

II. Holy Week in Biblical Perspective  
*Maundy Thursday*  
“Pastoral Homily”  
John 13:1-30  
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April 14, 2022 • Thursday Evening Sermon

They now have come to the Passover and by this time a tradition has developed within Israel. The Passover had been reclaimed and heightened under the reforms of King Josiah years before by his decree and even into the days of Jesus. It was to be eaten in Jerusalem and the people were to come to Jerusalem to celebrate it. One of the traditions was as they would prepare and eat the meal there would usually be this statement by the eldest son of the family that went something like this; what makes this night different from all the others. The answer would be this is the night the God of glory and justice will pass over the house where the lamb and the blood has covered it and that’s why we celebrate this Passover.

During the Passover between 4pm and 6pm it was called between the hours, where there would be the sacrifice of the Passover lamb and the preparation for the supper that evening. The Scriptures said they would eat it in haste as the covenant meal brought them back to remember what the Lord had done to deliver them, to repent of their sins as they cleaned out the leaven and take up their staff to be ready to follow and serve the Lord. So, this was not to be a sit down gala dinner event.

I have often thought about that tradition and what makes this meal and so different from all the rest. Now as we come a millennia later, it’s even more different, because on this night in His week of passion, Christ is actually bringing attention to three suppers. This night will be after hundreds and hundreds of years, for it will be the last Passover supper. Its very purpose instituted by Christ Himself is now being fulfilled in Christ – the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He is the One who drinks the cup of judgment to give us the cup of life. This meal will be the last of the sacrificial system because all that it was pointing is now going to be fulfilled in Christ and this night Christ will institute the New Covenant meal.

The New Covenant meal will be the Lord’s Supper. The Old Covenant meal was a bloody meal with a sacrifice pointing to Christ. When you read the account of the institution of the Passover, it says it’s an everlasting memorial. How is it an everlasting memorial when it is now been fulfilled and set aside? It is everlasting because it is fulfilled in Christ forever and now He gives a New Covenant meal which has its purpose, its own shelf life when Jesus says in Luke 22:15-16; [15] *And He said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. [16] For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”* The Passover is replaced by the Lord’s Supper which will last until the coming of Christ.

Then there is the anticipation of the supper of the Lamb – the marriage supper – for all eternity when we will again sit down with Him in His glorified Incarnate body to enjoy that supper forever and ever. Don’t miss the fact that this Passover supper was being done as the One who instituted is about to fulfill it and is now the Host for the Disciples. The Disciples have asked Him, ‘where will we have the supper **for You?**’ Interestingly, He is about to fulfill the supper **for them**. They will have this supper in an Upper Room.

There is some discussion about this Upper Room, but according to my study of the Bible on this I am convinced that this Upper Room is like the epicenter of Christianity. They arrive at this room for the last Passover, first Lord’s Supper and it is a room that will again be visited by

Jesus after His resurrection as some of His Disciples in fear have retreated there. On that first Lord's Day He comes and gathers them together for the first Lord's Day service which I love to note was a Sunday evening service. Then one week later they will be back in the Upper Room again for another gathering and this time Thomas will attend the Sunday evening service. They will be sent back to this Upper Room after the Ascension of Jesus to pray for the outpouring of the Spirit of God to visit them with power that they might be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the utter most parts of the world. In that room they will also identify the one who will replace Judas Iscariot, who had betrayed the Lord.

They aren't through with that room for Peter will be arrested and gloriously delivered by the hand of the Lord and he will come back to this room where they are praying for Him. We find out that the Upper Room actually belongs to the family of the man named John Mark who wrote the Gospel of Mark. His mother Mary is the one who is there are a hostess for them as they are praying.

It would have been like any other Passover as it begins. There would have been all of the elements – the bitter herbs. It wouldn't have been many for this is not a feast in the sense that we would think of a feast. In that sense it mirrors the Lord's Supper. Its glorious feast is not in the span and diversity of the meal but in that which it represents and that to which it points. So, it was with the Passover for it was a spartan meal – a meal that was rapidly eaten. There was preparation like the cleaning out of the leaven and the sacrifice of the Passover lamb. It would have begun with the baptisms which were done by the pouring of the water. In this case the people who participated had to be cleansed and all of the utensils would have had to have been purified.

It's clear the utensils had been purified but Jesus notes that no one had bothered to baptize or purify those who came to the attendance of it. So, Jesus takes off His outer garments, wraps the towel around Himself and begins to minister to them. Matthew, Mark and Luke center in on the Lord's Supper but John doesn't really mention it except for 'a new commandment I give you.' John centers in on the Passover itself and the things that occurred and it's a rather lengthy text. I want to read some from this text. We see here where Jesus didn't come to be served but to serve and give Himself a ransom for many.

John 13:1-30 says [1] *Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. [2] During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, [3] Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going back to God, [4] rose from supper. He laid aside His outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around His waist. [5] Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around Him. [6] He came to Simon Peter, who said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" [7] Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." [8] Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with Me." [9] Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" [10] Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." [11] For He knew who was to betray Him; that was why He said, "Not all of you are clean."*

[12] *When He had washed their feet and put on His outer garments and resumed His place, He said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? [13] You call Me Teacher*

*and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. [14] If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. [15] For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. [16] Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. [17] If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. [18] I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against Me.' [19] I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am He. [20] Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the One I send receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives the One who sent Me."*

*[21] After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in His spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." [22] The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom He spoke. [23] One of his disciples (John, the author of this book, who had an intimate relationship with Jesus), whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side, [24] so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom He was speaking. [25] So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?" [26] 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. [27] Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." [28] Now no one at the table knew why He said this to him. [29] 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. [30] So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night. (This means they have now entered into the next day, the Passover.)*

It's interesting to note how they would have been seated. From the text, I can safely say that they would have been seated at a low table and seated around it on the floor with pillows in likely a U shape. John would have been at one end of the U table, ready to serve and be free to get up and do so. Next to him would have been Jesus and then Judas. It seems as if when Jesus washed the Disciple's feet the first one He came to was Simon Peter. Peter was likely at the other end of the U table and then Jesus works His way all around the table back to John.

Then Jesus begins to administer the meal. The first thing Jesus would have done is give the first cup, blessed it and then passed it around to the Disciples and they also would have taken the cup until it came back to Him. Then He would begin the supper. The first time they would take the bread, He would break it. The bread was not only sustenance and the staff of life, but the bread was also what we would call a fork and a spoon. Then He would take some of these bitter herbs that had been put together and wrap it up within the bread and then it would be dipped in vinegar or salt water. He would dip it, bless it and take and eat and pass it around to the Disciples until it gets back to Him. After doing that, they would take another piece of the bread, a second time, break from the bread and take some of the sacrificed lamb that would be folded and then dipped. The first time they went through this with the bitter herbs, that's when Judas would have left. When they get to the lamb Judas is gone.

I have often thought at this point, with Jesus knowing what is going to happen and He washed Judas' feet yet Judas did not partake of the lamb. He is gone to do what Satan had entered into his heart to do in the betrayal of Christ who is the Lamb of God, who came to save us from our sins. Then they would have come to the second cup and this cup would have gone around after the lamb. These things are pretty much evident in extra Biblical literature but also how it is laid out in the Gospels and in Exodus. You have to put it together reading both the Old and New Testament yet most of the Seders administered today are Seders that come out of the

European settlement of Jews in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century or out of what was known as the ghettos, but this is the simplicity of the supper that was there.

While the supper is still going on, we now travel back to Matthew, Mark and Luke. They tell us when Jesus gets to the conclusion of the meal that Jesus again breaks the bread. We do know that various statements around the bread had already developed around this time. They weren't prescribed in the book of Exodus but they had developed here. One of those statements that had developed by the first century was, 'This bread is the bread of misery because we were in the land of Egypt and in the bondage of slavery.' My guess is that this wasn't done at this meal but it would have been done previously and the Disciples would have been aware of that, but Jesus puts another blessing upon it – This is My body which is given for you. Clearly there is no transubstantiation because Jesus' body is right there with them. This is His body that you partake of by faith and just as the bread feeds your physical body, then by faith as you feed on Jesus, He feasts your soul. This is the Supper that He now puts into place.

After that bread had been passed around and they ate – one loaf, one Savior from which we all personally participate – He then comes back to the third cup. As He pours the third cup which is the conclusion of the meal, He then lifts it and said 'this cup is the New Covenant in My blood, (no longer the Old Covenant) being shared/given for many.' We now have bread and a cup that anticipate no sacrifice for they point back to the sacrifice He is about to make on Good Friday, the next day. Our Savior is informing us not only of a life of righteousness in our place but an atoning death whereby He gives Himself that we might have everlasting life.

This is why Paul as he pulls these strands together will say in I Corinthians 10:16-17, *[16] The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? [17] Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.* At that moment on Maundy Thursday, we have stepped from the Passover Supper now to the Lord's Supper – the very One who gave it which is anticipating Him, is the very One who hosts this supper is now going to fulfill that supper. He now gives us a New Covenant meal.

So why do we call this night Maundy Thursday? The word Maundy is a derivative from a Latin word that we get another word from in our language – mandate, commandment. Because at this supper He says 'A new commandment I give to you that you who partake of this meal, who know Me as Lord and Savior, must now love one another.' What is new about that? There is nothing new about that but I didn't finish what He said – you love one another as I have loved you. Matthew 20:28 says *[28] the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.* He did this so that all of His people will be saved from all of their sins for all of eternity.

It is that sacrificial love that our Savior has given to set us free that we now give to one another that men and women might marvel. Oh, how they love one another! Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Thank You for the glory, the majesty, the intricacy and yet the expansiveness of Your Word and it all brings us to the glory, majesty, intricacy and the expansiveness of our great God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – manifested in the preeminence of Christ through whom we were created, by whom we are saved and in whom we are providentially sustained until He comes again and we shall be with Him. Lord, we long for that meal that is coming, but we rejoice in the meal that we partake of whereby the Incarnate Christ is not at our table, but His Spirit has been sent to us to bring us

not only to the Table but to Him who is coming again for us in these moments of a simple but profound meal. The bread represents His body and the cup His blood. Please fix the eyes of these Your people on Jesus and we rejoice as we have sung that there is no condemnation now, I dread, bold we approach the eternal throne. Jesus has loved us and loosed us from our sins, I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.