

Working outline, as of Friday, subject to change.

- I. Song 869, We're Marching to Zion
- II. Family Matters / Prayer, Chuck Edmonds
- III. Song Insert, All Things are Ready

#### IV. Bread & Wine

##### A. Bread

1. We take it for granted don't we.
  - a) "Honey, go to the store and get me a loaf of bread."
  - b) .99, clean, already cut, perfect for sandwiches or toasting.
  - c) Keeps well at room temperature.
  - d) No effort on our part.
2. But this is now, and we want to turn the clock back 2000 years. Really we don't need to turn it back that far, for bread was the same for thousands of years until the technological revolutions of the past 150-200 years.
3. Bread was the chief food of Israel. Originally it was made from barley flour mixed with broad beans, lentils, or other grains.
  - a) Only later when Israel became more wealthy did wheat enter the picture.
  - b) You did not just go to the store to buy bread. Rather you began with the grains, whole grains, generally grains that you grew in your field.
  - c) You ground grain using two flat stones, and the resulting flour was quite inconsistent, and if you were not careful, had a little ground rock in it too. The flour was then mixed with a little olive oil, and possibly salt, and cooked on a flat griddle or in clay ovens.
  - d) The final loaves were about 1/2" thick and as large as 20" in diameter.
  - e) Most women would grind grain and cook bread every morning and every evening, as the bread did not keep for long.
  - f) These loaves are usually pretty tough, which makes them good not only as an accompaniment with other foods, but also to serve as spoon, fork, napkin, and food wrap.
  - g) Bread was never cut – always broken, pulled apart.
4. If there was no time to mix and cook the grain, the grain was roasted whole, mixed with a little oil, and eaten.
5. When a family sat down for its meal, the head of the house would pickup a loaf and pronounce the blessing, "Blessed be the Lord, Our God, the King of the universe, who has caused bread to spring out of the earth." The guests would respond with, "Amen." The bread was then broken, and pieces passed to the guests. They guests waited for the host to eat first, then they all ate..

##### B. Wine. Now there is something many of us don't take for granted.

1. If you were not raised in a conservative US Christian family, you may not understand some of what I am about to say.
2. I was raised with the thought that wine, and all alcohol, is the drink of the Devil.

- a) We always wished that Jesus had made wine into water, instead of ruining perfectly good water by making it into wine.
- b) Excess and abuse are of Satan, drunkenness is always condemned, just like excessive use of food produces gluttony, excesses sexually produces adultery and licentiousness, and excessive materialism leads to greed. All are condemned and those who live in them will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- 3. But, wine is a symbol of happiness, celebration, fertility, joy, gladness, blessing, and well being.
  - a) God is described as the vine dresser, as the one who owns and plants a vineyard.
  - b) God's people have frequently been called the vine or the vineyard of God. When the vine did not produce fruit, it was good for nothing except to be burned in judgment. We are to be juicy wine producing grapes.
- 4. Now it is fair to say that wine in the first century was somewhat different from wine today.
  - a) The first is that they did not have the preservatives or the controls in the first century. Wine could easily ferment from being drinkable to being vinegar. Have any of you taken communion and it only took sip for you to know that the grape juice must not have been refrigerated since last week.
  - b) Table wine was normally mixed with water was to make the wine last longer and to "water down" its bad taste.
- 5. But good wine was highly valued, and was seen as a substantial blessing from God. The good wine was saved for the special religious feasts, wedding feasts, and such special occasions.
- 6. Therefore at the dinner table, the host would lift his glass and say, "Blessed be the Lord, Our God, the King of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine." To which those at the table respond, "Amen."
- C. By the way, Welch's Grape Juice was invented in 1869 by Dr. Thomas Welch, in Vineland, NJ. Vineland was a community which outlawed the consumption of alcoholic beverages, creating problems for the churches. Welch was a teetotaling Methodist and a communion steward for his church. When he got into the grape business, it was a religious thing. He read of the work of Louis Pasteur with milk and applied the principles to grapes, producing "Dr. Welch's Unfermented Wine." The Methodist church and then the whole temperance movement took his creation and ran with it. Prior to his process to pasteurize grape juice, wine was the standard in Churches across the world, and still is.
- D. So Bread and wine are the symbols of the good life, of God's blessings to man.

V. Reading: Jeremy Brown

- A. (Eccl 9:7 NRSV) *Go, eat your bread with enjoyment, and drink your wine with a merry heart; for God has long ago approved what you do.*
- B. (Isa 55:1-2 NRSV) *Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. <sup>2</sup> Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.*
- C. (Deu 7:12-13 NRSV) *If you heed these ordinances, by diligently observing them, the LORD your God will maintain with you the covenant loyalty that he swore to your ancestors; <sup>13</sup> he will love you, bless you, and multiply you; he will bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the issue of your flock, in the land that he swore to your ancestors to give you.*

## VI. Song 725: Let us Break Bread Together

## VII. Eating Unto the Lord

- A. Bread and wine were used as a holy offering to God.
  1. Usually when I think of an offering, I think of an animal.
  2. But along with an animal, there were grain and drink offerings.
    - a) We read about these first in Exodus 29 with the ordination of the priests. There we see the sacrifice of a lamb, accompanied with “*one tenth of a measure of choice flour mixed with one fourth of a hin of beaten oil and one fourth of a hin of wine for a drink offering.* A hin is a measure equal to 1.5 gallons.
    - b) After that we see numerous examples of grain offerings and drink offerings accompanying sacrifices at the altar. Some of these went to the priests as part of their support, some was burned and poured out, but some returned to the one making the sacrifice for his dinner.
- B. The book of Deuteronomy, describing the principle laws of Israel, says (Deut. 12:5-8) *But you shall seek the place that the LORD your God will choose out of all your tribes as his habitation to put his name there.* (I.e. the temple or tabernacle location) *You shall go there,<sup>6</sup> bringing there your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and your donations, your votive gifts, your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and flocks.<sup>7</sup> And you shall eat there in the presence of the LORD your God, you and your households together, rejoicing in all the undertakings in which the LORD your God has blessed you.*
  1. Steven did a sermon on this idea before Thanksgiving, so I will not repeat everything he said so well.
  2. Sacrifices were not just for God, they were to be eaten by the donor.
    - a) A family would bring their sacrifice to the altar, a sacrifice of animal, grain, and wine.
    - b) The priest would butcher the animal, and they would save some of the sacrifice for the priests and their families, burn some to God, and return the balance to the sacrificing family.
    - c) That family would then throw a party, a feast, a great meal, and invite others to share in that meal with them.
    - d) They were to *rejoice in all the undertakings in which the Lord you God has blessed you.*
  3. That’s why the three great celebrations of the Jews were called *Feasts.*
    - a) Some of us have trouble with this.
    - b) We read of *solemn assemblies* and think that means *long faced and silent.* *Solemn* really means *Holy, unto the Lord.*
    - c) You don’t have to be long faced and quiet to be God’s person.
    - d) Deuteronomy 16 says, (Deu 16:13-15 NRSV) *You shall keep the festival of booths for seven days, when you have gathered in the produce from your threshing floor and your wine press.*

(This is at the end of the harvest).<sup>14</sup> *Rejoice during your festival, you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female slaves, as well as the Levites, the strangers, the orphans, and the widows (Everybody!) resident in your towns.*<sup>15</sup> *Seven days you shall keep the festival for the LORD your God at the place that the LORD will choose; for the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all your undertakings, and you shall surely celebrate.*

- C. Sometimes Christians have great difficulty aligning what we do here, in the sanctuary (the holy place), with what we do across the parking lot in the Fellowship Hall (the unholy place?).
1. We try to keep the *spiritual* and the *secular* separated, or maybe I should say the *solemn* and the *celebrative* separated.
  2. The fellowship Hall for us is the place of laughing, joking, and eating.
  3. This is the building for somber assemblies.
  4. Bah, Humbug.
  5. God told his people to eat unto the Lord, to eat their own sacrifice rejoicing, with joy, in celebration, and he called it a festival, a festive joyous time.
  6. Maybe this relates to what Jesus said about our whole lives being spiritual worship and a living sacrifice. Stop trying to make one moment sacred and another secular – it is all sacred.
  7. I like the way the writer of Chronicles describes the assembly at the end of 1 Chronicles. David is about to die and Solomon is being made King in a deeply religious ceremony. The story says, (2 Chron. 29) <sup>21</sup> *On the next day they offered sacrifices and burnt offerings to the LORD, a thousand bulls, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their libations, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel;* <sup>22</sup> *and they ate and drank before the LORD on that day with great joy.* Can you imagine a barbecue/worship which required 3000 animals to feed the worshippers.
- D. Throw a party in honor of God, and eat and drink with great joy before the Lord, in the presence of the Lord. Celebrate the goodness of God.

VIII. Song 729, Come, Ye Thankful People Come

IX. Financial Offering

X. Song 798, The Lord's Prayer

## XI. Passover

- A. While Israel was a loosely organized ethnic group enslaved in Egypt, God freed them using a series of plagues. Everyone has heard of The Exodus. The last of the plagues, the death of the first born, was accompanied with a dinner, the Passover meal, when God passed over the homes of his people but would enter the homes of the Egyptians and kill the firstborn of man and animals. Blood on the doorpost was a sign of God's ownership.
- B. Every year, the Israelites reenacted that feast and celebrated their freedom in the Passover Seder meal.
1. They were to eat the very same foods that the original Israelites ate.
  2. to gather on the same day of the year, at the same hour of the day as the original Israelites.
  3. to eat in family units, with extended families, guests, and slaves so that an entire lamb could be eaten at one sitting.
  4. They were to eat bread that was hastily and freshly made, unleavened bread.
  5. They were to dress the same way as their ancestors, ready to travel, staff in their hand.
  6. They were to eat in a hurry, standing up, ready to go.
  7. And the youngest child was to ask the question of the patriarch of the family, "Why are we doing this?"
  8. Then the patriarch would tell the story again of how God had brought us, not them but us, out of Egypt.
  9. Through the centuries this feast has evolved among the Jewish people to include setting an empty chair in anticipation of Elijah coming to usher in the Messiah.
- C. Scriptures use Passover to illustrate many spiritual ideas, ideas which continue in the Lord's Supper today.
1. Covenant:
    - a) God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and chose them to be his own people.
    - b) The Israelites, in preparing that Passover meal and putting the blood of the sacrificial animal on their doors were covenanting with God, obeying him with their actions.
    - c) Jesus would talk about the wine at his Passover Seder as being the blood of his covenant with us.
  2. Marriage:
    - a) Israel saw God as the groom and themselves as his bride.
    - b) Passover was the time when God and Israel became engaged, only to be married at Sinai.
  3. Freedom
    - a) Passover was Independence Day.
    - b) Israel celebrated it as the day God brought them out of Egypt,

4. New Birth
  - a) It was spring.
  - b) Plants were beginning to bud. Days were getting longer. It was lambing time for the flocks.
  - c) New life was in the air, a time for new beginnings.
5. Remembrance
  - a) Why are we doing this?
  - b) When we have a perfectly good worship service going, why to we stop and pass some trays of cracker and juice around.
  - c) We are reminded that not all know the story, and those who do need reminding.
6. Thanksgiving
  - a) Always giving thanks. We have received so many blessings, how could we not stop and say *thank you*, and offer our sacrifices to God as an expression of appreciation.
7. Look to the future:
  - a) When they disobeyed and were taken over by other powers, they looked every Passover for God to raise up another Moses to free them again.
  - b) Elijah was prophesied to return and usher in the age of the Messiah.
  - c) They had that empty chair in longing that the new age was about to dawn.
- D. And so every Spring the people of Israel celebrated with a week long feast, remembering what God had done and renewing their commitment to be his people.

XII. Song 390: Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

XIII. Eating with Jesus

- A. Luke tells us about the enemies of Jesus. They criticized Jesus, calling him "*a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!*" because he was known for his meals and his table fellowship with outcasts. (Luke 7:33-34 NRSV)
- B. John proclaims Jesus' first miracle was at none other than a wedding banquet. And when the wine ran out, Jesus turned the ceremonial Jewish holy water into the finest drinking wine of the event.
- C. Wedding banquets and other great dinners would later become the topic of several parables of Jesus.
  1. He talked about how those who should have been invited, and were invited, failed to show up, so the host had to look elsewhere for guests for his table.
  2. He talked of being prepared, because we don't know when the bridegroom would show up, and we would sure hate to miss the party.
  3. Of course the imagery of God as the Groom and his people as the bride is as old as Israel.
- D. Jesus enjoyed eating with people.
  1. There were the 5000 on the mountaintop in the desert and the 4000 on another occasion.
  2. He prepared fish for his disciples by the Sea of Galilee.
  3. He and his disciples playfully rubbed grain between their hands as they walked through the fields on the Sabbath.
  4. Ate with tax collectors and sinners.
  5. When he raised a little girl from the dead, he was concerned that she have something to eat, and when he, himself was raised from the dead, he asked his disciples, "Do you have anything to eat?"
  6. It was at a dinner party at a Pharisee's house that a women barged in and washed his feet, causing quite a stir.
  7. When he found little Zacchaeus, he invited himself home with him for a meal, and Zacchaeus invited all his sinful friends to come eat with Jesus.
  8. Jesus told a story about a young men who left home, ran out of money, and ended up eating with pigs. He remembered that his father had *bread to spare*, so he returned home seeking employment. But his father welcomed him with a great banquet instead.
- E. He described his teaching as new wine which the status quo could not contain.
- F. He described himself as the bread of life.
  1. (John 6:48-58 NRSV) *I am the bread of life.*<sup>49</sup> *Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.*<sup>50</sup> *This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.*<sup>51</sup> *I*

*am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."* <sup>52</sup> *The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"* <sup>53</sup> *So Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; <sup>55</sup> for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup> Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. <sup>57</sup> Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever."*

XIV. Song 200: Jesus Thou Joy of Loving Hearts

XV. Children's Moment

- A. At this point our Children's Minister gathered the children to the front and told them the story of the Last Supper. This was about a 5 minute segment for children, which of course was observed by all.

XVI. Song 590: Jesus is All the World to Me

XVII. Celebrating Jesus

- A. When the early church came together, one thing was often in common. They ate.
1. (Acts 2:42-47 NRSV) *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup> Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All who believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup> they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.*
  2. At Traos the church met on the first day of the week to break bread, that is to eat together, and Paul joined them.
  3. One of the problems was abuses with the Lord's Supper.
    - a) Some treated it as an indulgence which allowed them to sin all week and be forgiven by eating the bread and drinking the wine.
    - b) Some used it divisively to maintain class distinctions and to be gluttons and drunkards.
  4. It was a hungry Peter who had a vision of unclean foods, a vision which led him to understand that even Gentiles could be saved.
  5. Peter would later tell Cornelius that he ate and drank with Jesus after his resurrection as a proof of his physical life.
  6. It was on a storm tossed ship that Paul took bread and broke it with his fellow captives to give them hope for rescue.
  7. And one of the great controversies of the early church was over who one could eat with and who to avoid, and what foods were kosher and what foods should be avoided.
- B. Great banquet to come.
1. Israel's vision of the age to come was a great banquet on Mt. Zion with unlimited food and wine.
    - a) Jesus played on this thought when he described the inclusion of non Jews into the Kingdom in this way: (Mat 8:11-12 NRSV) *"Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. <sup>11</sup> I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, <sup>12</sup> while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*
  2. Jesus' story of the prodigal leaves a similar impression of the banquet which lies ahead for the repentant children of God.
  3. He told his disciples, (Luke 22:28-30 NRSV) *"You are those who have stood by me in my trials; <sup>29</sup> and I confer on you, just as my*

*Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, <sup>30</sup> so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.*

4. Jesus told a story of the Rich Man and the beggar Lazarus, who just wanted to eat crumbs from the rich man's table. In the judgment, the tables were turned, and it was the now parched rich man who had to watch at his beggar friend eat at Abraham's table.
  5. Revelation promises that the tree of life, from which Adam and Eve were banished, now is in the paradise of God and awaits all who conquer.
  6. And we are invited to the climax of history, the marriage feast of the lamb, where we will gather as his bride to live eternally with him.
- C. What a rich heritage we have in this little loaf of bread and jug of grape juice.
1. They have seen all of man's history.
  2. They have seen the mighty acts of God in miracles, kings, festivals, healings, resurrections, conversions.
  3. They remind us that God so loved the world that he gave his only son to bring us salvation.
  4. And every time we eat together we should remember The greater sphere of God's eternal kingdom.
- D. Let me now explain the conclusion of our service.
1. We have printed *Come, Share the Lord* on the back of your song insert.
  2. In your order of service is a responsive reading. Get both of these please.
  3. As we sing *Come, Share the Lord*, I want you to get with your family, or friends, or with some of our guests for this morning, and move to one of the 7 tables set up around the building.
  4. When the song is completed, Ed Pennington will lead us in the responsive prayer.
  5. Then I invite you to serve one another and celebrate Jesus with your friends around the table. Share with one another something good that God has done for you.
  6. If mobility prevents you from moving to a table, just stay seated. No one has been assigned to serve you, but we have a lot of observant servants who will notice you and bring communion to you.
  7. There is no time limit on this meal and there will be no whistle, prayer, or song to tell you to stop. You are free to celebrate Jesus with one another until David turns out the lights.
  8. Come, Share the Lord

XVIII.Song 364: Come share the Lord.

XIX. Responsive prayer (Ed Pennington)

We praise you Lord God, Ruler of the universe, **who has brought forth bread from the earth.**

We praise you Lord God, Ruler of the universe, **creator of the fruit of the vine.**  
We praise you Lord God, Ruler of the universe, **for choosing us as your people and saving us from our sin.**

We praise you Lord God, Ruler of the universe, **for Jesus Christ, our sacrifice, Savior, and Lord.**

We praise you Lord God, Ruler of the universe, **for your constant care and abiding love.**

Fill our hearts with love for one another **as we long for that great feast at your eternal table.**

In the powerful name of Jesus we pray, **Amen.**