

THE SCROLLS

Meeting The Messiah | Mark 14:12-26

Life Lesson

Communion reminds us that our faith is not built on ritual but on rescue. Just as the Passover pointed to God's deliverance from slavery in Egypt, the Lord's Supper points us to a greater deliverance—freedom from sin through Jesus, the true Lamb of God. We come to the table not as perfect people but as redeemed people—equally in need of grace and equally recipients of mercy. The lesson is this: never forget what you've been saved from, who saved you, and what it cost Him. When we remember rightly, we live gratefully, humbly, and obediently.

Examine Scripture

12 On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrifice the Passover lamb, his disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare the Passover so that you may eat it?" **13 So he sent two of his disciples and told them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him.**

14 Wherever he enters, tell the owner of the house, "The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" **15 He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make the preparations for us there."** **16 So the disciples went out, entered the city, and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.**

17 When evening came, he arrived with the Twelve. 18 While they were

Come to the Table

Communion, or the Lord's Supper, may be familiar to followers of Jesus, but to outsiders and unbelievers, it may be one of the most confusing and misunderstood traditions of the Christian Church. To them, it just seems a little weird to drink a small amount of juice and eat a stale piece of bread. All in a ritual to remember one of the worst moments in history: the crucifixion of Jesus. However, for those of us who follow Jesus, communion is an important and essential part of our worship.

Before we look at our text, we must understand a bit of background on the communion, or Lord's Supper. It was first celebrated by Jesus and His Disciples on the night He was betrayed. It took place during the Passover Feast. The Passover Feast commemorates God delivering His people from 400 years of slavery in Egypt. It is called Passover because it remembers the night the Lord passed through Egypt, striking the firstborn. However, those in houses with the blood of the sacrificial lamb on the doorposts and lintels were passed over, and the firstborn were spared. The Passover Feast was to be a memorial of this deliverance and salvation (Ex. 12:1-14). Today, it still remains one of the most holy of Jewish traditions.

In the New Testament, we find that Jesus transformed the Passover Feast into a celebration of greater deliverance and salvation: forgiveness and deliverance from sin. Communion, or the Lord's Supper, is now a memorial of what Jesus accomplished by His death on the cross. It reminds us of the new covenant in His blood that frees us from the law and from sin.

But why is it important to continue observing Communion? It is one of the two ordinances of the Church: communion and baptism. This means it is a unique ceremony that Jesus commanded the Church to observe until His return. It is not a man-made tradition; it was instituted by God. Therefore, we see that from the very beginning of the Church, when they met together, they broke bread and celebrated Communion (Acts 2:42). The Church followed

reclining and eating, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me.” 19 They began to be distressed and to say to him one by one, “Surely not I?” 20 He said to them, “It is one of the Twelve—the one who is dipping bread in the bowl with me. 21 For the Son of Man will go just as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for him if he had not been born.” 22 As they were eating, he took bread, blessed and broke it, gave it to them, and said, “Take it; this is my body.” 23 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. 25 Truly I tell you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” 26 After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

- Underline “the Passover” in (v. 12). Write “Ex. 12” above it.
- Underline “they prepared the Passover.” In the margin, list the elements of the Passover and their significance.
- In the margin, connect the elements of the Passover to what Jesus has accomplished to provide salvation.
- Circle “one of you” in (v. 18). Above it, write, “me” to show how you betray Jesus each time you sin.
- Circle “bread” in (v. 22) and write “Jesus’ body” above it. Circle “cup” in (v. 23) and write “Jesus’ blood” above it.
- Bracket “singing a hymn” in (v. 26) and write “Communion is worship” in the margin.

Personal Notes

in obedience and continued to observe Communion, and we continue to do so today.

Vs. 12-16

The text begins with preparations for Passover. The Disciples ask Jesus, “Where do you want us to go and prepare the Passover so that you may eat it?” (v. 12). At this moment, they were still in Bethany; however, the Passover meal must be eaten within the walls of Jerusalem. So the Disciples knew they had to find a place and prepare for the meal. The Passover meal was not a simple meal; it had integral parts and ingredients that required careful preparation. Included in the preparation was the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, as referred to in the first part of (v. 12).

Jesus’ instruction to the disciples closely mirrors the preparations required for His entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-6). As in Mark 11, it is unclear whether Jesus made these preparations beforehand or whether they demonstrate His omniscience. It is clear, however, that God’s sovereignty is evident in every detail of the betrayal, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It was customary for anyone who had a spare room to allow it to be used by pilgrims who needed to celebrate the Passover. So, the Disciples’ request to the man carrying the jar of water (the owner of the house) is not intrusive but is in keeping with the custom of the times. The Disciples found the man, inquired about the room, and found it just as Jesus said they would. Thus, they began preparing for Passover.

To understand the full context of the Passover meal and its relationship to communion, we must examine the elements and their symbolic meanings. The bitter herbs were intended to remind them of the bitterness of slavery in Egypt. The unleavened bread reminded them of the people’s urgency and readiness to leave Egypt. The charoset (a sweet fruit mixture) symbolized the mortar they used as slaves. The four cups were reminders of God’s promises to His people: Cup of Sanctification: “I will bring you out”; Cup of Blessing: “I will deliver you”; Cup of Redemption: “I will redeem you”; and Cup of Acceptance: “I will take you for me as a people.” The greens dipped in salt water served as a reminder of the tears shed in bondage and slavery. Lastly, the Passover lamb represented the sacrifice of the lamb and the provision of its blood to mark the doorposts. The lamb was a substitute. Sin required death: the lamb or the firstborn. The lamb’s blood provided salvation as a substitute for the firstborn. The lamb was also a practical provision. It was to be roasted and eaten; it was not just to prevent death; it was to preserve life. So, each element of the Passover meal was a mini-sermon to remind the people of the slavery of sin and the goodness of God. This is why it requires such careful preparation.

Personal Notes

The significance of Passover is that the next generation and generations to come will hear about the Lord's deliverance of his people. Some will celebrate the Passover even though they never wiped a drop of blood on a doorpost. Some will celebrate the Passover's victory, though they were never in slavery. That makes no sense, that the Lord would want generations and generations and generations to remember this victory he has given when they themselves were never in captivity, never enslaved to Pharaoh or Egypt. It doesn't make sense unless the Lord has something bigger in mind than just freeing his people from captivity in Egypt. It only makes sense if their celebration of this Passover points to something bigger. We know their celebration points to Jesus as the greater Passover Lamb. In (John 1:29), John the Baptist proclaims, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" Again, in (John 13:1), we read, "Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father..." If we turn back to (Ex. 12:3): "...every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers' houses..." The lamb would come from the father's house, and Jesus is the Lamb of His Father's house. Lastly, in (Rev. 5), John sees "Then I saw one like a slaughtered lamb standing in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders." In other words, everything in the Passover meal, from the very first Passover to even today's celebrations, prophetically points toward Jesus as the Lamb of God!

Vs. 17-21

As Jesus and His Disciples were eating the Passover meal, what should have been a beautiful moment of celebration turned grim when Jesus revealed: "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me" (v. 18). The Disciples were distressed and began saying, "Surely, it is not me!" It is interesting that the Disciples seemed worried or fearful that they might be the ones to betray Jesus. Perhaps this was driven by fear or at least a lack of confidence in their spiritual fortitude. The Disciples seemed self-aware that they were susceptible to falling. In Matthew's Gospel, he tells us that each disciple, one by one, asked, "Surely not I?" (Matt. 26:25). Even Judas played the part, though he knew he had already betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.

Jesus already revealed two clues about who would betray Him: he was one of the Twelve, and he was eating with them. But Jesus gives a third, more specific clue: "the one who is dipping bread in the bowl with me" (v. 20). This may be a reference to the charoset of the Passover meal. The difficulty in determining the betrayer is that all the disciples would have been dipping their bread in the bowl. So, Judas betrayal still remained a secret between him and Jesus.

Personal Reflection

1. When I participate in Communion, do I approach it as a routine ritual, or do I truly reflect on the depth of Jesus' sacrifice and the deliverance?
2. Just as the Passover reminded generations of God's past deliverance, how am I intentionally remembering and sharing the story of my own deliverance from sin with the next generation?
3. The disciples each asked, "Surely not I?" in response to Jesus' warning about betrayal. Do I have a humble awareness of my own vulnerability to sin, or do I assume I am spiritually stronger than I am?
4. Communion reminds us that we come to the table as equals, equally sinful and equally recipients of grace. Is there anyone I struggle to see as equally in need of grace and equally loved by Christ?
5. With Jesus as the Lamb of God who took my place, how should that reality shape my daily life—my gratitude, obedience, worship, and relationships with others?

Commentaries

Exalting Jesus in Mark by Daniel Akin

MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Mark 9-16 by John MacArthur

BECNT: Mark by Robert Stein

Mt. Zion's Mission

Mt. Zion Baptist Church exists to MAKE, MATURE, and MULTIPLY disciples of Jesus Christ.

Though many forces were at work in this moment, such as Judas's selfishness and Satan's schemes, it is clear that this moment was the work of God's sovereignty. Everything happened exactly as it must to fulfill prophecy and complete God's plan. Even what seemed to be a grand victory for Satan, as Satan entered Judas (John 13:27), was only a pawn in the sovereign hands of God to bring about salvation. Yet Judas was not innocent or left without responsibility for his actions. In fact, Jesus pronounced a deafening judgment upon him: "Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for him if he had not been born" (v. 21). Sin is ultimately a betrayal of God, and it will always bear daunting consequences.

Vs. 22-26

Now, after Judas leaves, Jesus transformed the Passover Feast into a celebration of greater deliverance and salvation: the forgiveness and deliverance from sin. Jesus takes elements from the Passover meal and uses them to give us the elements of communion: the bread and the cup. The bread symbolizes Jesus' body, which would be beaten, flogged, and broken for us. The cup symbolizes His blood, which is shed for us. Though Jesus was betrayed by Judas, convicted by the chief priests, sentenced by Pilate, and scourged, mocked, and crucified by the Roman soldiers, we must remember that He was betrayed, scourged, and crucified with our sin! Because of our sin, the full wrath of God was poured out onto Jesus: "Yet he himself bore our sicknesses, and he carried our pains; but we in turn regarded him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds." (Is. 53:4-5).

Just as baptism is an outward expression of an inward experience, communion is also a powerful symbol and picture of our faith in Jesus. It is a way to express our faith by celebrating and remembering the sacrifice of Jesus. The bread and the cup symbolize the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. As with the Passover meal, it is our time to remember our exodus from sin and death; our time to remember how the blood of Jesus saves us from the punishment for our sins and the wrath of God.

Communion is not merely a memorial of what Jesus did on the cross; it is a reminder that we are all united by the Gospel. In fact, communion means "to have in common." As followers of Jesus, we all have at least one thing in common: we are saved by grace through faith in the Gospel of Jesus. In other words, when we come to the table to observe communion, we come as equals. We are all equally depraved, deserving of God's wrath, yet we have also received the same grace and mercy because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.