

**Turn in your Bibles to Matthew 26, verse 17.**

This morning we continue on in our march with Jesus to Calvary and the cross. We've called this sermon series “The March to Victory,” as we follow along with Jesus in His journey to the cross.

---

And as I say that to you, might I remind us all of something that's very basic: the purpose, the goal, the objective, the climax of the life of Jesus Christ was His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. Jesus came to this earth to die. Jesus said, “I came to give my life as a ransom for many.” That was the plan. It was not an accident. It was not a bad ending to a good beginning. Jesus came to die for the sins of the world.

Listen, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is the focal point of all of Scripture. The death of Jesus is not the end of the story, or the beginning of the story...IT IS THE STORY OF THE UNIVERSE. Everything begins and ends with Jesus. And we'll see that today as we go back in time, all the way to an Old Testament feast, and see how the sacrifice of animals (lambs) during an event called the Passover is a reminder of who Jesus is and why He came. Today we'll see “Lessons from Jesus and the Passover.”

---

**Matthew 26:17-25**

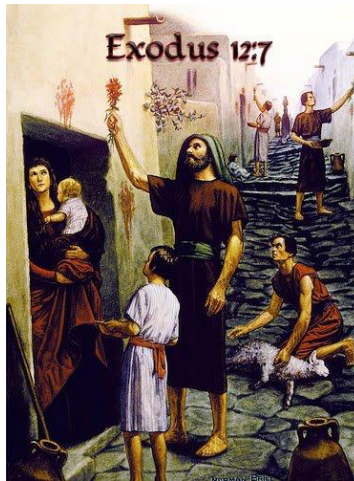
<sup>17</sup> Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?” <sup>18</sup> He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’” <sup>19</sup> And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover.

<sup>20</sup> When it was evening, he reclined at table with the twelve. <sup>21</sup> And as they were eating, he said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” <sup>22</sup> And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?” <sup>23</sup> He answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. <sup>24</sup> The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.” <sup>25</sup> Judas, who would betray him, answered, “Is it I, Rabbi?” He said to him, “You have said so.”

---

Let's set the scene. We've made it all the way to Thursday, the day before Jesus' death on the cross and Jesus is preparing to eat the last meal before His crucifixion with His disciples. This meal is called the Passover and as we'll see next week, as we share communion together, Jesus changes it to “The Lord's Supper.”

Now since we are not Jews, we need to spend a little time seeking to understand the Passover. The Passover was the event that changed the history of the Nation of Israel. They had been in bondage in Egypt for 400 years. They were slaves. But, a deliverer came, named Moses and after a series of 9 plagues with no success in having the Pharaoh release the nation to return to their homeland, one final plague was to be unleashed on Egypt. That final plague was the death of the first born in every home that didn't have blood on the doors...



That blood was the sign to the Angel of Death to “pass over” that home. And from that day until today, the Jews celebrate the “Passover” annually. Let me show you some of their festivals.



You'll see the left side of the chart the Feasts in the Fall: Tabernacles, Day of Atonement, Trumpets and then the right side of the chart, the Spring Feasts...and there in the month of Nisan, (the first month of the Jewish Calendar) and corresponds with our March and/or April and it is the month for the celebration of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. See how they are together... **Now look again at verse 17** and we'll see why.

**Matthew 26:17**

**17** Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?"

Again, the Feast of Unleavened Bread and The Passover were combined. The Feast of Unleavened Bread lasted one week, (7 days), from the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan until the 21<sup>st</sup> and the day before it the 14<sup>th</sup>, was the Passover. Again, the Passover was celebrated in commemoration of the sacrificial lamb whose blood was used to escape the judgment of God. And it was this symbol of a lamb that would foreshadow the ultimate Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ, whose blood would allow humankind to escape the judgment of God. And so, according to Exodus 12, the Passover was a meal that was held the night before the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Now I want to show you how they ate this meal. This is fascinating... This is called the Seder (SAY-der) plate:

# What's on the Seder Plate?

Although the history of the Seder goes back thousands of years, each item on the Seder Plate still has deep significance to our personal lives today.

## EGG

Reminds us to **mourn** that we can no longer offer the **Korban Chagigah** (Holiday sacrifice) since we no longer have the Temple. An egg is a sign of **mourning** because it is round, symbolizing the cycle of life from birth to death.

We yearn for God to **redeem us** from our present exile so that we will be able to serve God in the most optimal way.

## LETTUCE

A form of Marror. Lettuce is not always bitter, but it **can become hard and bitter** if left in the ground for too long before being harvested. This hardening process parallels the **transformation in attitude** that the Egyptians had toward the Jews: Just as lettuce starts out soft and ends up hard and bitter, so too, the Egyptians originally welcomed Jacob and the Jewish people to Egypt with open arms, but **later turned their backs on the Jewish people** and subjected them to backbreaking labor.

The lettuce reminds us to remain loyal and appreciative toward the people who help us. We should not be like the Egyptians and the lettuce, which are soft at first but later become hard and bitter.

## ROASTED BONE

Reminds us of the **Korban Pesach** (Paschal Lamb) that was eaten at the seder in the times of the Temple. Since we no longer have our Temple, we can't offer the Korban Pesach any more, and we don't eat this meat, either.

The Korban Pesach was **roasted** because roasted meat is considered something eaten only by **royals**; poor people are more likely to just boil their meat. The Korban Pesach reminds us to celebrate that God elevated us from a nation of slaves to a **holy nation of royalty**. We are not just regular people, we are **children of the King!**

## CHAROSET

A mixture of apples, cinnamon, nuts, and wine. Its appearance reminds us of the **bricks and mortar** the Jews used in Egypt.

We dip the bitter Marror into the Charoset to sweeten the bitterness of the Marror. This is a reminder that we can always find a **spark of goodness** and something to appreciate within every challenge we face in life. Every dark cloud has a silver lining.

## KARPAS

A vegetable like celery or a potato. We dip the Karpas into **saltwater** to remind us of the **salty tears** the Jews shed from the backbreaking labor in Egypt.

When God saw the Jews' tears and heard their cries, God's mercy was aroused and He brought the Jews out of Egypt. The salty tears therefore remind us of God's **tremendous mercy**, and the **power of prayer** to save us from even the most difficult of circumstances.

We dip the Karpas into saltwater

## HORSERADISH

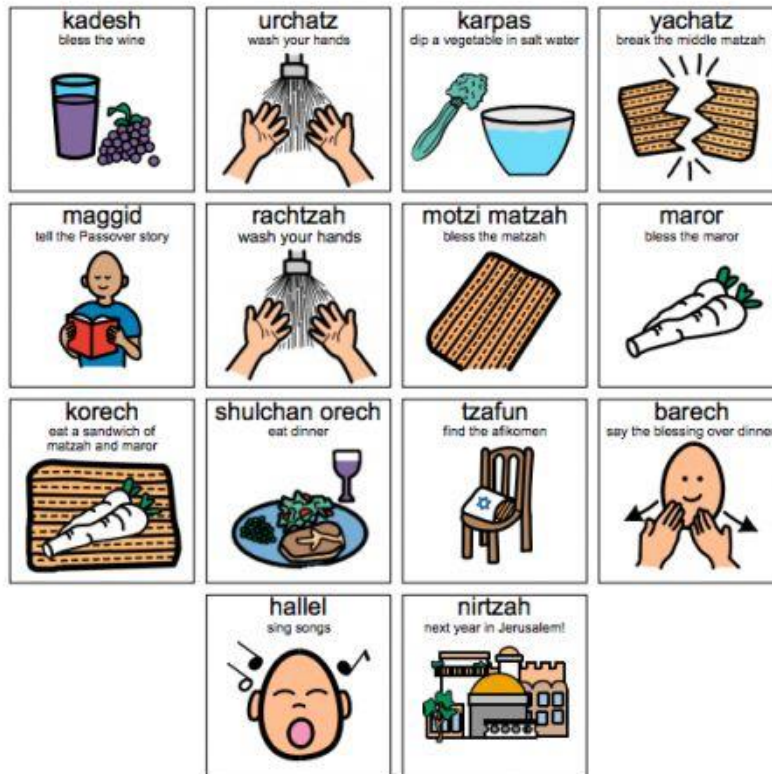
Reminds us of the **bitter enslavement** of our forefathers in Egypt. Many people eat **LETTUCE** (see above) for Marror instead of horseradish.



The **Roasted Bone**: represents the Passover Lamb. The **Char-Oh-Set** is a mixture of apples, cinnamon and nuts that represented the bricks and mortar the people had to make for the Egyptians. The **Car-Puz** was a piece of celery or parsley or even a potato that was used to dip into the **Bowl of Saltwater** to remind them of God's mercy in that when He saw their tears, He brought them out of Egypt. The **Horseradish or Bitter Lettuce** reminded them of the bitter enslavement in Egypt. The **Unleavened Bread** reminded them that they didn't take the time for the bread to rise and they had to get out of Egypt fast and bring none of the evil influence (symbolized by the leaven) from Egypt. And finally, the **EGG** was a reminder to them to mourn because they weren't able to offer sacrifices in the Temple.

And so it is...this entire meal was a celebration of God's provision to get them out of such a terrible situation of 400 years of slavery and bondage. Now, there is something else I want you to understand. There was a prescribed order in how they were to eat the meal. Take a look... Order of the Say-der.

## Order of the Seder



  
[www.jgateways.org](http://www.jgateways.org)  
 Created by Rebecca Redner  
 ©2011

There were 14 steps which started with a cup of wine, and then they washed their hands and then moved to the Car-Puz (dipping the celery or parsley into the salt water), then the breaking of bread and so forth... But, I want you to also notice that they don't actually eat the meal of the lamb until the third row, after they have dipped the bread into the bitter Korech (or the horseradish) and that will be important for you to remember in a bit. Ultimately they finish by singing the Hallel, Ps 113-118 and remind each other to return to Jerusalem the following yr to celebrate the Passover again.

Now, here's one other thing that's important to note...they also have what are called the "Four Cups of the Passover."



**Each of these cups held great prominence and symbolism for the people.**

1. The **first cup**, which happened at the beginning of the meal represented that God would "bring them out" (**DELIVERANCE**).
2. The **second cup** represented that (**FREEDOM**), "I will rid you of your bondage." (NOW BE THINKING ABOUT THIS IN TERMS OF JESUS NOW...**all of this was a foreshadowing of Jesus.**)
3. The **third cup** represented, **REDEMPTION**, "I will redeem you." This cup was passed when blessing the bread in the middle of the meal.
4. The **fourth cup**... Now, many Bible Scholars believe Jesus didn't drink that cup with the disciples (which came at the end of the meal), but is waiting to drink that cup the cup of **CONSUMMATION** "He takes us as His people," when He will drink it with us, His Bride, the Church, at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

So, this is the meal that Jesus and the disciples will be participating in later that evening...but, they need **a place to have it.** Jesus gives them instructions.

**Matthew 26:18**

<sup>18</sup> He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'

Now there is something interesting about this man. Jesus said to go into Jerusalem and find a "certain man." **Turn to Mark's Gospel, chapter 14** (the Apostle Peter's account). Mark will identify this man in a specific way.

**Mark 14:12-16**

<sup>12</sup> And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?"<sup>13</sup> And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him, <sup>14</sup> and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'<sup>15</sup> And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us." <sup>16</sup> And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

In the first century Jewish culture, seldom did men carry jars of water on their heads. Most often, they were in the fields (it was an agrarian society) or running a small shop...so, normally the ladies were carrying the water jars. This appears to be a male servant of some sort, and so, this would be an easy way to identify the man. AND NOTICE, that everything was furnished and ready and prepared. Remember, this was all in Jesus' plan. It's likely He had already worked this out with the man Master of the house (where the servant worked.) It's also likely that this large upper room was the room where the disciples came to after the crucifixion and ultimately Jesus came to after His resurrection and it was also likely the room where they came to while they waited for the Holy Spirit to come upon them as noted in Acts chapters 1 and 2.)

---

Think about this...think about the precision and the exactness of all of this... Jesus had this all planned out... Oh, how many times had Jesus said: "My hour has not yet come?" How many times have the Scriptures said, "But His time was not yet come?" But now Jesus says, "My time is near."

**See it again in verse 18.**

**Matthew 26:18**

<sup>18</sup> He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'"

---

Jesus was on a divine mission to save you and me. A divine timetable...and now it's all unfolding and will be complete in about 24 hours, when He proclaims from the cross: "It is Finished!"

**Well, evening came and the room was ready...**

**Matthew 26:20**

<sup>20</sup> When it was evening, he reclined at table with the twelve.

---

Now remember how they ate in the first century. (We saw this last week... at Simon the Leper's house when Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus...)



The tables were only about 12" off the ground and they either sat up at the table, or reclined on pillows with their head at the table and their feet pointing outward from the table. So, they're eating at the table, and then, Jesus drops a bombshell on them...

---

**Matthew 26:21-23**

<sup>21</sup> And as they were eating, he said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." <sup>22</sup> And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, "Is it I, Lord?" <sup>23</sup> He answered, "He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me."

---

Can you see this in your mind's eye...they were all dipping the bread with their hands in that salt-water and bitter horseradish dish. And the announcement Jesus made must have left them with their mouths hanging open and perhaps even tears streaming down their faces (verse 22 says: "They were very sorrowful." In the Greek it means: "deeply grieved.").

---

In fact, they are so shocked, so grieved that they began to ask Him, "Is it I"...and notice they called Him "Lord," (**Kurios**, Sovereign over the Universe). When you say Lord...that's what you're saying... You are saying Jesus is sovereign over the universe... He is LORD!! BOSS!! CHIEF!! PRESIDENT OF YOUR LIFE!!

Do you call Him: "Lord?" Is He truly Lord (the Boss) over your life? Are you running everything through Him? Whose in the driver's seat of your life? If it's you...and you're calling the shots...He's not Lord...you are! Do you need to switch seats today? You can do that in your seat in your spirit right where you sit. Will you do it? Don't wait. Just do it. Say, "Lord...you are Lord and I've been in the wrong seat...here...take the wheel...I'll ride...you drive." Let me tell ya...peace will flood your soul if you'll let go of the ownership of your life and let the King of Kings drive your life.

---

Or you can be like Judas. Did you see what Judas called Jesus?? He didn't call Him "Lord"...

### **Matthew 26:25**

<sup>25</sup> Judas, who would betray him, answered, "Is it I, Rabbi?" He said to him, "You have said so."

Judas called Him: "Rabbi," "TEACHER." Now, granted that was a sign of respect, but don't miss the fact that Judas did not call Him, "Lord." You see, Judas was simply keeping up the charade by asking the same question all the others were asking: "Is it I." Yet, Judas knew it was him. He had already been paid... Judas was in it for the money and when He saw that Jesus was not going to be the Messiah he was looking for... He was done! He had already taken 30 pieces of silver for Jesus...the price of a slave.

---

You see, when Jesus rebuked Judas (remember last week)...



When Judas said what Mary did was a "WASTE." But, Jesus said, "Leave her alone, she's done a beautiful thing to prepare me for my burial." Judas must have thought, "That's it...He's not setting up a kingdom...I'm not getting anything out of this..." And so, he goes to the Chief Priests and Caiaphas and says, "What will you give me?" And the deal was done!

---

Yes, Judas asked, "Is it I, Rabbi" to keep up the charade...after all...he still had to turn Jesus over to the Chief Priests later that night in Gethsemane. **By the way**, did you know this was **prophesied** by David in Psalm 41?

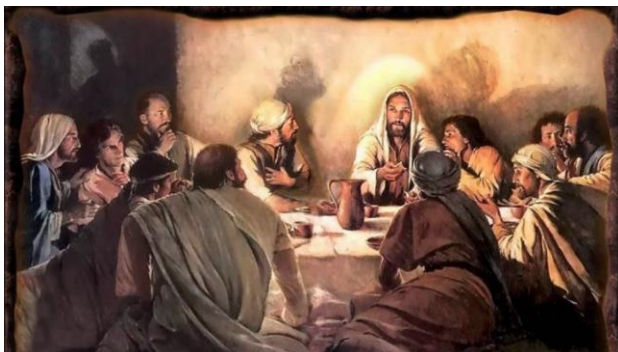
## **Psalm 41:9**

Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

---

Understand something Church, (and this is crucial...) don't ever forget that every single one of the 12 Apostles would desert Jesus in just a matter of a couple of hours, when they get to Gethsemane. They would all leave Him in fear. Only Peter would show up at Caiaphas' courtyard, but it was there that he denied Jesus three times. And yet Jesus longed to have this meal with all of these deniers. What amazing love!

And get this... do you remember what Jesus has already had to do in that room? He had to break up a fight... A fight? Yes, they were arguing again about who was the greatest among them. And I believe it had to do with the position of where they would sit. See the artist's depiction of this scene... Jesus is in the middle...



He is at the position of honor at the head of the table and then, of course, there would be those two highly sought after positions beside of Him, to His left and to His right. Do you know who was sitting to His left and right? John's Gospel tells us. **Turn to John chapter 13 and we'll see this play out.**

As you are turning, let me remind you of something else that Jesus had already done because none of those guys would do it...He washed their feet...



Amazing isn't it. Even though Jesus was headed to the cross, He still served...He still showed love to those who would deny Him and betray Him. You do know He washed Judas' feet as well. Oh what love! **Look at John 13...let's see where they're seated...**

---

## **John 13:21-30**

<sup>21</sup> After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." <sup>22</sup> The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. <sup>23</sup> One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, <sup>24</sup> so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. <sup>25</sup> So that disciple, leaning back



against Jesus, said to him, “Lord, who is it?”<sup>26</sup> Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.<sup>27</sup> Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.”<sup>28</sup> Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him.<sup>29</sup> Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor.<sup>30</sup> So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

Amazing isn't it? The other Apostles couldn't figure out that Judas was the Betrayer. Even after John asks, (and some of them had to hear what Jesus said), they still seem confused...and perhaps it was because it was too shocking to believe that Judas would do such a thing. After all, in that culture, you would never eat a meal with a person, identifying yourself as a “friend” and then turn on them. That was unthinkable...no...the meal was a symbol of friendship.

---

Matthew Henry, great Bible Commentator describes the conundrum this way:

**“They were not inclined to suspect Judas. Although he was a thief, it seems he had led such a generally acceptable life that none of them even looked at him, much less said, ‘Lord is it Judas?’**

**It is possible for a hypocrite to go through the world not only undiscovered but also unsuspected, like counterfeit money, so cleverly produced that no one questions its genuineness. They were inclined to suspect themselves... They feared the worst and therefore asked the One who knows us better than ourselves, ‘Lord is it I?’ Perhaps we should ask them same.”** Matthew Henry, Bible Commentator (1662-1714)

---

Lord, is it I? Don't we all have it in us to deny Jesus? Yes. Jeremiah the prophet describes our condition:

#### **Jeremiah 17:9**

**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?**

Jesus can...Romans 5:8 says, “and while we were still sinners, Christ died for us!” Oh what love! But, here's the truth, Church family, and I've said this before, the same sun that melts butter, hardens clay. Judas had a choice...and he made and it Jesus said, “Now go and do it!” And Jesus said these most frightening words:

---

#### **Matthew 26:24**

**<sup>24</sup>The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.”**

---

*Listen, God can serve His own purposes through a human being's sin, like Judas, yet that does not excuse the sinner or make it any less terrible.* Judas had made his own choice and he was the source of his own damnation; and yet, it all fit perfectly into the sovereign plan of Jesus.

Judas was indeed like hardened clay...his heart was hard. Better that he had never been born than to exist in Hell forever and ever...and the same is true of you. It's better for you to have never existed than to die and go to Hell forever. But you do exist...so, I ask you in the name of Jesus Christ, the One who died for you...receive Him today, while there is still time.

---

We close with this thought... Josephus, the Jewish historian tells us that there were over a 250,000 lambs slain during the Passover during the time of Jesus. And at 10 people per lamb,

which was allowed by the Law...that's at least 2 ½ million people, in the city of Jerusalem with all of those lambs...going to the Temple. See the picture...



You would bring your lamb to the Priests in the Temple and they would sacrifice your Passover lamb for you and your family and you would take it back to where you were staying and you would roast it and eat it as part of the Sayder meal. Do you know when they began to sacrifice the lambs in the Temple courtyard? 3 pm. From the hours of 3 pm to 5 pm on the evening prior to the Passover.

---

What time of day did Jesus die? 3 pm. The ninth-hour in Jewish time. And it was at that precise moment, less than 1,200 feet away from where Jesus was crucified on Calvary that in the Temple courtyard, the lambs would begin to scream and bellow as they were slaughtered. 1 Corinthians 5:7 says, "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed." At 3 pm He said: "It is finished!"

Listen, the blood of those Passover lambs never could and never would take away the sins of humankind, but the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ would.



Will you receive Him today and call on Him as your Lord!

---