

Series: **Gospel of Mark**
Today's Title: **"The Last Supper"**

March 14, 2021 – *Mark 14:12-26* (Also: Matthew 26:17-29 Luke 22:7-23)

Objective: To help people know the sovereignty of God and the transition from Passover to Communion that Jesus initiated.

Prayer

Turn to Mark 14:12-26

Celebration

Betrayal

2 extremes of human activity - which exude 2 vastly different feelings and emotional responses.

- One exudes joy and blessing.

- The other exudes pain and shock.

In our passage today - we will see some secretive planning on the part of Jesus - and we'll see how Jesus completely reorders a 1,500-year-old tradition which started under Moses' leadership to something brand new - which we (The Church) have celebrated for the past 2,000 years.

Read Mark 14:12-17

The plan of Jesus for their Passover Celebration. *vs. 12-17*

The timing of God.

Quick review...

Passover was a meal which celebrated the nation's deliverance from Egypt.

It commemorated and celebrated that last and final plague as God's "destroyer" (Exodus 12:23) angel '*passed over*' the homes which had the blood of the Passover lamb on the door frame, sparing the life of the 1st born inside.

If the blood of a Passover lamb was not on the door frame of the home, the 1st born inside would die.

After this plague of judgment in Egypt, the Pharaoh let the Hebrew people go - and they had to hurry - so they made unleavened bread to eat on their journey.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was observed the 7 days after the Passover meal.

Over time, Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread was referred to as 'Passover' or 'The Feast', which included both celebrations.

Kind of like when we speak of our Christmas celebration, we might be including Christmas Eve under the umbrella of 'Christmas'.

Celebrating Passover and the Feast was an issue of obedience to God's Law, which is probably why the disciples are asking Jesus, '*What's the plan for the meal?*'

Judas cannot know the location of their Passover celebration - for that would allow the religious establishment to arrest Jesus in private.

They didn't want to arrest or kill Jesus during the Feast - with all the people - but when Judas showed up, he would offer them an opportunity they could not refuse. Even though they didn't want to do this during the Feast - sin is often more powerful than our own desires - and the temptation overpowers our own will!

Jesus sends Peter and John (Luke 22:8) into the city - and He tells them what to look for and what to do when they find it.

By sending Peter and John - and not telling them the location but simply what signs to look for - Judas has no idea where they will celebrate the meal - so he can't arrange his betrayal.

This is why Jesus sends Peter and John - 2 of His inner circle (James being the 3rd).

A “man carrying a jar of water” would stand out because this was what the women would do.

This man and the “master of the house” seem to be followers of Jesus and Jesus has already arranged the details for them to celebrate the Passover meal.

vs. 16 - Peter and John stay and do all the preparation for the Passover meal.

vs. 15b-16

“there prepare for us...and they prepared the Passover.”

vs. 17 - Jesus knew the location of the upper room.

He led the disciples to it when it was time for the meal. But He kept the details from the others - and most importantly from Judas.

One more interesting historical note.

The Jewish Mishnah are the official documents concerning the conduct of the Jews and also from the history of Josephus.

The Mishnah is the oldest authoritative postbiblical collection and codification of Jewish oral laws, systematically compiled by numerous scholars (called tannaim) over a period of about two centuries. It's 'final form' was completed in the 3rd century A.D.

In **Exodus 12** (see also Numbers 9:2-3) God commanded that the Passover meal was to be celebrated on a specific day - the 14th day of a specific month (Nisan - our March-April time frame).

We know from the Mishnah that Jews who were from Galilee (northern Israel - where Jesus His disciples were from) celebrated Passover at a slightly different time than the Judean or southern Jews.

Galilean Jews celebrated Passover on this date from sunrise to sunrise.

The Judean Jews celebrated Passover on this date - but they celebrated from sunset to sunset.

On this date - the Passover of Jesus' crucifixion (30 A.D.?) - this meant that Galilean Jews celebrated on Thursday night, while the Judean Jews celebrated on Friday. Both of these celebrations were authorized and legitimate.

Luke 22:15

Jesus said, "I have been very eager to eat this Passover meal with you before My suffering begins."

"very eager" - Lit. *with desire I have desired*

Why was He so "eager"?

Because He had much to teach them in these final hours before His arrest.

- The disciples will have their final argument about who will be the greatest in Jesus' kingdom and He will teach them about serving and wash their feet as a powerful lesson in humility.
- He will pray for them - the High Priestly prayer (Jn. 17).
- He will teach about love and unity.
- He will celebrate one final time with His disciples - His closest friends - before He is crucified.
- He will tell of betrayal - and denial.

There was so much yet to do!

Jesus had to celebrate the Passover meal with His disciples on Thursday because He would be crucified on Friday morning around 9:00 a.m.

According to the plan and timing of God, Jesus had to die - be slaughtered - as **THE** Passover Lamb at the same time - 3:00 p.m. on Friday - that the Passover lambs were being slaughtered at the Temple - for the Judean Passover celebrations.

The different times of celebration between the Galilean and Judean Jews allowed this to occur.

(Sources: <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/41-73/the-new-passover> ~ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Mishna> - <https://www.gotquestions.org/Day-of-Preparation.html>)

The betrayal announced vs. 18-21

Only 2 people in the room knew the truth.

Jesus and Judas were the only ones who knew the betrayal which was already in motion.

Read vs. 18-21

At some point in the celebration, Jesus makes a shocking statement.

vs. 18 - “one of you will betray Me, one who is eating with Me.”

This shocked them - and made them “sorrowful”.

Greek word = *deep grief, distress, deep emotional pain*

Betray Jesus?

They couldn't fathom this.

Nobody suspected Judas.

He was a very skilled hypocrite.

The disciples, knowing their capacity for sin, ask Jesus

“Is it I?”

vs. 20 - They were all “dipping bread into the dish” with Jesus. That was part of the Passover meal. Jesus is simply repeating that one of the 12 - one of His disciples who had been with Him for the past 3 years will betray Him.

Judas’s betrayal was not a surprise to Jesus.

Remember...Jesus is in complete control not only of the events leading to His death, but also of the timing of those events.

He knew when He called Judas to be His disciple that Judas would betray Him.

vs. 21 - “For the Son of Man goes as it is written of Him...”

Psalm 41:9 *(See also Ps. 55)*

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

This betrayal had been prophesied hundreds of years before - and Jesus makes a strong statement of judgment against His betrayer.

vs. 21 “...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.”

Judas was responsible for his actions.

Even though Judas’ betrayal was prophesied and part of God’s plan, it didn’t remove his guilt.

This is the reality and tension of God’s sovereignty and human responsibility.

The Bible teaches both.

This statement by Jesus in vs. 21 is probably the strongest statement on human responsibility for personal sin in all of Scripture - and it's straight from the mouth of Jesus! God is sovereign - controlling the events and timing. Judas is morally responsible for his thoughts and actions.

In the same way...

God is still sovereign over history - all events and the timing of those events.

Even though we live within the sovereignty of God, we are still morally, spiritually responsible for our thoughts and actions.

Judas leaves (John 13:26-30) during the meal.

Why does he leave?

To give the religious establishment the location and general time frame that Jesus would be alone - with only His disciples - in the Garden of Gethsemane.

John 18:2

“Now Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with His disciples.”

John also tells us that since Judas kept the money bag, the other disciples thought his departure during the meal was to purchase other items needed for next 7 days - for the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The transition from Passover to Communion. vs. 22-26

Read vs. 22-26

The Passover meal was a celebration meal - and as such, it was a lengthy meal and there were many components to the Passover celebration.

- Prayer of thanks
- First cup of red wine
- Ceremonial washing of hands (highlighted the need for holiness)
- The eating of bitter herbs - with unleavened bread
- Sing the Hallel - **Psalm 113 - 114** (entire Hallel is 113-118)
- 2nd cup of wine
- Eating of the lamb (main course?)
- 3rd cup of wine
- Sing remaining Hallel - **Psalm 115-118**
- Final cup of wine
- Sing one more **Psalm 136**
- Depart for the Garden of Gethsemane

Remember - Jesus was in complete control not only of the events - but also their timing.

Nothing was beyond His control.

He knows Judas has conspired with the religious establishment to betray Him.

He knows what's coming!

But He also knows that they must celebrate the Passover not only to be obedient to God's Word, ***but this was the last Passover!***

Jesus would turn the pages of history - turn the page from the old to the new.

This Passover would be the divine transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant.

It was a transition from Israel - who Jesus has pronounced divine judgement on (Matt. 23) and transition to the Church - which would begin after His resurrection and ascension.

Jesus was going to change the Passover meal to what we call '*Communion*' or '*The Lord's Supper*' or '*The Eucharist*'.

This was the last Passover - until the kingdom of God is established on earth.

Luke 22:16

"For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." - The Millennial Kingdom - Paul says we do communion "until He comes" (1 Cor. 11:26).

The most notable thing Jesus does is change the focus of the meal.

He takes the spotlight off of slavery in Egypt and God's redemption / liberation of His people unto freedom and puts the spotlight on Himself.

Instead of the bread being a reminder of the suffering of the people and their quick departure from Egypt, it is

now a reminder and symbol of His body and the suffering He would endure.

- This is brand new!
- This is not part of the Passover tradition.
- Jesus is completely changing a 1,500-year-old tradition and command of God.
- He's changing the Passover meal into something completely different.

The New Covenant promise is in **Ezekiel 36-37, Jeremiah 31**

When Jesus gave His life on our behalf, His sacrifice - the shedding of His blood ratified the New Covenant promised in **Ezekiel and Jeremiah.**

Isaiah 53:12

“...he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.”

The New Covenant is based in what Jesus has done for us - in our place, not on our obedience or goodness.

Christianity is not based in our feeble promises to God, but in His promises to us and His sacrifice on our behalf.

He became our substitute.

Mark 14:24 - “My blood...which is poured out for many.”

Matthew states: “which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” (26:28b)

Luke writes: “This is my body, which is given for you.” and “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.” (22:19-20)

In the Passover meal the wine represented their redemption from slavery.

Jesus changes that to representing His blood which would be shed “for the forgiveness of sins” in the “new covenant”.

His blood redeems / liberates us from our bondage / slavery to sin.

Theologians refer to this as the *Substitutionary Atonement*.

Jesus took upon Himself the punishment we deserve.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT)

“For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.”

Then Jesus makes a promise about the future.

vs. 25 - “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 looks forward to the Millennial Kingdom - something that will happen after the Rapture of the Church, the 7 years of Tribulation and judgment, and the 2nd coming of Christ.

At that time, Jesus will set-up a kingdom on earth - for 1,000 years.

It is in that Kingdom that we will join Him and have a celebration meal with Him!!!

Everything was now changed.

Jesus would not celebrate Passover anymore.

He commanded His disciples to celebrate the new Passover meal which looks to His suffering, death and sacrifice for sins - not the Exodus from slavery in Egypt. This was so much for the disciples to take in!

I'm sure they didn't understand the significance of what Jesus did, taught and instituted that night, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, they would.

26 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Today, there are 2 sections to the Garden of Gethsemane. One section is in the Kidron Valley - at the base of the Mt. of Olives - where there stands The Church of Agony.

Another section is uphill from the Church of Agony - on the hillside of the Mt. of Olives.

The Church of Agony marks the traditional site where Jesus and His disciples went and prayed after their Passover celebration.

But the hillside section of the garden is beautiful.

If you ever get the chance to be there (2023?), try and take some time and read through the passages / accounts

of Jesus praying - His desire for His disciples to be with Him and pray with Him - and His arrest by a huge contingent of Roman soldiers - along with the Temple Guard - and Judas.

Apply it...

God is sovereign, we are responsible moral agents.

The importance of communion.