

GATHERED AROUND HIS TABLE

John 13:21-30

Introduction: Without a doubt the best known representation of the Last Supper is Leonardo da Vinci's painting, *The Last Supper*. It represents the moment that Jesus said, "One of you will betray me. It shows the effect of that word "betray" upon the 12 men most closely associated with Jesus during his life and ministry.

The scene is the night of the Passover supper. In a small upper room in Jerusalem. Surrounded by his 12 disciples, Jesus is breaking the bread of their farewell meal. Love, terror, grief, and amazement find expression in the question, "Lord, is it I?"

The picture was painted on the wall of a monastery dining room in Milan, Italy. Seated at their meal, the brothers of the monastery could look upon the table of Christ as if He were their guest. It is said to be an exact copy of the table, linen, and dishes used by the monks.

The original is nearly lost to us. It was painted in oil, and has suffered serious injury from the dampness of the plastered walls. Not many generations had passed before it began to fade. In the 17th century a door was cut into it. Later Napoleon's army used the hall for a military camp and the soldiers amused themselves by throwing rocks and bricks at the painting. At one time a French king bargained for its removal to France. They tried, but the plaster began to crumble and the work was stopped. Many copies of the masterpiece have been made by Leonardo da Vinci's pupils.

Let us now read the passage of Scripture on which this famous painting is based.

- Gathered around the table with the Savior were 12 men. Each had his particular need, his personal character, and his own thoughts.

- Gathered around this table today are all of us. Each of us has our particular need, our personal character, and our own thoughts. Some of the same things seen at the first table are seen around this one. With whom would you identify? **Text: John 13:21 - 30**

I. THOSE TO WHOM IT MEANS NOTHING

1. To Judas Iscariot the Last Supper with the Lord meant nothing. He did not believe in Jesus and had even decided to betray him.

- But notice..As Jesus made appeal after appeal to Judas, the others were apparently not aware of what was going on. To them Judas had given the appearance of loyalty and love. Only Jesus knew exactly how he felt.

- There may be some gathered around our table today, who, like Judas are not believers and this means nothing to you. **Only you and the Lord know how you feel.**

II. THOSE FOR WHOM IT MEANS EXAMINATION

1. Did you notice that every disciple was so unsure of his own commitment that every one of them had to ask, "**Lord, is it I?**"
 - Peter tried to find out who would betray the Savior but had to examine his own loyalty.
 - Paul reminds us in 1 Cor. 11:28 that each of us ought to examine ourself before partaking of the meal. **It is a time for each of us to examine our own self.**

III. THOSE TO WHOM IT MEANS LOVE

1. The Gospel of John identifies one disciple as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." (himself)
 - Jesus loved all the disciples but there was a special bond between Jesus and John.
 - There could be no question of John's love for Jesus, yet he, too, said, "**Lord, is it I?**"
2. John's kind of love, support and affirmation of Jesus is the kind of total commitment necessary for Christ and his church today. **What kind of love do you have?**

IV. THOSE TO WHOM IT MEANS LOYALTY

1. Three disciples are mentioned by name. There were 9 others. What of them? They were persons who served with loyalty, faithfulness, and obedience. For the most part, after their choice by Jesus, their names drop out of the Gospel record.
 - Does this mean they dropped out? **NO INDEED..In every advance for Christianity they were there. Unsung heroes perhaps, but they were there.**
2. In any sport, football, basketball, baseball, etc..people know the names of the quarterback, the pitcher, the center, etc...but not of those linemen, running backs, forwards outfielders, etc...Everyone is essential to any team to any victory. **The church must have these kind of people..Are you one of them?**

V. THOSE TO WHOM IT MEANS FORGIVENESS

1. Any meditation on the Lord's Supper has to center on Jesus Christ.
 - For Jesus, the supper meant forgiveness. He gave his life so we can be forgiven of our sins and receive new life.
2. The elements of the supper are visual reminders, **Today we have come with our sins. We need forgiveness, we need someone who can feel with us. With which do you identify? No meaning - examination - love - loyalty - forgiveness?**

3. While reviving the memories of His Family, this Supper has also been used by Christ **to draw the unsaved to Himself.**

CONCLUSION

1. It is our privilege and duty to observe this blessed Supper often. It is our **wake up call.** It calls our hearts up to heaven. It is the prelude to that great marriage supper of our Lord. It is the glorious celebration of being redeemed. Yet, **it also reminds us of Christ.**
2. **"And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me.' After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, 'This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come..." (1 Cor. 11:24-26)**
3. Let us now partake of this Supper which the Lord left for us.