yeah, here it comes.

And this meal would bring God's people together. It would provide the foundation for their people. It would be a sacred narrative and a ritual to pass from one generation to the next.

And here we are talking about it. The head of the household was to perform a priestly ritual. Selecting the offering of a lamb.

A sacrifice of blood. The lamb's blood would be drained, sprinkled on the doorpost. The flesh would be described in a very particular way.

And get this, the Passover would not be complete by merely sacrificing. The Passover was complete. Jesus died for our sins.

But there's more to that. Unless you eat the lamb, you will have no life. Isaiah, fast forwarding again.

Jeremiah, the prophets see a new meal taking place on God's holy mountain. A feast with choice wines and the finest of meats. Isaiah talks about seeing something in the Spirit, prophetically.

And then we fast forward to Jesus. The one who spoke the world into existence in the beginning. It's there in that first chapter of Genesis.

The Father and the Spirit making creation. This divine Logos is the Greek word. It's the ultimate universe.

The eternal word takes on a human body to share our human nature. To live and die as one of us. To reconcile us.

He engages in table fellowship. He was trying to get ahead in the echelon and hierarchy of the temple. But he's got everything wrong.

What's he doing? Out of plants and ethnos and trouble. He brings his people back together. For what? A sacred meal.

A sacred meal. Sacrifice. I'm going to point to it.

The thing of sacrifice involves the elements of temple, priesthood. The sacrificial offerings themselves. There's a lot more, but just think about those.

The word sacrifice seems foreign, really, to our modern sensibility. Sacrifice was understood as taking some aspect of creation and returning it back to God. As a gift that was created by God.

And offering it back to God. Now God doesn't need our sacrifice. He says it about himself.

He needs nothing. And the result of the act is we return the one true God through these acts of worship. And so, elements like adore, to adore.

Adoratio is the Latin. Adora, which means mount to mount. That means to adore in Latin.

Mount to mount. Right? And just imagine the breath of God being blown into you when you cry out his name. Face to face, mount to mount.

Remember to breathe upon after the resurrection. He's reenacting Genesis creation. That's what we receive when we adore God.

And it's all for the purpose of reconciliation. Cilia, the Greek word, means eyelash. Cilia, right? Eyelash to eyelash.

To reconcile my eyelash to God's eyelash. We're once again being reconciled to face. We're no longer doing this, right? But we're turning.

That's how close we are now. We're restored eyelash to eyelash. We're reconciled.

The big deal is being reconciled. And out of that we can direct. Being lined up in divine alignment.

Like the word orthodoxy, right? It doesn't just mean right theology. Orthodoxy means right praise. Doxa, glory.

Orthodoxy, right praise. But what's the big deal? Because if we're not formed in orthodoxy, the result is idolatry. Because we're made to worship and we'll worship.

That's not the question, whether you'll worship or not. You will. And it's very, very, very... It's just so easy.

Because we can think about idolatry as some sort of ancient no-no. It's a very subtle thing. And we have to say, search me on God again.

On a regular basis. Get rid of our idols. The reason why we give attention to some nations and not to others.

Loyalty. We buddy up with them. So this is the kind of national idolatry.

But it's very subtle. It goes right down to the individual. And we really do have to say, search me.

And try me. And see if there's any whippy way of me. Because, Lord, I want to be eyelash to eyelash.

You know? I want to feel the breath of God blowing in me. As I adore him and as I am reconciled to him. That's what this altar is all about.

That's where it's taken to adoration and reconciliation. And so Jesus is walking around fully human and fully divine. And he's in the midst of a situation where the temple has really gone.

The priesthood. And there's not right alignment in Israel. In the first century.

We see that in the way. And there's this figure called John the Baptist. Who was to introduce Jesus to the world.

Now John was out in the wilderness. Performing priestly functions because the temple had gone wrong. You see, John is the son of Zechariah the priest.

And Elizabeth becomes a priestly family. That means that John was slated to be a priest. And so John is a priest.

But he's not going in the temple. Because there was a prophecy in the prophet. Saying that in Ezekiel where the glory of God had departed from it.

And when Jesus is presented in the temple. The glory of God reappears. This is the glory of God.

That John talks about. And so John is out baptizing. Like what people would do in the temple.

They would go and they would take ritual baths. Just baptizing. And so from going to the temple.

People would go to the temple. To have their sins forgiven. And John was doing the same thing.

When the people came to the temple. They would go through a mikvah or a bathing ritual. John was doing the same.

And then when Jesus comes on the scene. He looks. Who is the new sacrifice.

Who is the new Exodus. And he's getting ready to enact the new Exodus. Because he is the new king.

Baptized in the muddy waters. People would go to the temple to have their sins forgiven. Right? Jesus says your sins are forgiven.

And hey that got you in trouble. And he says well just so you know. That the Son of Man has authority to forgive sins.

Rise up and walk. Oh yeah. This is the new temple.

This is the new priesthood. He came to the temple to be instructed by the law. Scribes were there.

Well Jesus teaches and says that. You have heard it said that I say. He's the new rabbi.

Amen. In Matthew's gospel. At the Lord's Supper.

He's celebrating a meal indeed. But as Jesus gives us the words of institution. Paul replicates this morning.

He does something different to the Passover words of institution. Taking the Passover bread. He says this is my.

He's saying that I am the lamb. Who takes away the sin of the world. This is my body.

And this is before the crucifixion. And so the disciples. The twelve disciples there had no idea what he was saying.

They had no idea. And then taking the third cup. Which would be that cup.

That was lifted up at that time. This is the chalice of my blood. This is the blood of the new and eternal covenant.

Which is poured out for you. Once poured out in the temple. Now it's poured out for the life of the world.

For the whole world. In the temple when the animals would be slain. The priest would catch the blood of the animal in a bowl or cup.

And only the priest would do that. And this is the chalice of my blood. This is the cup of the new covenant.

Which is shed for you. Whenever you do this. Do this.

In memory. Now when he's doing all of this. He's looking forward to the next day.

Because that's Maundy Thursday. And he's thinking about Good Friday. And he's getting prophetic enactment of what will take place.

On Calvary. Not in the temple. Not right in the city gates of Jerusalem.

But outside the camp. Dying on cross is criminal. In great shame.

He is initiating them. As priests of a new sacrifice. To be fulfilled on Good Friday.

The crucifixion as sacrifice. To crucify Jesus. Any person watching the crucifixion that day.

Would have never. Not even the 12. They say he's becoming sin.

He's taking on the sin of the world. He's spilling the weight of sin on him. It wouldn't occur to them.

This is God's land. Here on the cross is shame. It's taking away.

At this time. Foolishness to the Greeks. And assembled.

Jesus gives the interpretive key to the moment. To the scapegoat. Upon whom the sins of the world.

Outside the camp. Where the wrath of God was falling. The blood from his side.

What do we see? The blood of the water. We see the high priest. Sprinkling blood on the people.

For the whole world. Because Ezekiel's prophecy. Again.

Ezekiel. He was a temple priest. Said the glory of Yahweh.

Moved away. From the temple. But one day the glory would return.

From the temple water. Ezekiel says. Will flow forth from the side.

Of the temple. To provide life. And this is the life giving water.

That is pouring from the side. For the life of the world. So.

I'm going to stop there. And we'll take this up next week. And we'll begin again.

In the midst of the sacrifice. This is a beautiful image. Knowing that this painful.

This horrendous act. Actually is grounded in life. How.

Life and hope and faith. And reconciliation. Look upon the cross.

In the name of the father and the son.

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