

**Passion Week: Thursday – A King's Final Preparation**  
*Luke 22:1-30*

*'I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.'*

**Introduction:** Travelling for any amount of time when you kids at home is an interesting conundrum. Some in this church travel often as part of your job, or have one that requires you to be gone days at a time (that's a big "Thank You", my faithful firemen). I do not have to travel very often, and when I do it tends to be a choice rather than a duty (thankfully). The conundrum is the fact that I LOVE being home and being with my girls, but there are strategic and effective areas of ministry and life to be a part of that require being away for a short time. Tonight Danny, Marshall and I are flying out to a conference in Indianapolis for a time of learning, team building, and connecting with new and old relationships. It means we will be apart from our families for a few days. It means that the last few hours together I want to soak up time with my girls, being in their presence, giving them last minute advice, and enjoying family that cannot be replaced. It's the feeling we all get before leaving for any amount of time, even though our kids don't always feel it the same way (dad, can I go play?).

We come to Thursday night in the narrative of the Passion week, and it is perhaps my favorite scene in the entire drama of Easter. Jesus is hours away from arrest, trial, separation from the disciples, unimaginable physical suffering that was tip of the iceberg compared to the suffering He would endure as God's wrath was poured out on Him. He is with his band of followers, the twelve that were left after the crowds chose to follow the Pharisees, and He does not waste a minute. It is clear that though the dread of the moment was palpable in Jesus mind, but the disciples were clueless to the imminent magnitude of what was about to happen. Jesus was committed to the Father's will, but never to the neglect of those He came to love, save, and serve, even when they did not reciprocate the same toward Him. It is the same today. **Jesus died for God.** He died to accomplish redemptive history, to completely satisfy the wrath that had to be poured out on sin, and did so perfectly, never compromising holiness or righteousness. **But He also came to save sinners like us.** In doing this, He showed the width, depth, and breadth of what love truly is. As we focus on this Thursday evening, no one can leave here without the knowledge that in believing in Jesus and repenting of our sin, we are **fully known and fully loved.** God knew all that you have done and will do, and **STILL** wanted you in His family, at the cost of His own Son, who shed His blood joyfully for you.

**The Plot Thickens** (1-6)

**Luke 22:1-6** Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. <sup>2</sup> And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people. <sup>3</sup> Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. <sup>4</sup> He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. <sup>5</sup> And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. <sup>6</sup> So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd.

**The conundrum of the Sanhedrin**

Jesus had not only rocked the boat in Jerusalem, He capsized the entire vessel. After coming in triumphantly on Sunday and being hailed as a King, Jesus took over the Temple mount in a Messianic way. On Monday He overturned the corruption that was perpetrated by the Sadducees for years, turning over the money tables and costing them precious income (like closing a store during Thanksgiving weekend). On Tuesday He put the religious leaders to public shame, answering their questions with questions they could not answer without incriminating themselves. In these two days, Jesus solidified the resolve of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who naturally hated each other, to unite

forces to get rid of Jesus once and for all. However, they had **two main problems**: 1) The crowds loved Jesus and would have rioted if they would arrest Him in the open air (v. 2). Though the people would ultimately turn their backs on Him, there was enough support for Him to protect Him. 2) They could not put anyone to death on their own, so they would have to get the hated Romans involved. They would have to build a case to motivate Rome, who only wanted to keep the peace and collect taxes, to put this folk hero on trial and on the cross, a punishment reserved for thieves and seditionists. On top of these reasons, it was also the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and there was no time left to kill Him before. It would seem they would have to find a way AFTER the feast to accomplish their insidious plan (whatever that would end up being).

### **Satanic driven opportunity presented**

In walks two key players in the drama: Satan and Judas. They would swing the narrative seemingly in favor of the Sanhedrin, as they were scratching their heads and stroking their beards, in walks the solution to their problem.

**Judas** - A few things concerning this villain of the story. Judas was one of the 12 disciples, meaning he had now been with Jesus over 3 years, had heard His teaching, experienced His love, and observed His miracles. However, none of these things SAVED him and his heart was disenchanted with all that he saw. We know that he had a key role with the band as the Treasurer, keeping and distributing the money to the poor (John 12:6; 13:28). But we also know he was a selfish thief who would steal out of that same moneybag, laundering money for himself. This level of selfishness hardens one's heart toward the realities of sin and forgiveness and allows one to **self-justify**, even taking advantage of and betraying the ones closest to him. He was also the only disciple not from Galilee, as the surname **Iscaiot** suggests he was from the village of Keriath, the Southern region of Israel. This is why when he got up from dinner on the night of betrayal no one reacted, since they understood he knew the area and was going ahead to bless the poor (John 13:29)

**Satan** - In the whole of the gospel narrative, Satan has been a bit of a background player. He showed up at the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, but even then it was the Spirit that led Jesus there (Luke 4:1). We've seen his name pop up in Luke several times, but typically as a reference to his work rather than his person (can Satan be divided - 11:18; bound a woman with a disabling spirit - 13:16). But in Luke 22, on this last night with His disciples, we see Satan enter in twice. The second will be when he requested to sift Peter like wheat, which resulted in Peter's denial of Jesus (22:31). The first is here as he enters into Judas and prompts him to sell Jesus out to the Sanhedrin, an act prophesied beforehand (Zechariah 11:12-13).

A few questions to answer quickly. 1) Though Satan can affect believers, he cannot enter or possess them. We are indwelt by the Spirit of God, so Satan cannot coexist in the same temple. Judas was an unbeliever with a hard heart, so opened himself up to this kind of influence. Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44) and his main tool is deception. Remember, he CANNOT do anything that he has not been given delegated authority to do (remember his interaction with Job)

2) *Why did Satan commit suicide by hastening his own demise?* The answer is in his character. A liar and deceiver will ultimately believe his own lie. He knows the prophesy and truth, but still believed he could thwart the plan of God. And/or he simply wanted to inflict as much pain and suffering on the ultimate victor as he could, even at the cost of his own eternal punishment.

So Judas solves one problem for the Sanhedrin: it was not to identify Jesus for the Sanhedrin, but it was to do so for the Roman soldiers in a place that was in the **absence of the crowds**. This interaction sets the stage for the preparation of the upper room.

### The Preparation Veiled (7-13)

**Luke 22:7-13** Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it." <sup>9</sup> They said to him, "Where will you have us prepare it?" <sup>10</sup> 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 <sup>11</sup> 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?' <sup>12</sup> And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there." <sup>13</sup> And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

#### Messianic setup

Jesus would celebrate a Passover meal with His disciples on Thursday in the upper room of a borrowed room.<sup>1</sup> Notice the strange and seemingly unnecessary subterfuge going on in this scene. Jesus sends Peter and John, trusted leaders, into the city to find and prepare the upper room for the meal to come.

**Why did Jesus not simply tell them where it was? Why did He have them find a man carrying a jar of water?** The answer is Judas. Jesus kept the location of the meal hidden from all the disciples so Judas would have no idea where to direct the Roman guard.

How did this happen? We often chalk things like this up to the divine and miraculous: *Jesus just waved his magic wand* (or staff, or wiggled His nose or something) instead of thinking through the logic of the scene. In the days of the Passion week, there is nothing recorded that happened of Wednesday, which some have dubbed *Silent Wednesday*. But this would have been the day that gave Judas an opportunity to meet with the Sanhedrin, for the Sanhedrin to get to the soldiers, and for Jesus to make preparations in the city for the upper room. Jesus was not unaware of Judas' plans, but He also wanted time with the disciples, and was always a few steps ahead of His pursuers. We remember here that **no one took Jesus' life, but He gave it freely, laying it down under His own authority** (John 10:7-18). The Sanhedrin would only arrest Him when He was good and ready, and not a minute before.

#### Necessary parts

Peter and John would have been able to secure a Passover Lamb, slaughtered on the Temple mount, would have set up the triclinium table, set out the cup of wine, gather the bitter herbs, and the basins for washing hands. The Passover meal would have taken a considerable time with several stages. There would be an opening prayer of thanksgiving, followed by the first of four cups of wine, known as the cups of blessing. This would be followed by a ceremonial washing of hands, symbolizing the need to be

<sup>1</sup> An apparent discrepancy exists at this point between John's chronology and that of the other gospels. The latter clearly state that the Last Supper was a Passover meal (Matt. 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-15). John 18:28 however, records that the Jewish leaders 'led Jesus from Caiphas into the Praetorium, and it was early [Friday morning; the day of the Crucifixion]; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.' The challenge is to explain how Jesus and the disciples could have eaten the Passover meal on Thursday evening if the Jewish leaders had not yet eaten it on Friday morning.

The answer lies in an understanding that the Jews had **two different methods of reckoning days**. Jewish sources suggest that Jews from the Northern part of Israel (including Galilee) counted days from **sunrise to sunrise**. Most of the Pharisees apparently used that method. On the other hand, the Jews of the southern region counted days from **sunset to sunset**. That would include the Sadducees. Though no doubt confusing at times, that dual method of reckoning days would have **practical benefits at Passover, allowing the feast to be celebrated on two consecutive days**. That would have eased the crowded conditions in Jerusalem, especially in the temple, where the lambs would not have had to be killed on the same day (For further discussion on the issue, see Harold Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, p. 74-90; Robert L. Thomas and Stanley N. Gundry, *A Harmony of the Gospels*), and John 12-21 in the MacArthur New Testament Commentary, p. 62-63.

cleansed from sin. Next would be bitter herbs, with a paste made of fruits and nuts, remembering the bitterness of slavery in Egypt. There would be singing of Psalm 113 and 114, then the drinking of the second cup of wine, followed by an explanation of the meaning of Passover by the head of the family, remembering how God delivered His people from a foreign power and saved the eldest son by the blood of a Lamb on the doorpost of the house. Then came the meal, the third cup, singing of the rest of the Hallel Psalms, and the fourth cup. After the meal they may stay and sleep typically (especially after a full meal and a bit of wine).

### The Passover Transformed (14-23)

**Luke 22:14-23** And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. <sup>15</sup> **And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. <sup>16</sup> For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."** <sup>17</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. <sup>18</sup> For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." <sup>19</sup> 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." <sup>20</sup> And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. <sup>21</sup> But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. <sup>22</sup> For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!" <sup>23</sup> And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.

#### Divine desire expressed

Notice the desire of Jesus as He laid down to eat the meal with the disciples. The cross loomed large in His mind and gaze, but never to the neglect of those He came to save. Sometimes it is hard to **like** those that we are called to **love**. We love by choice but that also means that some people are hard to be around, hard to like, hard to WANT to be with. But Jesus' desire was not just loving, He wanted to spend time with His own (even when they were not particularly loveable). This gives us hope. We have a Savior that not only performs a transactional act of buying out of death, He goes beyond that and desires an intimate relationship with us.

Notice how **HE** anticipated what was to come: *I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God*. This was not a phrase of duty or of something He was looking to get out of. On the contrary, He was longing for the day when He will dine with His own:

*Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns  
Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come  
and his Bride has made herself ready  
it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure  
Revelation 19:6-8*

Jesus desire was to eat this meal with an eye on the next one that He'll eat with us! Each time we celebrate communion, we eat with an eye on the ultimate Communion. This is God's heart for us, and Jesus' heart for His own.

#### Old transformed into something new

The Passover meal was not only a time that remembered the deliverance of Israel from slavery through blood, it was a remembrance of a system that was a shadow of things to come, a temporary way in which sin could be covered but not paid for, pointing to something better to come.

**Exodus 24:5-8** gives a vivid picture of the Old Covenant's inauguration. The Law had been given (Exodus 19-20) and the Book of the Covenant had been read (Exodus 20:18-23:13) and then Moses offered up

burnt offerings to the Lord. He took the blood of the offering and sprinkled (or doused) half on the altar and the other half on the people! This was a messy and gross sight, but one that was filled with symbolism. The Old Covenant was launched in a bloody wave for **2 reasons**:

- 1) Sin is serious, and must be dealt with seriously
- 2) The payment of sin is always death

The problem with these sacrifices, as well as the whole system, was that it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (Heb. 10:4). It could deal with the external nature of sin and relationship, but could not cleanse from the inside, could not take away wrath, and could not once for all bring one into a right relationship with God. But it was never intended to, but pointed to the One who would be able to do what mere ritual and sacrifice could not: "**Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world**" (John 1:29). So notice three key things about the transformation of a Passover meal into "communion".

**Cup of Communion** - in the normal Passover seder, participants are directed to drink from their own cups, but Jesus distributed the single cup among the disciples, emphasizing the communal aspect of the meal. They were at the table in fellowship together, showing the radical, mutual participation of the supper He was about to institute. We come to the table the same way: we are all sinners in need of a sacrifice in our place, not through our own abilities or righteousness. We are made one with Christ and immediately one with each other.

**The Bread** - The unleavened bread of Passover symbolized the bread of affliction Israel ate while persecution reigned in Egypt (Deut. 16:3). But Jesus radically changed its significance. The bread signified His body, which was given for us. This is perhaps the most powerful of pictures: His body given for us as a substitute, atoning for our sin in a way no animal or other sacrifice could. As Jesus hung on the cross, He took our place, taking on the punishment we deserved and which He did not. He became sin on our behalf so that we could have life, and by His wounds we are healed (Isa. 53:5, 1 Pet. 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:21). That is what we are to celebrate and **remember**, since we always think that we can contribute something, when the reality is that our only contribution is sin itself.

**The Cup** - Notice the emphasis is given in the blood as a *New Covenant*, which is a covenant of forgiveness (Jer. 31:34) and the only saving one. Jesus blood provided the payment needed to ransom sinners, perfectly paying for their sin, fulfilling God's demand for perfection and perfect justice.

Each of these pointed to what Christ would do on the cross in a few moments, as His blood was spilt and shed for us. We remember this about how the New was so much better than the old:

- **Provides a New Heart** - The problem with the Old covenant was it dealt with the external, but not the internal (Jer. 31:31-34). The New Covenant in Christ makes us partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) transforming our heart from stone to flesh and making us sufficient as ministers of it (2 Cor. 3:6). This means we can serve God from a new heart, rather than mere external conformity
- **Better Relationship** - The New Covenant meant that the veil separating us from God is torn, and we have access to the Father through Jesus the Son, not through a priest. We can pray and be heard, we can pursue and be received, we can love because we were loved first.
- **Holistic Forgiveness** - Sacrifices under the Old Covenant had to be repeated, but Jesus died once for all. That means that our sins of the past, present, and future were poured out and paid for on the cross. That means that we can openly fight our sin, confess freely, and no longer walk

in **insecurity** concerning our relationship (I sinned, is God mad, and do I have to wait to approach Him?).

### **The Path to Greatness Defined** (24-30)

**Luke 22:24-30** A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. <sup>25</sup> And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. <sup>26</sup> But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. <sup>27</sup> For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves. <sup>28</sup> "You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, <sup>29</sup> and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, <sup>30</sup> that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

### **Greatness through service demonstrated**

It did not take long for the disciples to forget (can you relate), and forgetfulness is the enemy of faith. Most likely this dispute over greatness in the future kingdom (which they thought was happening imminently) was over seating arrangement and distribution of land in the kingdom. We know Jesus was at one side of the table with Judas on one side and John on the other, with Peter on the other end. We also know that this dispute either took place right after the washing of their feet by Jesus (though it could have prompted Jesus' washing). It is clear they missed the point of what He was trying to teach.

Notice that Jesus told the disciples that the one who reclines was greater than the one who serves, but added, "***I am among you as the one who serves.***". He demonstrated this by washing their feet, by going to the cross as a servant, and patiently enduring with their constantly missing the point. In the upper room He wanted His disciples to realize that the leaders of His kingdom would not lead out of **force, intimidation, or fear**, but would lead with the power of service. It would be that power that would ignite the reaching of nations, the willingness to suffer, and the humility to trust the sovereign plan of God.

Yesterday we went hiking up to the cross at Madera, and our youngest declared herself as the leader, which prompted our middle to take the role of *director* (I'll help the leader - talk about a great help mate someday!). But for our daughters on the hike, the leader was **first, the boss, and the best**. That is so often how we think in this life, placing ourselves in the front by a show of force or boasting, rather than humble service.

What do we learn and walk away with from this most extraordinary night?

- 1) Jesus moved heaven and earth to die for us, willingly laying down His life not only to save us but to bring us into His family because He WANTS us.
- 2) We are forgiven because Jesus substituted Himself for us on the cross, shedding His blood as payment. This means we have access to God, can freely deal with our sin, and joyfully yield ourselves to His Lordship since He is our loving Master
- 3) Our response is to follow the example of our Lord, to turn to serve each other out of love and humility. If we are to be great, let's not pursue it by positions, money, or titles of power, but in consistent, persistent, relentless service to one another, starting with our homes, working out to this church, and showing it to this world.

We are infinitely loved. We have been forgiven. We are free. Now we live for God's glory, not our own.