

Maundy Thursday, April 9, 2020
Remembering Jesus! The Last Supper!
Matthew 26:17-30

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Tonight we recognize, remember, and commemorate Jesus' last supper. In Matthew 26 we see how Jesus sent His disciples ahead, told them WHO to talk to so they would find THE room, and they spent the day preparing the Passover meal, (no small feat). Jesus then joined His friends in the Upper Room in the evening to celebrate the Feast of the Passover. This was their time to remember God's faithfulness, retell the story of the exodus from Egypt; and reclaim the promise of His covenant.

Tonight I would like us to think about the atmosphere in the room the night Jesus instituted this amazing meal. Can you imagine it? It was probably loud with everyone talking at the same time, much like dinners with friends and family at Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Easter.

So, in the room that night, the disciples were celebrating, laughing, sharing stories, enjoying their meal, when Jesus interrupted them with some "show stopping" news. He said, "I tell you the truth. One of you will betray me." What? Picture the mood change at that moment suddenly shifting from celebratory to sorrowful. The Bible tells us they were all greatly distressed at this news. Of course they were. They LOVED Jesus. How could this be? So, one by one they asked their Friend, Jesus, "Is it me? Am I the one, Lord?"

Though Jesus did not reveal who would betray Him at their questioning, He reiterated one of them in the room, one who had just eaten out of the same bowl as He, was the one. He went on to say the Son of God needed to die as it was written, but how terrible it would be for the one who betrayed Him; so dreadful in fact it would have been better if he were not born.

It was then Judas spoke up and said, "Rabbi, (or Teacher), is it I?" Judas identified with Him as teacher, not as Lord. He would later regret that decision as well as his actions.

Judas' betrayal ought to serve as a warning to us, as to how easy it is to be "on board" one minute and "out of the boat" the next, how easy it is for us to dip our fingers into the bowl with Jesus, to worship Him in public, serve Him, walk with Him, and yet betray Him with our words and actions. Every time we prepare to receive communion, we ought to remember how this one man who walked with Jesus, met with Him face to face, served by His side, was still able to betray Him.

In Matthew again, we read Jesus merely responded to Judas, "It is as you say." He didn't beat him over the head with the truth or try to further embarrass him. He knew what Judas was thinking even though Judas wasn't admitting it. Jesus knows what you're thinking right now. He knows what I'm thinking. He knows what we have done right and what we've done wrong. He isn't going to beat us over the head with His truth or try to embarrass us. Instead, He invites us to His table. He provides the meal and asks us to remember Him as we come to commune. What we do with His invitation and how we remember is up to us.

After unfolding the big news, they went back to eating. As they did, Jesus instituted the last supper, also called communion. It is a “means of grace”; a “way” we get to experience God’s grace tangibly here on earth. As we celebrate this meal, we remember the relationship we share with Him. We do this in remembrance of Him.

Now this whole evening was a roller coaster of emotions. First they are having a great meal! Then they find out someone is going to betray Him but don’t know who. Then they get back to eating again. Then Jesus talks about eating His body and drinking His blood! Then they finished eating and sang a hymn of praise! Then they recessed to the Mount of Olives where Jesus had more bad news for them. They would all stumble and fall asleep while He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, and then they would all deny Him. Up and down and up and down.

And that is sometimes how life is right? A roller coaster of emotions! Up and down, up and down. But we can enjoy the ride a little more if we journey this life in faith, including when we come to the Lord’s table. Sometimes, unfortunately, we come to receive without much preparation. We are more focused on life, than on Jesus. We are remembering lots of other things instead of remembering the price Jesus paid for us. We commune without giving Him much thought; we quickly motor through it, or take it out of habit, or because it’s offered, without being cognizant of its significance. When we do this, we are really missing a grace opportunity; really missing the privilege of communing with Jesus.

God uses bread and wine to help us remember Jesus paid the price for us, Jesus made the greatest sacrifice of all time so that as often as we eat and drink, we remember His body broken and His blood shed for the forgiveness of our sins.

At this time while we are unable to partake in the Lord’s Supper because of the COVID-19 virus, know that you are still under God’s grace and that your sins have been forgiven because of Christ’s death on the cross.

Tomorrow night, our spiritual journey continues, and it too is a bit of an emotional rollercoaster ride because we will take time to remember and relive His gruesome death on the cross. Take every step of the journey, taking the time to truly experience and appreciate your life in His.

Tonight and every time you come to the table, take time to remember Jesus lived, Jesus died, and Jesus rose again. Remember the price that was paid! Remember you are forgiven! Remember Jesus! Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus unto life everlasting. Amen.