

TUESDAY, APRIL 11

Mark 14:22-25

Pastor Sam

At Crossway, we have communion at least once a month during Sunday services. It's an important part of our worship, and for many of us, it's a meaningful and emotional time. But where does communion come from? Why do we do it at church? What does it mean?

In Mark 14, we read about what is sometimes called the Last Supper. Jesus and his disciples are together for one last meal before his betrayal and crucifixion. It's not just any meal, it's Passover. Passover and the celebrations around it were meant to help the Israelites remember the salvation of God from the terrifying tenth plague against Egypt. Central to the meal were unleavened bread, lamb (the Passover offering), and cups of wine.

As Jesus and his disciples are eating, Jesus takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it, and then gives it to his disciples. Up to this point, Jesus hasn't done anything different from the countless number of Passover celebrations before theirs. However, what Jesus does next is completely different. He says, "Take; this is my body." He then takes the cup of wine, gives thanks, and gives it to them saying, "This is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."

Some believe that the bread and the wine became the actual body and blood of Jesus that night. The bread retained the appearance, feel, and taste of bread, but the substance, which is undetectable by our senses, changed and became the literal body of Jesus. Those who believe this say that this is still what happens today during communion.

I have a very hard time believing that Jesus was trying to say that

the bread had now become his actual body. That was probably the last thing on anyone's radar that night.

Jesus had used metaphors before. "I am the vine." "I am the door." "I am the good shephard." Here in Mark 14, Jesus is demonstrating that he is the fulfillment of all that the Passover meal represented. He would die on the cross so that we could be saved from our sins. He would be the sacrifice, and God would 'pass over' our sins. His blood would be poured out to open the way of salvation for us. Don't forget what Jesus says in verse 25: "Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." This would be the last time Jesus drinks wine here on earth with his disciples. But, Jesus wanted them to look forward to the day when they would join him in the kingdom of heaven for the ultimate celebration.

The Lord's Supper reminds us of two very important things: 1) the ultimate sacrifice of Christ, and 2) the ultimate celebration in heaven because of that sacrifice. Paul adds something very interesting to this. In 1 Corinthians 10:16, he says receiving the bread and the cup involves a "participation" with the body and the blood of Christ. What does that mean? Somehow, there is a powerful connection to Christ that takes place for us in communion. It is a spiritual thing that happens, and it happens by faith.

1) **Read** Mark 14:22-25 and reflect on Christ's words. What was Jesus trying to teach his disciples and us? What does Jesus' sacrifice mean for you today? What blessings and benefits have you received because of Christ?

2) **Pray:** Be thankful for Christ's work of forgiveness and salvation on the cross. Repent and ask for help in living a life of gratitude to God. Be specific in your prayer time today.

3) **Join** us on Good Friday for communion. Prayerfully prepare for that time of remembrance, celebration, and grace.