

“Given and Shed for You!

(03-28-13)

Even though Jesus would be going to the cross on Friday to suffer for the sins mankind has committed, on Thursday He wanted to celebrate the Passover meal with His disciples.

Tonight, let's look at what Luke says in chapter 22. The Jewish Feast of Unleavened Bread began with the observance of the Passover. Look at verses 8-13, *“So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, ‘Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.’ They said to him, ‘Where will you have us prepare it?’ He said to them, ‘Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters and tell the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there.’ And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.”*

To observe the Passover meal, the disciples would have to get unleavened bread, spices, fruit, and a lamb. There was a lot of preparation that went into the observance of the Passover. The borrowed room also had to be searched for any trace of yeast. Any crumb of bread had to be removed. Yeast represented the evil influence of Egypt the Jews were leaving behind at the Exodus. Yeast came to be known as the influence of sin.

The disciples prepared the feast. The writer of Hebrews says we're to come to the Lord's Supper with a prepared heart. The yeast of our sin must be removed from our lives through confession and repentance. Listen to Hebrews 10:22-23, *“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.”*

When Jesus and the disciples arrive at the upper room, the Passover meal's ready. They begin to celebrate it the same way it had been celebrated for over 3500 years. The disciples probably felt this Passover meal was just going to be like the others they had celebrated with Jesus in the last two years, but Jesus knew this one was going to be a little different!

Look at verses 19-20, *“And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’”*

Martin Luther has said, *“For as soon as Christ says, ‘This is My body,’ His body is present through the Word and the power of the Holy Spirit. If the Word is not there, it is mere bread; but as soon as the words are added they bring with them that which they speak.”*

By the time the night's over, this meal wouldn't be remembered as just a Jewish celebration where a lamb was sacrificed and how God passed over the houses of the Israelites where the blood of the Passover lamb was spread on the doorposts. It would be celebrated in remembrance of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who was the ultimate sacrifice Who would give His body and His blood on the cross for all our sins.

The Jews celebrated Passover remembering how God brought them out of slavery in Egypt. We celebrate the Lord's Supper of Christ's body and blood remembering what He did for us when He brought us out of sin. Holy Communion is for us, a time of remembrance of all Jesus has done for us!

But after Jesus took bread and wine and gave them as His body and blood for the forgiveness of sin, He said something that caused the disciples to question everything!

Look at verses 21-23, *“But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!” And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.*”

Maybe you’re thinking, “That’s awful! I’d never do that!” But think about it, every time you do something that you know you shouldn’t do, or don’t do something you should, aren’t you betraying your promise to be faithful to Jesus? God cares about everything you do. He wants you to live a life of truth even when no one else knows about your sins except Him. That’s what His love is all about! His grace and forgiveness are endless!

The Lord’s Supper is a proclamation of the good news of salvation won for you! Christ came and died for your sins! The weight of sin you carry is gone! Jesus has paid the entire debt of your sin! He’s your Savior and Redeemer!

When we partake of Christ’s Body and Blood, it’s as though we’re transformed two thousand years into the past. We’re with Christ and the disciples at that final Passover meal as His children. Listen to 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, *“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? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.”*

When we gather in communion, we gather together in unity. Think of the cross. The vertical beam shows our relationship with God and the horizontal beam shows our relationship with each other. As we come to the Table, we’re in both relationships. As we stand side-by-side, we’re saying we stand together in the one, true faith!

As you come to the Table, Jesus is here! It’s a time of reflection, recommitment, and being united together in one body! It’s a time to celebrate your hope for eternity. That’s why as you leave the Table, you should leave in great joy, with a smile on your face, because you’ve been filled with the Savior’s presence, forgiven and renewed by His Body and Blood, given and shed for you!