

#26 - The Last Supper Luke 22:7-39; John 13:1-17

Engage:

The time for the earthly ministry of Jesus was fast coming to a close. In this story Jesus gathered His disciples in an upper room for a final meal together. Matthew, Mark and Luke record the institution of the Lord's Supper as part of a Passover meal. John expands on this special time with the washing of the disciple's feet.

The Passover and Feast of the Unleaven Bread was a seven day memorial of the exodus of Israelites from Egyptian slavery (Exodus 12:12-27; 23:15). (Note: Jewish males were expected to journey to Jerusalem for three special festivals: Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles). During the time of Jesus it is estimated that several hundred thousand people filled the city for this occasion, and that around 100,000 lambs were sacrificed causing a "river of blood" to flow out from the temple area.

The celebration included a roasted lamb, bitter herbs, four cups of wine, unleaven bread (matzo cracker), and *haroset* (a dipping sauce made from fruit and bitter herbs). Everything had to be eaten, so enough people had to be gathered to do this. During the meal the youngest person in attendance would ask the meaning of the Passover observance. The patriarch of the group would then explain the story of God's deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery.

Note: Each of the four cups represented one line taken from Exodus 6:6-7a.

1st cup - "I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians."

2nd cup - "I will free you from being slaves to them."

3rd cup - "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment."

4th cup - "I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God."

Just as the Passover was established by God to remind the Israelite children of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the Lord's Supper was begun to show that a New Covenant was now in place based on the cleansing power of the blood of Christ. God established this covenant. Therefore, the covenant relationship is not an agreement between equals. We are given the choice to accept or reject this covenant relationship!

Thoughts about the story:

Note: This story presents a special problem as to how to harmonize the Luke account and John's account of the washing of the feet of the disciples. The following is taken from A Harmony Of The Gospels written by the late Dr. A. T. Robertson, one of the foremost New Testament scholars of the last century (Note: The underlined and bolded texts represents the text for this story. Also, a copy of the verses in order follows this handout.):

#143 - The preparation of the Pascal meal at the home of a friend (possibly that of John Mark's father and mother)

Mk 14:12-16

Mt 26:17-19

Lk 22:7-13

#144 - Jesus partakes of the Pascal meal with the Twelve Apostles and rebukes their jealousy

Mk 14:17

Mt 26:20

Lk 22:14-16, 24-30

#145 - During the Pascal meal Jesus washes the feet of His disciples

Jn 13:1-20

#146 - At the paschal meal Jesus points out Judas as the betrayer

Mk 14:18-21

Mt 26:21-25

Lk 22:21-23

Jn 13:21-30

#147 - After the departure of Judas, Jesus warns His disciples (Peter in particular), against desertion, while all protest their loyalty

Mk 14:27-31

Mt 26:31-35

Lk 22:31-38

Jn 13:31-38

#148 - Jesus institutes the memorial of eating bread and drinking wine

Mk 14:22-25

Mt 26:26-29

Lk 22:17-20

1 Cor 11:23-26

Note: "It appears that Luke does not attempt to be strictly chronological in his account of the Last Supper. He records the most important part in his account of the Last Supper. He records the most important part of the occasion first—the sharing of the bread and the cup. Then he tells of Jesus' comments about his betrayer and about the argument over who would be greatest, though both of these subjects seem to have been introduced earlier. John's Gospel (13:26-30), e.g., indicates that Judas had already left the room before the bread and cup of the Lord's Supper were shared, but Luke does not tell when he left." NIV Study Bible

- Luke 22:7-13 (Matthew 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16) – Jesus sent Peter and John to make preparations for the disciples to share the Passover meal together. They were sent into Jerusalem to find a man carrying a water jar. Note: This person would be obvious because this was typically a "woman's job." He led them to a person who owned a house where Jesus could observe the Passover with His disciples. Note: It is assumed that there had been an agreement made by Jesus with this unknown person ahead of time since everything was prepared and ready. Jesus had been in the area for the several days and could have easily set this up. Note: Since Peter and John were sent, Judas could not have known where they would meet until they went there together as a group if he had intentions of betraying Jesus at the meal.
- Luke 22:14-16, 24-30 (Matthew 26:20; Mark 14:17)

Luke 22:14-16 – This was a special time as it would be the last Passover meal Jesus would share with His disciples. He knew that He was to become the "Passover lamb" that was slain so that the God's people could be delivered. This was expressed from the beginning of His ministry (John 1:29). The next time Jesus will partake (Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25) will be at the celebration of the "wedding supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:6-9).

Luke 22:24-30 – During the meal the disciples got into an argument about who was the greatest. This was not the first time this had happened. The first was roughly a year earlier (See Matthew 18:1-6; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-50). The second time was just a few days before this occasion (Matthew 20:17-28; Mark 10:32-45). Each of these occurrences followed a time when Jesus predicted His death. Each time Jesus sternly rebuked His disciples. Also, they must have forgotten that Jesus had said that a person is wise to put himself in a low position so as to give

the host the opportunity to move you up, rather than be embarrassed and have to move to a lower position (Luke 14:7-11).

Jesus then said that they would be rewarded in the future rule of Jesus (also see Luke 18:30) if they would share in the trials now by serving sacrificially. Today is no different. Note: “Jesus urges and exemplifies servant leadership—a trait that was as uncommon then as it is now” (NIV Study Bible).

- John 13:1-17 – Note: This is the beginning of the most extensive account of what Jesus said to His disciples on their last night together before the crucifixion. It includes 5 of the 21 chapters of John (chapters 13-17). Also, a special emphasis of Jesus in these chapters is the use of the word translated “love”—roughly 80% of the times used in John.

John 13:1-5 – Jesus knew that the reason for His coming had arrived (John 13:3). During the meal He arose from where He was sitting and proceeded to take a towel and water which had been poured into a basin and began to wash the feet of His disciples. Jesus took the responsibility that the lowest servant of the house by washing the feet of each of His disciples. Note: What Jesus did, one of His disciples should have done. But they were too busy arguing among themselves as to who would be considered greatest. In all, this was Jesus’ way to give a hands on visual response to the dispute. He said that He came as one who serves, rather than as one who sits at the table (Luke 22:27). The point of His lesson was humility. Note: Seeing the Christ act as a slave must have been confusing to the disciples “This is not a comfortable passage for leaders who find it hard to serve those beneath them” (Life Application Bible).

John 13:6-11 – When it came time for Jesus to wash the feet of Peter, he objected. Peter’s response was: “You shall never wash my feet.” The word “never” is translated from the Greek phrase “eis ton aiona” – meaning forever. (Note: The same phrase is translated “forever” in John 6:51, 58; 8:35; 12:34; 14:15.) Jesus countered Peter’s strong statement by saying that if Peter didn’t allow Jesus to wash his feet, that he would no longer be involved in the purpose of Jesus. Peter “repented” and said that Jesus could wash him anywhere He wanted. Note: The cleansing that Jesus referred to was much deeper than a physical bath. What Peter really needed was a spiritual cleansing. Note: John 13:7 - “understand” - It would not be until after the cross that the disciples minds would be opened so that they would more clearly understand the extent of the servanthood model of Jesus.

John 13:12-17 – Jesus knew that Judas would betray him before the next day break. One must wonder what must have gone through the mind of Judas as Jesus washed his feet. Judas did not leave until later. See John 13:30.

After washing the feet of the disciples, Jesus returned to His place to sit and explained that He was their teacher and they were His students. He pointed out that their responsibility was to imitate Him as their teacher. Jesus called them not just to a single act, but to display an unchanging attitude of servanthood which could be expressed in any way that was needed at the moment. “‘Footwashing’ translates into performing lowly tasks which everyone else avoids because of pride” (Mark Moore). Note: This was not an institution of foot washing as a “sacrament.” It was Jesus making a strong point about being a humble servant!

Note: “Jesus did not wash His disciples’ feet just to get them to be nice to each other. His far greater goal was to extend His mission on earth after He was gone. These men were to move into the world serving God, serving each other, and serving all people to whom they took the

message of salvation” (Life Application Bible).

John 13:18-20 – Jesus clearly revealed that He would be betrayed by one of His disciples (“one who shares my bread” - Ps 41:9; also Zechariah 11:7-11). Point: Old Testament prophecy was being fulfilled as Jesus was destined to be betrayed!

Jesus showed His concern for His disciples in that He wanted them to “believe.” This is the stated purpose of the gospel of John. See 20:31.

- Luke 22:21-23 (Matthew 26:21-25; Mark 14:18-21; John 13:21-30) – Jesus made it clear that one of the Twelve (Mark 14:20) would betray Him. He had predicted this earlier (Matthew 17:22; Mark 9:31; Luke 9:44 and Matthew 20:18; Mark 10:33). Jesus said it would be one those who ate with them (Mk 14:18). Jesus would even give him a piece of bread (Jn 13:26). Jesus indicated to Peter and the “disciple whom Jesus loved” (most likely John) that Judas was the one (John 13:23-26)
- Luke 22:31-38 (Matthew 26:31-35; Mark 14:27-31; John 13:31-38) – After the departure of Judas, Jesus warned His disciples (Peter in particular), against desertion, while all protest their loyalty.

Jesus said to Peter that Satan wanted to “sift you as wheat,” meaning that Satan had asked for permission to test or tempt Peter and the disciples by crushing them like grains of wheat. See Job 1-2. Note: It seems out of place, but the word “you” is plural in the Greek. In particular, Jesus said that He had prayed specifically for Peter that his “faith may not fail” even though he would soon deny Him (Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-18; 25-27). Note: Judas betrayed Jesus. What Peter and Judas both did was wrong, but the outcome for each was different because Peter repented. The same outcome will always be true for those who repent and do not repent. Jesus closed this portion by making a plain statement that troubles would come to His followers.

- Luke 22:17-20 (Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26) – Here we finally come to the point where Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper. (Note: The disciples did not understand that this would be their last meal together before the crucifixion of Jesus). In Jewish culture, it was a special event to share a meal with someone, especially a meal like the Passover.

By giving thanks or blessing the meal, Jesus was not only saying thanks for the food, but He was also inviting God to be present (and in this case He was). Note: The phrase “gave thanks” is a translation of the Greek “*eucharisteo*,” from which we get the word Eucharist.

Jesus took the unleavened bread, gave thanks for it, broke it and then gave some to each of the disciples. This bread is representative of the sinless life and body of Jesus.

Jesus then took what may have been the 3rd cup and announced that it represented the blood that He would give on the cross to establish the New Covenant. Through this covenant, humankind has the opportunity to receive forgiveness of sin because of the one time sacrifice of Jesus’ blood (See Isaiah 53:4-8; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 9:22-28.) which was “poured out for you” (or “many” - Mark 14:24; or see John 3:16 - “for God so loved the world”).

Jesus established His death as a memorial (or a “remembrance”) for His followers to help them be always mindful of the significance of His blood sacrifice on our behalf. This was God’s

means of delivering us from the slavery to the bondage of sin. This parallels the Passover which was a reminder of God's redemption of the Israelites from the slavery of Egyptian bondage.

One argument that has been presented states that Jesus did not partake of the 4th cup. He will at the wedding supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6). Not only does the Lord's Supper look back to the cross, but it also looks forward to Jesus' return.

Note: "Beyond this **forward** and **backward** glance, the Lord's Supper urges us to look **inward**, to examine ourselves (1 Cor 11:27-32), and **outward**, to proclaim the unity of Christ's body (1 Cor 10:17; 11:17-19). It is indeed a wondrous mystery that such a fragile memorial, comprised of such common and transitory elements, has endured so tenaciously the ravages of time" (Mark Moore).

- Luke 22:39 (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; John 18:1) – To close out the evening, Jesus led the disciples to the Mount of Olives is where Gethsemane was located. They also sang a hymn, which would be common, especially for a Passover celebration. Psalm 136 or Psalms 115-118 were used.

Discussion Starters:

- What impresses you the most about Jesus at the Last Supper?
- Share with your group what you do to prepare for communion and why it is an important part of your worship experience.
- Who do you know that has demonstrated what it means to wash feet? What did he or she do?
- When and/or why is it difficult for you to serve others (wash feet)? What can you do to demonstrate this ministry of service this week for Jesus' sake and that of His kingdom on earth?
- Why is it so important to accept the service of others when they offer it?

The text in order:

Luke 22:7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8 Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover."

9 "Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked.

10 He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, 11 and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat

the Passover with my disciples?' 12 He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there."

13 They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

14 When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. 15 And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

Luke 22:24 Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. 25 Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. 26 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. 27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. 28 You are those who have stood by me in my trials. 29 And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, 30 so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

John 13:1 It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world

and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

2 The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

10 Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I

am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Luke 22:21 But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. 22 The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him." 23 They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

Luke 22:31 "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

33 But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death."

34 Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me."

35 Then Jesus asked them, "When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?"

"Nothing," they answered.

36 He said to them, "But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one. 37 It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'; and I tell you that this

must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment."

38 The disciples said, "See, Lord, here are two swords."
"That is enough," he replied.

Luke 22:17 After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. 18 For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."