

How Does God Change the World?

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Text: Luke 22:14-30 (NIV)

14 When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. 15 He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 Then he took a loaf of 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." 20 And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. 21 But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. 22 For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!" 23 Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.

24 A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. 25 But he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. 26 But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. 27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

28 "You are those who have stood by me in my trials; 29 and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, 30 so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Theme: The Bible's answer to "How does God change the world?" is the church.

David Fitch writes in his book, *Faithful Presence* ...

The Bible's answer to this question is the church. God's plan is to become present to the world in and through people, and then invite the world to join with [God]. How does this happen? In the simplest of terms, a group of people gather and become present to God. In our life together, we recognize God in the presence of Jesus Christ through disciplines in which Jesus has promised, "I am in your midst." By knowing God's presence in Christ in this way, we are then able to recognize Christ's presence in the world. We participate in Christ's work in the world, and Christ's presence becomes visible. The world then sees God's presence among us and through us and joins in with God. And the world is changed. This, I contend, is faithful presence. This is the church. And this is how God has chosen to change the world.

How does the church be the church? One way is through rehearsing – or rather retelling through our actions and our lives – the gospel each time we gather around the Lord's Table. Those who gathered first, and who gather now – are there:

✓Only because Jesus invited them (the Master). Come because He calls you.

✓Even though they didn't get it (the mystery). Belong because you want to believe.

✓Even though they clearly hadn't earned the right by the character (the meanness!) Receive it because you need it.

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