

The Lord's Supper

Mark 14:22-31

I hope you enjoyed time with loved ones for the Thanksgiving holiday, and I hope you took time to truly be thankful to the Lord for how good He is to all of us.

Since today is the Sunday after Thanksgiving, I really want us to think about an intimate dinner with family and friends.

Enjoying fellowship and conversation and simply being thankful that we can all be together, sort of like the show *Blue Bloods*.

We realize there are no perfect family gatherings, there might be political differences or even the strange uncle who was visiting for the holiday, but the meal can still a time to love one another.

Please open your Bibles to *Mark 14*, as we continue in our line-by-line study of *Mark*. Last time we were in *Mark*, before the Thanksgiving message, Judas negotiated a price for Jesus' life.

In contrast to the Love and worship Mary had shown at a dinner party, as she broke the alabaster jar of perfume open to anoint Jesus, Judas went to the religious leaders to sell out Jesus.

The religious leaders wanted to arrest Jesus, but not during the **feast** because He still had favor with the people. As Judas was celebrating Passover, Jesus reveals one of them will betray Him.

The Disciples all ask, "*Lord is it I?*" Then, Judas asks, "*Teacher, is it I?*" which shows his hypocrisy.

Judas knew he had already sold Jesus out to the religious leaders before the dinner. What an unbelievable betrayal followed by amazing **Grace**. Jesus loved Judas, even as he betrayed Him.

And now this morning, our passage speaks of how, at the Passover dinner, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper.

Since we celebrate Communion every week here at LFF, it can become routine, and we can be in danger of forgetting how Biblically important Communion is for believers in Christ.

I. Elements of the Passover.

The Passover dinner in our *Mark* passage takes place after over 1,500 years of celebrations, where the symbols of unleavened bread, wine, and a slain, unblemished lamb, represented Jesus.

The hour had come for the ultimate Passover Lamb to be slain.

For us today, we celebrate the **real** Passover with the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

1 Corinthians 5:7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. NKJV

I would like to discuss some of the symbolism of Christ, shown through Passover dinners, which the Jews before Jesus' time, as they celebrated, didn't even realize what it truly meant.

The Seder is the traditional dinner Jews eat at Passover and the word Seder means "**order**".

Passover has a specific order for food to be eaten, for prayers to be recited, and songs to be sung.

Each item used for the Passover had a specific meaning related to Jesus and the Exodus for the Jews, as they escaped Egypt.

1. The lamb shank is to remind us of God's salvation.

During the original Passover, God told the Israelites to sacrifice an unblemished lamb and place some of its blood on their door posts of their homes.

If they would follow the Lord's instructions, then the Angel of Death would "pass over" their homes and preserve the firstborn.

This whole thing was a picture to show us how Jesus is the "*Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*".

Jesus' sacrifice allows us to go from death to life; it delivers us from sin and death into the true Promised Land, our eternal life.

The Lamb shank was important because we are told the lamb's bones could not be **broken**, and the same was prophesied about the crucifixion of Jesus.

In one of the many Messianic prophecies, *Psalm 34:20 He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken. NKJV*

John 19:31 Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

John 19:32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him.

John 19:33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

John 19:35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.

John 19:36 For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken."

2. The unleavened bread.

As the Jewish people left Egypt, they were in a hurry and had no time to allow their bread to rise. From then on, Passover was followed by the week-long Feast, using Unleavened Bread.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread spoke of the purity of God since all leaven was a symbol of sin, and **leaven was to be put away** for Passover, to **symbolize** purity.

Leaven in scripture represents sin which *permeates and contaminates every aspect of our lives; it pollutes our hearts.*

The Apostle Paul used leaven to speak against carnality when he asked a rhetorical question in 1 Corinthians 5:6, "Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?"

The unleavened bread represented the **sinless** Bread of Life, Jesus Christ.

John 6:35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. NKJV

The unleavened bread or *matzoh* was to be placed in a bag called an *echad* (*ehh-cod*), which means “one” in Hebrew. The *echad* was one bag, with **three** chambers.

One piece of *matzoh* was placed in each one of the three chambers of the bag.

The first piece of *matzoh* was placed into the first chamber and then never touched, never used, and never seen.

The second piece of *matzoh* in the bag was broken in half at the beginning of the Seder; half of the *matzoh* was placed in the *echad*, and the other half was placed in a linen cloth.

The third piece of *matzoh* in the bag was used to eat the elements on the Seder plate.

Though the Israelites never understood this truth, God the Trinity was pictured with the *matzoh*.

- The 1st *matzoh* that remains in the bag throughout the Seder represents God the Father, whom no man sees.
- The 2nd *matzoh*, the broken one, represents God the Son.
- The 3rd *matzoh* pictures the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

The reason the middle matzoh was **broken** was to picture the broken body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:23 The Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;

1 Corinthians 11:24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." NKJV

Also, the *matzoh* used for the Passover Seder had to be prepared in a certain way, **besides** being made **without a leavening** agent.

The unleavened bread was to be striped with holes poked in it; representing Jesus' stripes and His pierced side.

3. Vegetable.

The vegetable was dipped in salt water and eaten, to represent the hyssop that was used to apply the blood of the Passover Lamb to the door posts of their homes.

In the New Testament, **hyssop** was used to give the Lamb of God some sour wine when Jesus said He thirsted in *John 19*.

The salt water represented the tears shed during the bitter years of slavery and the Red Sea that God split during the Exodus.

4. Bitter Herbs.

Bitter herbs are used to remind the Jews that they were unable to offer sacrifice and worship to God, during the **bitterness** of slavery, while in Egypt.

5. Charoset. (a mixture of apples, nuts, wine, and spices)

kr·ow·set represented the mortar the Israelites used in the constructing buildings during their slavery in Egypt.

Of all the elements of the Seder, Charoset (*kr·ow·set*) alone is sweet, which is used as a reminder of the **hope** of redemption.

6. Hard-boiled or Roasted Egg.

The egg was used to mourn over the loss of their temple and the fact that the egg is roasted reminds the people of the **roasting** of the sacrifice on the altar of the temple.

7. Four cups of wine.

- The first glass was the “cup of **sanctification.**”
- The second was the “cup of judgment.”
- The third was the “cup of **redemption.**”
- The fourth was the “cup of praise.”

II. The Lord’s Supper.

Read *Mark 14:22-25*

Passover and communion are **intimately** linked together, because it was during the celebration of the Passover Feast that Jesus offered His disciples the bread and the fruit of the vine.

Jesus clearly showed that communion was a picture of His body about to be offered on the cross and His blood soon to be shed, for the remission of sins.

Jesus broke the unleavened bread and told the Disciples to eat it as a representation of His broken body. Then He took the cup and told them the wine represented His shed blood.

Jesus fulfilled the Passover and gave the feast a new meaning.

Exodus 6:6 'I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an **outstretched arm** and with great judgments. NKJV

In the New Testament, the Messiah had both of His arms outstretched as He freed us from sin and brought our salvation.

Like the first Passover, everyone who believes and receives Jesus' sacrifice by faith to cover their sins, will be spared the second death, because of the **shed blood** of the Lamb of God.

Notice the term New Covenant. Before I describe the New Covenant, let discuss the Old one. God established the Old Covenant with Israel and required strict obedience to the Law.

Besides keeping the 10 commandments, the Law also required that Israel perform certain sacrifices in order to atone for sin.

Animal sacrifices could only cover sins; those sacrifices could not remove sin. ***Hebrews 10*** shows us a contrast between the animal sacrifices and Christ's sacrifice.

Animal sacrifices could never remove sin, but when Jesus Christ shed His blood, it removed all sins for those who receive Him.

Another problem for Israel about the Mosaic Law was they were incapable of keeping it. The Law was perfect, but all people are born sinners so, no one can be perfect or keep the Law perfectly.

Paul said in *Galatians 3:23* ***But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.***

Galatians 3:24 ***Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.***

Galatians 3:25 ***But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. NKJV***

The New Covenant is God's promise He will forgive sin and restore fellowship to those who will turn their **hearts** to Him.

Jesus Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant, and His death on the cross is our guarantee of the promise.

The New Covenant was predicted in the Old Testament through the prophets Moses, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; that someday God would restore His people through **faith** in the coming Messiah.

The New Covenant involves a total change of heart through the Holy Spirit, so that God's people are naturally pleasing to Him.

Jesus took the cup of **redemption** and used it as a symbol of the New Covenant in His blood, revealing He is the Promised One, who would give us a new heart and save us from our sin.

Here Jesus broke nearly 1,500 years' worth of tradition of Passover to institute "Communion", as He radically repurposes this holy feast into a memorial of His upcoming sacrifice.

Jesus instructed His followers to eat the bread representing His body broken, and drink the cup representing His blood poured out, in remembrance of Him!

Jesus said in *vs. 25*, "***I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.***"

In the *Book of Revelation*, we read of the Lamb's supper and His bride, the Church, who was made ready for the feast.

Jesus was promising, with the statement of not drinking the fruit of the vine, that the kingdom will be a fulfilled **reality** when the Church will be gathered at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

The Last Supper was also a picture for the Church's future supper with the Bride Groom Jesus Christ.

When we partake of Communion, it reminds us, not only of Jesus' death and resurrection but, it also reminds us of our future hope of glory with Jesus for eternity.

Jesus did drink from the cup of God's wrath at the cross, for the remission of sins, and then He instituted Communion for us to partake in remembrance of what He did and what He will do.

Then Jesus got up from the table and washed the Disciple's feet.

Jesus even washed the feet of Judas who would walk out of the upper room to betray Him!

III. Jesus sings in the face of adversity.

Read *Mark 14:26*

The Passover meal was followed by the singing of the last half of the Hallel Psalms found within *Psalms 115-118*.

Imagine being the all-knowing God the Son, knowing full well what was about to happen to you, and yet you still take time to praise the Lord in Hymns.

Jesus Christ was singing worship songs to the Father with His Disciples on His way to the Garden of Gethsemane before His brutal beatings and crucifixion!

When we can make melodies in our hearts in the face of adversity, it proves that our trust is in the Lord God almighty.

Billy Graham said, “*Comfort and prosperity have never enriched the world as much as adversity has.*”

1 Peter 1:6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

1 Peter 1:7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, NKJV

After Jesus sang a hymn, they left the dinner and went out to the Mount of Olives where they were accustomed to gathering.

Jesus told all of His Disciples they would all stumble and fail.

But I want us to notice what this teaches us about Jesus.

This passage shows the determination of Jesus to take the cross to save lost humanity.

The prophet Zechariah prophesied this event in 520 B.C.

Zechariah 13:7 "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, Against the Man who is My Companion," says the LORD of hosts.

"Strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered; Then I will turn My hand against the little ones. NKJV

Jesus was not condemning the Disciples, rather He was letting them know He was in charge, and the cross was necessary.

Prophecy was fulfilled, even as Jesus realized that each and every one of His Disciples would fail but, Jesus will not fail.

IV. Peter's denial predicted.

Read ***Mark 14:27-31***

Jesus had already told His Disciples one of them would betray Him and here He told them that all of them would fall away!

Some people believe Peter's denial began after Jesus' arrest, but his denial was a **slow fade** into sin which began right here.

Peter was **arguing** with the Word of God that Jesus spoke.

In vs. 27, Jesus said all of you will stumble, and here Peter is telling Jesus he knows better than Jesus.

Jesus also quoted *Zechariah 13:7 "Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.*

In vs. 28 Jesus was trying to **reassure** them with the words, "***But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.***"

Jesus goes before them, even knowing they would all stumble and even deny Him.

How many times have we stumbled and failed the Lord? How many times have you been disloyal to Jesus?

The Lord is the God of many chances!

Lamentations 3:22 Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not.

Lamentations 3:23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. NKJV

But **Peter says not so Lord.** ***Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. NKJV***

Peter didn't realize how weak his flesh was so he proclaimed that although all the others would stumble, he would not.

1 Corinthians 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. NKJV

Except for God's Mercy and watch care over us, we are all capable of all kinds of unspeakable evil.

Jesus told Peter that not only would he deny Jesus, but he will actually deny Jesus three times; **Peter then insisted a second time**

Matthew 26:35 Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" NKJV

Peter's double self-confidence led him to a triple denial of Christ. Like Peter, our flesh is **prone** to declare its own goodness and deny the Word of God!

James 4:6 "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." NKJV

V. Practical Application.

The next scene in *Mark* is the Garden of Gethsemane which means Olive Press. Jesus will face being crushed under the weight of the upcoming beatings and pain of the cross.

But notice, He is still concerned with, and loves His Disciples.

Here in our passage this morning, Jesus instituted Communion.

The memorial feast of love is the central ordinance committed to the church, and it is designed to bring the memory of Jesus Himself before the soul.

This scene was an appeal to the affections of His followers as He announced that He was going away.

He did not want to be forgotten by those He loved so tenderly so, He instituted this Holy ordinance that wherever and whenever it was observed it might recall Him vividly to mind.

Jesus' love was even stronger than physical death, which the cruelty of a Roman criminal's cross could not stop.

At the Last Supper Jesus shared a meal with His disciples as He led them in the observance of Passover and turned it into Communion from there on.

Jesus, the Master Teacher, used this opportunity to plant an important memory in His disciples gathered in the Upper Room.

Jesus shared this meal for their benefit and for ours.

As Jesus raised the bread and the cup in thanksgiving, He added new significance to this ancient ritual. Jesus told His disciples to observe the Passover "*in remembrance of me.*"

The meaning of Jesus' words and actions are rooted in His command to remember.

As we are His disciples today, we observe the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Christ.

The Memorial Supper highlights the significance of Christ's atoning work on the cross and tells us to remember His sacrifice.

It is also to highlight the believer's intimacy with Christ.

This observance is a time to remember all that Christ did for us individually and corporately on the cross.