

The Lord's Supper

Printed Text · Luke 22:7-23

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: EXPLORE the principles behind the Lord's Supper; COMMIT to participate in the Lord's Supper as Jesus would have believers do; and feel MOTIVATED to teach someone else about the importance of the Lord's Supper.

In Focus

Louise was a wonderful woman who left a godly legacy, not only with her family, but also among the church members. No wonder hundreds of people turned out for her homegoing service, even though it was a hot and humid day.

After the service and burial, people gathered for the fellowship meal in the church's banquet hall to share fond memories of Louise. The pastor was surprised at how far Louise's family had come for her funeral. Louise's kinfolk lived in Los Angeles, Chicago, Baltimore, Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and Montgomery, Alabama.

"Everyone is here," said one of Louise's distant cousins, "I wouldn't have missed this for the world. Louise was so very special, and I wanted to show her and the rest of my family what she meant to me."

A church member chimed in. "Yes, Louise was a stalwart of our church, and it was only fitting to share this special occasion with her family and friends."

Special occasions are for special people who have made a lasting impact on our lives. We want to demonstrate how much we love and appreciate them, and one of the ways to do that is with a fellowship meal to honor them. In today's lesson we learn there is something wonderful about sharing a meal together. In fact, in many countries, the dinner table is synonymous with brotherly love and fellowship.

Keep In Mind

"This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (from Luke 22:19–20, KJV).

Words You Should Know

- A. Unleavened Bread** (Luke 22:7) Greek azymos — In the New Testament, used with reference to the Feast of the Passover. Figuratively, it means "not penetrated by evil."
- B. Master** (v. 11) Greek didaskalos — Teacher; a name of respect given to many Jewish scribes.
- C. Remembrance** (v. 19) Greek anamnesis — A commemoration or memorial. It refers to Christ and the expiatory sacrifice of His death.

Say It Correctly

Synoptic Gospels. syn-OP-tic gos_PELS

Passover. paa-SOH-vuh

Fervent. FUR-vuhnt

Eschatological. ESK-uh-tuh-loj-i-kuhl

Incarnation. IN-car-nay-shun

KJV

Luke 22:7 Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.
8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.
9 And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?
10 And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.
11 And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?
12 And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.
13 And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.
14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.
15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:
16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.
17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:
18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.
19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.
20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.
21 But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.
22 And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!
23 And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

NLT

Luke 22:7 Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread arrived, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed. 8 Jesus sent Peter and John ahead and said, "Go and prepare the Passover meal, so we can eat it together."
9 "Where do you want us to prepare it?" they asked him.
10 He replied, "As soon as you enter Jerusalem, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him. At the house he enters,
11 say to the owner, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?'
12 He will take you upstairs to a large room that is already set up. That is where you should prepare our meal." 13 They went off to the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover meal there.
14 When the time came, Jesus and the apostles sat down together at the table.
15 Jesus said, "I have been very eager to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins.
16 For I tell you now that I won't eat this meal again until its meaning is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God."
17 Then he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. Then he said, "Take this and share it among yourselves.
18 For I will not drink wine again until the Kingdom of God has come."
19 He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."
20 After supper he took another cup of wine and said, "This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.

21 “But here at this table, sitting among us as a friend, is the man who will betray me.
22 For it has been determined that the Son of Man[c] must die. But what sorrow awaits the one who betrays him.”
23 The disciples began to ask each other which of them would ever do such a thing.

The People, Places, and Times

The Lord’s Supper. This was the last meal Jesus shared with His disciples prior to His death. The early Christian celebration known as the Lord’s Supper received its name from Paul’s reference to “the supper of the Lord” in 1 Corinthians 11:20. Originally it referred to Jesus’ last meal with His disciples.

Even if the Synoptic Gospels are correct in describing this “last supper” as a Passover meal (in John, Jesus’ last meal is eaten before Passover), the meal should still be viewed in the context of the table fellowship that was a distinctive feature of Jesus’ ministry.

In earliest Christianity, the Lord’s Supper was pervaded by intense eschatological expectation. Fervent hope for the new age, to be inaugurated by the risen and exalted Jesus upon His return to earth, is obvious in Mark 14:25 and Luke 22:18 and is echoed in 1 Corinthians 11:28.

In John’s Gospel, Jesus does not institute the Lord’s Supper during the last meal with His disciples, but the “bread of life” discourse in John 6 (vv. 25–59) likely reflects the understanding of the Lord’s Supper in the Johannine community. Jesus speaks of eating His flesh and drinking His blood as the means of attaining eternal life (vv. 53–58). This emphasis in John’s writing points to the Incarnation: to have eternal life, one must commit to Jesus as the revealer sent from God, the Word that became flesh (John 1:14).

Background

According to most scholars, the Feast of the Passover that Jesus and His disciples observed would fall on a Wednesday, just two days before Jesus’ crucifixion. Passover was a Jewish festival that commemorated the time when God brought His people out of Egypt after the death angel “passed over” their homes and killed all of Egypt’s firstborn children (see Exodus 12). The Passover meal reminds us of what Jesus provided for His people on Calvary. God gave Israel these instructions: the Passover lamb was to be without blemish (Exodus 12:5), the lamb sacrificed (v. 6), and the animal’s blood put on their doorposts (v. 7). God also told the people that if He saw the blood on their homes, their lives would be spared. Today, when God sees the blood of the Lamb applied in our lives, we are spared from death and degradation as well.

Caiaphas and the other religious leaders had already conspired to get Jesus, but they needed someone to help them. Judas was a willing nemesis, allowing Satan to use him in his ultimate plot. Perhaps Judas was a member of the Zealots, the party that was determined to overthrow Rome’s control of Israel. If so, it was easy for the religious leaders to manipulate him for only thirty pieces of silver. Judas was not into turning the other cheek and loving one’s neighbor as Jesus taught. Many scholars believe that Judas was very disappointed with Jesus and wanted to get rid of Him as much as the religious leaders did (see Luke 22:1–6). On the very next day, Jesus and His disciples sat down to have their last meal together before His inevitable moment at Calvary.

At-A-Glance

1. Jesus' Disciples Prepare for the Passover Meal (Luke 22:7–13)
2. Jesus and His Disciples Eat the Passover Meal (vv. 14–20)
3. Jesus Informs His Disciples of Betrayal at the Passover Meal (vv. 21–23)

In Depth

1. Jesus' Disciples Prepare for the Passover Meal (Luke 22:7–13)

According to Jewish law, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was to begin on the evening of the Passover. Jewish calendars are such that a day usually starts at sunset (6:00 p.m.). God commanded that on the first day of Passover, leaven was to be removed from the home, and a holy convocation would be instituted among the people (see Exodus 12:9-20).

It was on the day that commemorated the Feast of Unleavened Bread when the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed as stated in the Law of Moses (see Exodus 12:2–11) that Jesus told Peter and John to make the necessary preparations for Him and the rest of the disciples to share their last meal together.

Neither Peter nor John had any idea where the Passover could be celebrated. Jesus and His disciples had gathered near the Mount of Olives, so the logical place would be in Jerusalem, a few miles away. In fact, Jesus told them that as they entered into Jerusalem, they would see a man carrying a pitcher of water. Whatever building the man entered would be the place of the Passover meal. Scholars believe that the man would not be too difficult to spot since mostly women carried water in pitchers throughout the city (see John 4:7–11, 28–29). Jesus told Peter and John that when they saw the man, they should approach him and ask, "Where is the guest room in which [our Master] may eat the Passover with [His] disciples?" (v. 11, NKJV). Jesus knew that once the disciples made the request, the man would be only too happy to oblige.

Jesus' words prove that He is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. In His omniscience, Jesus has infinite wisdom and insight. There is nothing Jesus doesn't know. Yet one would be tempted to ask, "Yes, but how did Jesus know that a man with a pitcher would be in the city?" We recognize that some believe Jesus had arranged the events with this man in advance. However, because He is omnipresent, it is quite possible that Jesus could see the man even as He sat on the Mount (see John 1:48). We can rest assured that no matter what we face, Jesus can see our troubles and has the power and authority to strengthen us in our time of need.

Just as Jesus said, Peter and John arrived in the city and found the man with the pitcher of water. After the disciples shared Jesus' request with him, the man showed them the Upper Room where Jesus and His disciples could have their fellowship meal together. Once Peter and John found the room, they got it together, cleaning the place, finding and slaughtering the Passover lamb, and preparing the meal for the Lord and the other disciples.

What do we need to do to prepare our place for the Lord's coming? Maybe we need to sweep away some bad habits, sacrifice our fleshly cravings, or cleanse our minds from this world's pollution. Whatever it is, now would be the time to purge ourselves from dead works so that we can welcome the Lord to fellowship with us.

2. Jesus and His Disciples Eat the Passover Meal (vv. 14–20)

Scripture doesn't indicate how long it took to prepare the Passover meal. But after Peter and John had completed their task, Jesus and the rest of the disciples arrived. Everything was set for the Master and His followers to share a special time with one another. Jesus would use the meal not only to teach His disciples powerful truths, but also to share His most intimate feelings with them. As He sat with them at the table feasting and sharing, Jesus called their attention to the moment at hand.

First, He let the disciples know how much He desired to share the Passover with them before His death on the cross. The word "desire" refers to an intense longing that yearns to be fulfilled. For three years, Jesus had poured His very life into these men. The disciples were more than His students; Jesus considered them His friends. Jesus also knew that after this particular night He would not see them again. Jesus was going back to the Father, and the next time He and His disciples would share the Passover together would be in His Father's kingdom (v. 16).

Jesus' death was the means by which the New Covenant would be established. Thus, Jesus was pointing the disciples to the time when they would be reunited with Him in the millennial kingdom. John calls this reunion "the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:9), where believers of all races and social standings will come together with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to celebrate the victory that was secured for us through the cross and Jesus' resurrection.

The disciples still did not understand the significance of this Passover (see vv. 24–30). But Jesus had their attention, and He continued teaching, using the cup and bread as object lessons that pointed to Himself as the Lamb of God. First, giving thanks to the Father, Jesus took the cup, and passed it to the disciples. He wanted them to share the cup as a symbol that together they would be cleansed and redeemed by His blood. Jesus knew that once He was arrested and taken to Pilate, His physical life would come to an end. But the disciples were assured that just as they now drank together from the cup, so they would drink again in the Father's eternal kingdom.

Jesus also broke the bread into pieces, passed it around to the disciples, and urged them to eat it and to drink from the cup after the meal. The bread and the cup represented Jesus' body that would be broken on the cross and the blood He would shed. His death was not only for His disciples, but for all who would believe in Him. We have access to the Father because of Jesus. Scripture teaches that there is only one mediator between God and us, and that is Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).

While an animal sacrifice was necessary in the Old Dispensation, Jesus is the sacrifice God accepts in the New. His body and blood which were broken and shed at the cross are the means by which all who believe in Him shall be saved. Today, when believers partake of the communion elements, we are acknowledging that Jesus' death is sufficient for our salvation. That is why Jesus says that when we eat the bread and drink the cup, we must do so in "remembrance" of Him (v. 19).

3. Jesus Informs His Disciples of Betrayal at the Passover Meal (vv. 21–23)

The disciples were probably fascinated by Jesus' teaching, as He made Himself synonymous with the Passover lamb they had been enjoying. It was shocking to hear Jesus' next words. Someone at the fellowship meal would be instrumental in turning Jesus over to His enemies. The disciples were shocked to know that there was an "enemy in the camp" and began to ask the Lord who it was that would turn on Him. Obviously, if Jesus knew the man would be in the city with the pitcher of water, it wouldn't be too difficult for Him to point out His betrayer.

Jesus' arrest and trial had already been foretold by the Father in the Scriptures. But it would be tragic for Judas, the one who would raise his hand against Jesus. The Bible indicates that Judas eventually hung himself after he realized the extent to which Satan had deceived him (see Matthew 27:3–5).

The Lord's Supper is a special time for the church. We must always remember that it commemorates a special occasion for believers. Every time we partake of the communion elements, we need to remember just how much Jesus sacrificed so that we might enjoy sweet fellowship with Him and the Father in eternity.

Search the Scriptures

1. Who did Jesus send to prepare for the Passover? (Luke 22:8)
2. What did Jesus say they would find as they went to make preparations? (vv. 10–12)
3. How did Jesus symbolize the Passover meal? (vv. 17–20)
4. How did the disciples know Jesus was to be betrayed? (vv. 22)
5. What would happen to Jesus' betrayer? (vv. 22–23)

Discuss the Meaning

1. How could Jesus know that the man carrying the pitcher of water would be in the city, and that he would lead Peter and John to the place where they would observe the Passover?
2. Why should we celebrate the Lord's Supper?
3. What do the bread and wine symbolize?
4. What did Jesus mean when He said that He will not drink of the wine until God's kingdom comes?

Liberating Lesson

In the Middle East and many other European countries, dining at the table is more than eating food. It is an act of fellowship. In our fast-paced society, we have lost this concept. Talk about the benefits of sharing at the dinner table. Encourage family and friends to start coming together around the table to discuss aspirations and dreams while enjoying a good meal.

Application For Activation

This week, spend time with Jesus, focusing on His statement that His body and blood are the means for our salvation. Begin to thank Him that we have access to the Father because of what He has done on the cross. Remember that there is only one mediator between God and us: Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

More Light on the Text

Luke 22:7-23

Luke 22:7–23

- 7 Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.**
8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.
9 And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

The annual commemoration of the Passover (Greek: pascha, PAS-ka) is conjoined with and sometimes referred to as the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The avoidance of leaven symbolizes the haste of that unforgettable night of the exodus. In the context of this passage, the word “Passover” is used either of the meal, the feast day, or the whole eight-day period of celebration. Peter and John were sent out to make arrangements for what would be Jesus’ last Passover supper. Jesus Christ fulfilled the deepest spiritual meaning of the Passover by offering Himself as the true Lamb of God that takes away the sin, not of the Jews only, but of the whole world (John 1:29).

- 10 And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.**
11 And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?
12 And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.
13 And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

There seemed to be understandable secrecy about the plans for Jesus’ last Passover. Jesus was aware that Judas was conspiring with the religious leaders to arrest Him. Therefore, it would make sense to keep the location of the dinner a secret to ensure that His enemies did not interrupt this most important occasion. Peter and John—Jesus’ most trusted friends—were sent to follow up with the “goodman” of the house (Greek: oikodespotei, oy-ko-des-POH-tay), which refers to the house supervisor or master of the house), who would show them to a prepared upstairs room (Greek: anagaion, ah-nah-GUY-on).

- 14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.**
15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:
16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

At this solemn gathering, Luke refers to the disciples as apostles (Greek: apostoloi, ah-PAHstah-loi). They had completed their period of apprenticeship, and here at the Last Supper they receive Christ’s final instructions and message for the entire world.

The phrase “with desire I have desired...this Passover” expresses the intense eagerness with which Jesus was approaching this particular Passover before His passion. It was of the utmost importance that His disciples understand the full significance of His approaching death as the true Passover toward which the commemoration looks.

The phrase “until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God” anticipates a heavenly banquet that Christ prepares for His bride. It also indicates Jesus’ eagerness to have this parting meal together with His closest friends, students, and followers in ministry. Not even death can separate Him from those He calls His own.

**17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:
18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.
19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.
20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.**

Luke's account reverses the normal order of commemoration of the Passover meal. Ordinarily, at the outset of the meal, the head of the family would break the bread and offer thanks. At the end of the meal, the head of the household also closed by saying "grace" after the meal and sharing the "cup of blessing." At the Last Supper, Jesus offers thanks accordingly, then breaks and offers the bread to His disciples as the head of His "family." But more importantly, He adds the words, "This is my body," which gave new meaning and significance to the time-honored ritual. Here, Jesus is declaring that the deliverance commemorated by the feast of Passover is fulfilled in His broken body. In the same manner, He takes the cup of wine and gives it a deeper meaning and significance as He declares that it now fulfills the Old Covenant and establishes the New Covenant.

The shedding of blood is commonly associated with the ratification of a covenant, and what was written in blood was believed to be symbolically indelible. The blood of mere animals established the Old Covenant, but this New Covenant is established and ratified by the spotless blood of the Son of God. Jesus also wants His disciples to understand that His body is being given for them (Greek: *huper humon*, HOO-per HOO-mahn meaning "on behalf of you" or "for the sake of you"). Christ did not die for His sin or for His own benefit, but that those who put their trust in Him might receive forgiveness of sin and life forevermore.

**21 But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.
22 And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!**

Jesus predicts His betrayal and the fate of the one who would betray Him. There has been a great deal of discussion about the fate of Judas. Some suggest that Judas could not help himself and is therefore not blameworthy for betraying Jesus. If indeed Judas could not help but fulfill a task for which he had been specifically predestined by God, it would seem unfair and unjust to punish him for it. But the truth is that Judas was responsible for his own decisions. It is true that "Jesus knew from the beginning who should betray him" (John 6:64), but knowing does not mean causing. We may not be able to discern the motives rushing through the mind of Judas, but we can be fairly certain that greed and the love of money were involved. Judas could have chosen not to betray his Master.

23 And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

The Greek phrase translated "to enquire among themselves," literally means "to dispute to themselves" and suggests some form of inquisition among the disciples in an attempt to discover who the culprit was. Obviously, both Jesus and Judas knew who the betrayer was. Jesus' words were intended to rouse repentance in Judas, not to give occasion for self-righteous chatter. It is important that today we receive and respond to Christ's Word, not with a holier-than-thou attitude, but with personal soul-searching and repentance.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday

Deuteronomy 16:1-8

Tuesday

Exodus 12:21-27

Wednesday

Luke 22:7-13

Thursday

1 Corinthians 10:14-22

Friday

1 Corinthians 11:17-22

Saturday

1 Corinthians 11:23-32

Sunday

Luke 22:14-30