

Introduction

1. Much work goes into preparing a holiday meal or a special birthday meal like I had last week.
2. Jesus' disciples were looking ahead to the coming Passover meal, which was, for the Jews, an important, annual holiday meal, like our Thanksgiving or Christmas family meal.
3. They asked Jesus about His plans for this special meal, and He gave them details of where it would be.
4. As His disciples celebrated the Passover meal with Him, Jesus gave the meal a new, richer meaning than they had ever experienced before. It was the best Passover ever!
5. **Read Mk 14:12-26.**

A. Preparations for the Passover (12-16)

1. The time of this interaction between Jesus and His disciples was "On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread" (12a).
 - a. In Mark's Passion Narrative, we now fast-forward one week since our last lesson about Jesus' anointing by Mary at Bethany (cf. Mk 14:1-12).
 - b. The events of Mark 11-13 have already taken place:
 - 1) Mk 11:1-11 - The Triumphal Entry on Palm Sunday
 - 2) Mk 11:12-26 - The Cleansing of the Temple by Jesus
 - 3) Mk 11:27-12:40 - The Questioning of Jesus by the Jewish Leaders and Their Debate with Jesus)
 - 4) Mk 12:41-44 - Jesus' Observations about the Widow's Faithful Offering, and
 - 5) Mark 13 - Jesus' Little Apocalypse on the Mt. of Olives
 - c. It is now Thursday of Holy Week, the day on which it was ". . . customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb." (12a)
 - 1) Remember that Passover is one of the Feasts of Yahweh prescribed in Leviticus 23 for all Jews to observe in remembrance of the Death Angel passing over homes with the blood of the lamb on their doorposts and lintels.
 - 2) God commanded Moses and the people saying, "The LORD's Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. On the fifteenth day of that month the LORD's Festival of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work" (Lev 23:5-7).
 - 3) The Jews celebrated God's mighty action in sending a tenth and final plague on pharaoh and the Egyptians that resulted in their release from slavery in Egypt and marked the beginning of their journey to the Promised Land as Israel, the people of Yahweh.
2. The disciples asked Jesus, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" (12b)
 - a. Lk 22:8 identifies the two disciples as Peter and John.
 - b. The Passover lamb had to be sacrificed on the day it was to be eaten, and the Passover meal had to be eaten inside the walls of Jerusalem. The city was crowded, and they needed a place to meet.
 - c. There was also much work to do: clean the room of any yeast and set up the dining area; purchase a lamb, have it slaughtered at the Temple, roast the meat; procure wine, herbs, and unleavened bread.
 - d. They knew Jesus would keep the Passover, but they need instructions on where to prepare it.
3. Jesus gave His disciples instructions about the preparations for Passover (13-15).
 - a. As usual, Jesus was one step ahead of His disciples. He had already made preparations for a place to meet and everything they would need for their Passover celebration either by supernatural knowledge or previous communication of His plans to a benevolent supporter in the city.
 - b. He gave two of His disciples interesting, detailed instructions on how to find the location: ". . . Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there" (13b-15).
 - c. Spotting a man carrying a jar of water, which was woman's work, would have been easy, but there was also the miracle of timing their meeting him.

- d. We don't know in whose home Jesus met, but some scholars speculate that it may have been the home of Mark's father.
- 4. Passover preparations were completed by the advance team of two disciples.
 - a. Not surprisingly, the two disciples went and “. . . found things just as Jesus had told them” (16).
 - b. They made the final preparations for the Passover meal and waited for Jesus and the other ten to arrive for the celebration.

B. Prediction of Betrayal (17-21)

1. The Passover meal is a time of joy as those gathered remember God's mighty presence with His people and His powerful deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt.
2. However, as Jesus and His disciples ate this Passover meal around the table, Jesus turned what would have normally been a happy, joyous discussion to a darker topic when He said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me.” (18b)
 - a. “Truly, I say . . .” (Gk., *amen lego*) – This is a fact that you can count on happening.
 - b. “betray” (Gk., *paradosei*) – This is the same word used in Mk 14:10 concerning the intention of Judas: “Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them.”
3. The disciples were “saddened, and one by one they said to him, ‘Surely you don't mean me?’”
 - a. The disciples were “saddened” (Gk., *lupeisthai*) is a strong verb meaning “grieved, vexed, annoyed.” They couldn't believe that Jesus had just said what He had said especially about them!
 - b. Note that each disciple, “one by one,” most likely including Judas, made the same, strong statement.
 - c. Their statement was not as much a question as a strong denial: “Not I” (Gk., *meti ego*).
 - d. Even Judas, who knew the plan in his heart, denied that he was a betrayer.
 - 1) Perhaps he made his denial to save face in front of the other disciples.
 - 2) Perhaps he still believed that what he was about to do was not betrayal but an action that would propel Jesus to being the mighty Messiah he hoped for.
 - e. Daniel Akin insightfully states, “The answer to each disciple's question—Is it I?—requires an answer of yes from each and every one of us. Yes, Judas betrayed Jesus, but by morning all the disciples would betray Him. Judas betrayed Him for greed (vv. 10-11), but the rest would betray Him from weakness (vv. 37-42), fear (vv. 50-52), and cowardice (vv. 66-72). But what about you and me? Each one of us is a Judas because every sin against Jesus is a personal act of betrayal. Yet this is where the grace of the gospel shines so bright: even those who betray this great King and glorious Savior can experience immediate and complete forgiveness through simple repentance and confession of sin (1 John 1:9)” (Daniel Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Mark*, 328).
4. Jesus reaffirmed, “It is one of the Twelve . . . one who dips bread into the bowl with me.” (20)
 - a. During the Passover celebration, herbs are dipped into saltwater and *matzah* bread is dipped into either a horseradish sauce or a sweet apple/honey mixture.
 - b. Jesus affirmed that one of His closest followers would be the one to betray Him.
 - c. In John's gospel account of the Supper, Jesus adds, “I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: ‘He who shared my bread has turned against me’” (Jn 13:18).
 - 1) These words of Jesus appear to be a quote of Ps 41:9, which is as Psalm of David lamenting his betrayal by his trusted counselor Ahithophel who joined Absalom in rebellion against David. Absalom rejected Ahithophel's good counsel, and Ahithophel hanged himself.
 - 2) Just as Ahithophel ate David's bread and betrayed him, so Jesus indicated that one of his one closest followers would soon do likewise.
5. Jesus also affirmed two realities related to this impending betrayal.
 - a. First, “The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him.” (21a)
 - 1) This betrayal was part of the prophecy related to Jesus' mission as the Suffering Servant Messiah.
 - 2) He must be “handed over” in order to face the cross and complete His mission of redeeming humanity from sin.

- b. Second, though this betrayal was a part of prophecy, the betrayer would face severe consequences for his action.
- 1) “But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.” (21b)
 - 2) Only Matthew records the end of the matter for Judas. “When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. ‘I have sinned,’ he said, ‘for I have betrayed innocent blood.’ ‘What is that to us?’ they replied. ‘That’s your responsibility.’ So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself” (Mt 27:3-5).
- c. Warren Wiersbe writes, “Some people try to defend Judas by arguing that he betrayed Jesus in order to force Him into revealing His power and setting up the Jewish kingdom. Others say that he was nothing but a servant who obediently fulfilled God’s Word. Judas was neither a martyr nor a robot. He was a responsible human being who made his own decisions but, in so doing, fulfilled the Word of God. He must not be made into either a hero (‘After all, somebody had to betray Jesus!’) or a helpless victim of merciless predestination. Judas was lost for the same reason millions are lost today: He did not repent of his sins and believe on Jesus Christ (John 6:64-71; 13:10-11). If you have never been born again, one day you will wish you had not been born at all” (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Diligent*, 164-65).

C. The Last Supper Was a Passover Meal (22-26)

1. The Last Supper was a Passover meal or Seder which is a memorial celebration that follows a worship pattern prescribed in the Passover *Haggadah* (Hb., “telling; interpretation”).
2. The Passover Seder is rich with symbols in the special food and drink that is shared.
 - a. Unleavened bread, free of yeast, symbolizes the absence of sin.
 - b. Bitter herbs dipped in saltwater remind the Jews of the bitterness of their slavery and tears.
 - c. A sweet apple and honey mixture, that looks like brick mud, reminds the Jews that God was present with them even in their hard labor of making and laying bricks for pharaoh.
 - d. The lamb reminds them of the innocent, blood sacrifice made to redeem them from the Death Angel.
 - e. Four cups of wine are shared to re-tell the story of God’s deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt.
3. Jesus first took the *matzah*, unleavened bread, and gave it new meaning. It would now symbolize His sinless body broken for the sins of God’s people.
 - a. Jesus gave thanks (Gk., *eulogias* – “good word” - eulogy) for the bread provided by God the Father.
 - b. Jesus then said, “Take it; this is my body.” (22)
 - c. Jesus’ body would soon be ripped apart by Roman whips, pierced by a crown of thorns, three nails, and a spear, and completely broken for the sins of humanity.
4. The four cups of wine remind the people of God’s four promises to them in Ex 6:6-8: “Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.’”
 - a. The Cup of Sanctification – “I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.”
 - b. The Cup of Deliverance/Salvation – “I will free you from being slaves to them.”
 - c. The Cup of Redemption – “I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.”
 - d. The Cup of Hope/Expectation – “I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God.”
 - e. The first two cups come before the main meal. The last two cups come after the supper.

5. According to Lk 22:20, it was the third cup of the Passover Seder, the one taken after the supper, that Jesus reinstated.
 - a. The Cup of Redemption would no longer symbolize simply the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage but now it would symbolize the fuller deliverance of all humanity from bondage to sin, death, and Hell.
 - b. Jesus “gave thanks” (Gk., *eucarhistesas* – “good grace” - eucharist) for the wine which now symbolized not simply the blood of the Passover lamb but His own “blood of the covenant (Gk., *diatheke*) poured out for many” as God’s once-for-all Passover Lamb (cf., Hb 9:11-15).
 - c. The Old Covenant made with Israel and Sinai was now replaced by a New Covenant with all who would believe upon Jesus, the Lamb of God slain for the sins of all humanity.
 - 1) John the Baptist declared concerning Jesus, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (Jn 1:29)
 - 2) Paul later reminded the Corinthian church, ““For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed” (1 Cor 5:7b).
 - 3) Peter would later declare, “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.”. The Apostle John saw Jesus, the Lamb, in heaven” (1 Pe 1:18-22).
 - 4) In the Revelation, John saw “. . . a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. . . . the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God’s people. And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth” (Rev 5:6-10).
 - d. Wiersbe concludes, “Our Lord’s command was, ‘This do in remembrance of me’ (1 Cor. 11:24-25). The word translated ‘remembrance’ means much more than ‘in memory of,’ for you can do something in memory of a dead person—yet Jesus is alive! The word carries the idea of a present participation in a past event. Because Jesus is alive, as we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, by faith we have communion with Him (1 Cor. 10:16-17). This is not some ‘magical’ experience produced by the bread and cup. It is a spiritual experience that comes through our discerning of Christ and the meaning of the Supper (1 Cor. 11:27-34)” (Wiersbe, 166).
6. The end of the meal had come.
 - a. Jesus declared “Truly (Gk., *amen*) I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” (26a)
 - b. It was more than the end of a meal. It was the beginning of the end of Jesus ministry and life on earth.
 - c. It was also shared in anticipation of the consummation of the fourth Seder cup of hope/expectation which would be shared at the wedding feast of the Lamb in heaven (cf. Lk 14:14; Rev 3:20f, 19:6-9).
 - d. The passage concludes, “When they had sung a hymn (Gk., *humensantes*), they went out to the Mount of Olives.” (26b)
 - 1) Traditionally, since the destruction of the Temple in CE 70, Jews close the Seder by singing a song of hope, *L’Shana Haba’ah B’Yerushalayim*, “Next Year in Jerusalem,” as they look forward with hope to the coming of the Lord and celebration of the Passover Seder with Messiah in the New Jerusalem.
 - 2) However, Jesus and His disciples most likely sang the more traditional *Hallel* or Praise Psalms 115-118.
 - 3) We are not certain which hymn Jesus and His disciples sang that night, but we typically sing the first verse of “Blest Be the Tie that Binds” as the close of our Lord’s Supper celebration as we go out. Let’s sing that as our Benediction.

D. Questions/Thoughts for Reflection

1. Do you ever doubt that Jesus knows what is coming next in your life or that He is unprepared to meet your needs?
He knows; He cares; He has a plan; Seek His plan and follow it.
2. With the disciples, we certainly don't think that we would ever betray Jesus. We join them in saying, "Not I."
 - a. Have you ever denied Jesus by your unwillingness to respond to the directions He gave you?
 - b. Have you ever withheld doing good for the kingdom of God or for someone in need when you should have acted?
 - c. Have you ever kept quiet about your faith or trust in God when you should have spoken up as a witness?
 - d. Friends, we have all denied/betrayed our Lord at some point in our journey of life. We must confess our failures and seek Jesus' help to be more faithful in the future.
3. When you take the Lord's Supper, do you ritually take it or do you think about what it means to take it in remembrance of Jesus? How are you remembering Jesus in your life each day?