
We continue in our march with Jesus to Calvary and the cross. This series called “The March to Victory” details these last days of Jesus before he is nailed to the cross. Today we are going to look at one of the most intimate times he has ever spent with his disciples. Therefore, the title of today’s message is “Why Does Jesus Long For You?” As we unpackage this we will see the emotion that the Lord Jesus expresses.

As you are turning, I would like to ask you a question. When you came into this place of worship today and saw the tables set up for Communion. What did you think? What crossed your mind? Was there maybe an anticipation of being able to share in this today with your brother’s and sister’s in Christ? Did your mind go to 1 Corinthians Chapter 11 where the Apostle Paul in quoting Jesus reminded us that Jesus talked about the bread and the cup, “Do this, as often as you eat the bread or drink the cup, do it in remembrance of me (Jesus)”.

Or maybe your mind raced to that same portion of Scripture in 1 Corinthians Chapter 11 where we are warned to not partake of the Lord’s Supper unworthily. Verse 28 says, Let a person examine themselves before we eat of the bread or drink of the cup. That we come before the Lord with a heart of repentance. Maybe you looked at the tables and just, “Oh, we are having communion!”

“That’s nice!” I do pray that after today maybe we can look at this time and really, anytime we come together as a remembrance of what Jesus has truly done for us to have the opportunity for salvation.

Matthew 26:26-30

²⁶Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.”²⁷And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them saying, “Drink of it, all of you,²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.²⁹I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s Kingdom.³⁰And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

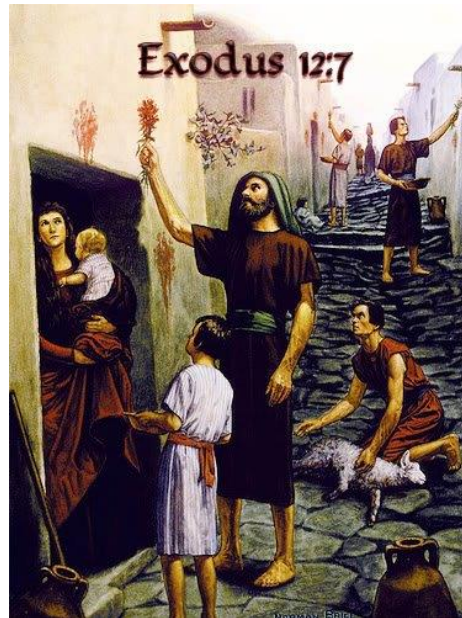
By way of review. We are at Thursday of the day before Jesus will go to the Cross. At this time, we are approximately 18 hours away from Jesus dying on the cross. Here is Jesus and his disciples in this upper room celebrating the Passover. For over 1500 years now this celebration has taken place. With this celebration was a backward look to that night of the blood of the Passover lamb that was on the doorposts to escape the judgment of God as the Angel of Death passed over Egypt to free the Jews from their bondage of slavery in Egypt.

But, there was also the foreshadowing of the final Sacrificial Lamb, Jesus Christ. Whose blood would be shed for mankind to come before God in repentance to escape the judgment of God and to be freed from the bondage of our sin. Look at the screens and see what the Word of God says in Ephesians 1:7

Ephesians 1:7

In him (Jesus Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace.

In this one meal Jesus both ended the old and instituted the new. The symbol of redemption went from this:



To this:



We learned that there was a specific order to the way the Passover meal was to be eaten. Remember the meal is called the Seder (Say-der). You remember this diagram from last week that showed us the order.

Order of the Seder



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 Created by Rebecca Fleider

Also, remember there are 4 cups that are passed around. But we only see two on this chart. You see the first cup which is the “Cup of Deliverance” is passed around at the beginning. The second cup, which is the “Cup of Freedom” can be passed anytime between the washing of hands and the beginning of eating of the dinner. It is the third cup, “The Cup of Blessing” that is passed at the beginning of eating the meal. Then the fourth cup that is not represented on this chart either can be passed around at anytime during the meal but primarily towards the end of the meal and then they sing the Hallel.

But where are we at this point in our Scripture today. Last week we got to the point where Jesus had dropped that bombshell that there was going to be one of them that would betray him. Everyone was eating of the horseradish or bitter lettuce. Also, they would dip the unleavened bread into this mixture of bitter herbs. It is at this point where we find in John's account, that Peter motioned to John to ask Jesus, "Lord, who is it?" And this is where Jesus told John it is who I give this morsel of bread to. Jesus dips that bread and hands it to Judas and Judas takes it and Satan enters Judas and Jesus tells him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." And Judas leaves.

After Judas leaves they begin the meal. Look at verse 26 again of Matthew 26.

Matthew 26:26

²⁶Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."

But I want to show you something from Luke's Gospel. Turn to Luke Chapter 22 beginning with verse 14.

Luke 22:14-16

¹⁴And when the hour came, he (Jesus) reclined at table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

As they begin this meal Jesus tells them that he has earnestly desired to eat this Passover meal with them. He had eaten other Passover meals with the disciples, but this is going to be the last one before he dies. What Jesus says in "I have earnestly desired" in the Greek is two words.

Epithymia Epithymeo – It is a longing, a craving! It is a very intense emotional response.

What had just happened? Judas had just left to get ready those that would arrest Jesus. The footsteps of Judas walking down those steps were fresh in Jesus' mind. The door shutting behind Judas as he goes out into the night. But where does Jesus' bring his focus to? His disciples!

He longed for this intimate time to spend with his disciples before his death. Jesus had to remind them again that the reason they came to Jerusalem this time was for him to die. Remember from last week as he sent the two disciples to make ready the Passover meal? Jesus said, "What?" "My time is at hand!" That is the reason Jesus came! It was to die! Look at the screens:

Romans 5:8-9

⁸But God, shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us! ⁹Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

And that is what Jesus is showing his disciples and to us as Jesus institutes what will now be called the Lord's Supper. But may we put ourselves in place of the disciples for a moment. That same intimacy that Jesus is sharing with his disciples at this moment he wants to share with you. But it is not just a Sunday morning thing! It is not just a Wednesday night thing! Jesus said if you want to follow me you must take up your cross, "Daily!" Look at verse 26 again.

Matthew 26:26

²⁶Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."

Jesus takes the bread and blesses it! He says, "Take, eat, this is my body." In the Gospel of Luke, Luke records that he says, this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me! Can we remember that Jesus' body was bruised and beaten for us? But not only that but that he took our sins upon his body! We see that Jesus in taking the Old Covenant of sacrificing lambs is now making the New Covenant through the sacrifice of what he is going to do on the Cross of Calvary.

But as Jesus has given his body for us. He in turns asks us to give him our bodies. He takes our old sinful self and makes us a new creation and we put on a new self through Jesus Christ. Turn to Colossians Chapter 3.

Colossians 3:4-11

⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵ Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. ¹¹ Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

As we think upon Jesus body it should remind us that if we are in Christ and have died to our old self then this should change what we do with our bodies, our thoughts our actions. How we talk to people and about people. What we watch and what we listen to. But more importantly than with other people but how we treat Jesus in what he has again done for us. Do we desire that intimacy with Jesus as much as he desires that intimacy with us? Jesus desires this relationship so much he died for us. What did these verses say again about the sins listed? Put to death what is earthly! Put them all away! Put off the old self! Put on the new self which is being renewed! How? Through knowledge of the creator and that comes through that intimate relationship of prayer, studying the word and worship. I am afraid what is happening in Christendom in a lot of places we have turned our relationship with Jesus in what we would call "Experiences" and that can make everything run off emotionalism. But our intimacy with Jesus is through a personal day to day walk of praying, studying Bible and serving others.

Turn back to Matthew 26 and look at verse 27 and 28.

Matthew 26:27-28

²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them saying, "Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus now takes the cup once again and he gives thanks and he tells them all to drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured for many for the forgiveness of sins. You all know this from Hebrews 9:22, "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."

In verse 28 it talks of a new covenant. See again these pictures.



See this is the old covenant. A foreshadowing of the true sacrificial lamb. Jesus Christ! This is the new covenant as we see Jesus on the Cross.



See as the Jews were looking to the past of their freedom from Egypt and their freedom from sin. They were looking to the future of the Cross for redemption also. Sacrificing lambs as their example of hope in the coming messiah. We look to the past to the Cross for our freedom from sin, but we also look to the future. Because in verse 29 Jesus says these words.

Matthew 26:29

²⁹I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom.

Because of the beaten and bruised body of Jesus! Because of the blood Jesus shed we have hope for the future. Jesus is no longer on that Cross. Remember his words? It is finished. Now Jesus waits for that time when we who are truly followers of Jesus Christ are raptured up so that he can drink that final Cup of Consummation at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

I kind of like this picture.



If we are in Christ. Look at that picture! That is our hope! Please stand.

Before we take communion, we will have a time of invitation. It may be that you don't have that intimate relationship with Jesus because you have never repented of your sins and surrendered to him. You may need to do that today. As it says in 1 Corinthians we are to examine ourselves. It may be you need to come to the altar today and get some things right with God. We won't wait long. You do as the Lord leads.

Communion

Please be seated. Jesus will be on the cross in about 18 hours. Through Jesus' death, burial and resurrection he is the only way to God the Father. The Lord's table is example of this. Jesus told us to remember.

And so today, as we partake in the Lord's Supper, may we remember all that Jesus suffered for us! But also, may we remember the intimate relationship that he desires for us to have with him that will lead us to a life of righteousness. May we remember his body that he gave for us... May we remember the blood he shed for us that we may have pardon for our sin and eternal life. Would you bow with me now and Let's thank him for his sacrifice upon the cross. **Let us Pray!**

At this time, if you name the name of Christ...if you are a born-again, believer and follower of Christ, we invite you to partake of this supper today. (**Now, of course I'm sure there are children in the room who haven't made this decision yet in their lives; however, they may still come forward with their families...**but I would encourage them not to partake if they haven't made a profession of faith at this point in their lives.)

You'll notice the two side sections...please use the round tables on the ends. For the two center sections, please use the baptistery and the rectangular table. After you have finished, you can leave your cup in the containers provided on the tables. **So, I invite you now to come forward and partake of the Lord's Supper.**

Church family I pray that through this worship time today you have seen Jesus desire for you. May we commit to seek him intimately and daily. Verse 30 in Matthew 26 says they sang a hymn at they left the upper room. We know that it was a portion of the Hallel from a portion of one of the Psalms of 113 to 118. So now as we leave we will sing one verse of the hymn, **"Jesus Paid it All"**. Please stand and sing.