

E-Mail JOKE – Bubba becomes a Catholic - (venison steak - Friday BBQ)...

Today we're going to be looking at the next segment of time in our "24" series. We are going to look at **the meal** He **shared** with His disciples in the upper room that final evening. We are using the 4:00 to 7:00 PM time frame for this message, and we will be reading from John's Gospel – picking up from where Pastor Jerry left off last week. Jesus has just gathered with His disciples in the upper room. His first order of business is to wash their feet and show the importance of being a servant in spite of the world's contrary view. He now sets apart a few hours of His final day on earth to celebrate this old **tradition** as they eat the Passover meal together. The Passover Seder had been a tradition commanded by God since the Great Exodus story. It marked the salvation of God's people by His direct intervention and miraculous deliverance from their slavery and bondage. In Luke's gospel, Jesus says that He longed to eat this Passover meal together. The reason for this statement is that Jesus was going to bring them **new meaning** to this old tradition that would revolutionize their thinking, establish His fulfillment of God's salvation plan, and alter the meaning of this celebration forever.

READ: John 13:18-14:6

New Prophecy – v. 18-30

v. 18b – ***"I know those I have chosen..."*** John 15:16 – ***"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last."***

Was Judas chosen? Did he bear fruit? Or did he just attach himself to this group of close followers of Jesus? Jesus knew those whom He chose, and they remained faithful, or at least came back after running in fear – and bore fruit. Scripture was fulfilled at this meal - Ps. 41:9 – ***"He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against Me."*** - as well as new prophecy declared predicting his betrayal.

"He who shares my bread..." – Someone who is so intimate that he eats with you and shares a meal with you. One who dips the bread in the same bowl with you and knows the details of your life. This was not some casual acquaintance, but he was a close friend – JUDAS!

"has lifted up his heel against me." – Palestinian thing with feet and shoes or sandals - - - Someone who would totally turn against you in disagreement – (business, family traditions, enemies, etc.). The betrayal is predicted by Jesus in **v. 10** also, as we heard last week. Jesus said if one bathes, he is clean and they were clean, **but not everyone was clean** (meaning Judas).

It was important for Jesus to show during this old tradition that something new was also going on – Prophecy was being fulfilled and new prophecy was being uttered.

v. 36-38 – Jesus predicts Peter’s denial – 3 times. This was another new and important prophecy Jesus revealed during this final meal in the last 24 hour of His life on earth. Peter was so sure of his devotion, but Jesus knew better. He knows us better than we know ourselves. How sure are you of your devotion to the Lord?

New Commandment – v. 31-35

We find that Jesus establishes a new commandment during the meal.

Once Judas left, the wheels were in motion without a way to stop them. Jesus had kicked off the plan that would end his life on earth and fulfill God’s will for humanity. Jesus says, ***“Now is the Son of Man glorified ...”*** During the special final meal together, Jesus establishes His final instructions to the twelve and beyond. He establishes a New Commandment – ***“They should love one another.”*** No one could possibly love more perfectly than Jesus – who is God – and therefore is Love. He tells them and us to love one another as He loves us – perfectly!

John 15:17 – ***“This is my command: Love each other.”*** LOVE – seems to be a major theme for John in his gospel and his epistles.

This is the way the world will know that we are really His followers – it’s the same for us today. How will the world around us know that we are followers or disciples students of the Master? What one thing distinguishes us from the evil world around us? Love! Only a true follower of Jesus can possibly have a genuine love for others. Love that gives of oneself to help others; love that takes ridicule, insults, anger, and doesn’t retaliate. It is this love that makes a difference in the lives of those we work with, live near, and even are related to. Do you love others the way Jesus loves you? This can be a type of gauge of our closeness to the Lord.

1 John 4:7-11 – ***“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”***

The clock was ticking and Jesus felt it most important to give this new commandment to love one another during this old traditional Meal.

New Promise for New Hope – v. 14:1-6

Jesus brings His followers a word of encouragement that will sustain them through many times of persecution in the future. His words have sustained the Church for centuries. Martyrs have willingly given their lives, believers all over the world have endured hardship, persecution, prison and reproach because of these words that Jesus spoke when He shared this last meal with His disciples.

“Don’t let your hearts be troubled...” - Take confidence in what I am about to tell you – This will give you HOPE. He gives them a description of what awaits them in the Kingdom of Heaven, but not only that - - He promises He will come again. This one new promise has given hope to every generation of Christians since that time. Jesus is coming again! We are still waiting in hope of this greatest event of all time.

“I will come back and take you to be with me...” - Jesus tells them and us – ***“You know the Way to this place.”*** But – they just don’t get it. Thomas breaks the silence, ***“We don’t know where you are going. How can we know the way?”*** “We don’t have a clue what you are talking about Jesus. Why are you always speaking to us in riddles?” Jesus answers one of the most profound statements in history.

Jn. 14:6 - *“I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through ME.”* WOW! The whole Gospel message and Hope for all humanity in one sentence. It’s all about Jesus and what we do with this statement. We can make excuses; we can argue other perspectives; we can deny His words. It can’t get any clearer than this...

Jesus is the WAY! - The way to Heaven; the way to eternal life; the way to a relationship with God; the way of hope to take us through any adversity we could face.

Jesus is the TRUTH! - The words He speaks are not just true, but they are Truth for us. Everything He has ever said has come to pass – will come to pass, and are a source of Hope because Jesus is Truth.

Jesus is the LIFE! - Jn. 5:26 – ***“As the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself.”*** Jn. 6:40,47 – ***“For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life. – I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life.”*** Jn. 11:25 – ***“I am the resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me will live even if he dies.”***

It’s not about this life; It’s about where you will spend eternity, and you don’t have to spend it anywhere else but in the presence of Almighty God forever – It’s up to you. It’s God’s will for you to be saved – we just read that. Trust in the hope that Jesus felt was so important that He spent some of this most precious time during the last 24 hours of His life to share these thoughts with His closest friends. They were recorded for all humanity to read and act upon. These words have been the foundation of the church, for every believer since **“the meal.”** His words are just as powerful and important today as when He first spoke them. The souls of those we know and love hang in the balance of their decision about Jesus.

New Covenant –

This aspect of The Meal is not explicitly covered in John’s gospel, but all three synoptic gospels (Matt. Mark, and Luke) pay particular attention to what has become the hallmark of the Christian worship experience. The entire meal has been summarized and titled, “The Lord’s Supper.” Jesus instituted the sacrament of Holy Communion during this final meal. Later on in the first century, Paul writes to get the Corinthian church back on the right foot regarding this sacrament that was designed to be celebrated in community with “thanksgiving” (Eucharist).

Jesus was not only telling them what was about to happen to Him, but He told them He was **establishing a new covenant in His blood** (an everlasting covenant). This was one more thing they couldn’t fully understand at the time.

He said His body would be bruised and broken like the bread He broke after giving thanks. His blood would be shed for the forgiveness of sin –just like the wine they would all share together after Jesus had given thanks.

Heb 9:22 – ***“In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”***

Notice how Jesus gave thanks before distributing and teaching about each element. So too, we are to receive with thanksgiving the elements that represent what Jesus did for each one of us. By this new covenant, we can experience the true Grace of God. Jesus paid the price for our sin so we could be free from the penalty ourselves.

2 Cor 5:20-21 – “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Rom 5:8 – “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

The disciples didn’t grasp all the new things Jesus told them during this final meal. During this traditional meal that signified the deliverance of God people by His miraculous intervention in history, Jesus established a new covenant that would deliver **all people** by His miraculous intervention in history. The world has never been the same. Either has anyone who has accepted this covenant for themselves.

Jesus knew they wouldn’t truly get it. That’s why he said in the beginning of our text today in verse 19 – ***“I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I Am (He).”*** If Jesus hadn’t told them about a new prophecy, a new commandment, a new promise of new hope, and a new covenant, they would have turned away in fear when the next events in history took place. But, Jesus revealed God’s plan beforehand. Nothing would happen to Jesus or them by accident or by surprise or because the enemy had gained the upper hand. He was fulfilling the great plan of God to the smallest detail, including some negative things they would experience like the betrayal and denial. Everything is in God’s control and Jesus revealed all these things to them during the meal. When the events actually happened they would remember what He told them already and believe deeper in Him and in who He really is – God incarnate.

I’m going to ask Pastor Jerry to come now and to bring us to the Lord’s Table as we celebrate Holy Communion together with thanksgiving to God and to Jesus Christ who saves us from the wrath to come. Luke records that Jesus said to his disciples that He sincerely desired to eat this particular Passover meal with them before He suffered. He spent these last few hours of his life teaching them some new and important things for their future and the future of all believers to come. This was not the same **old traditional** meal. He gave it **new meaning** on this occasion during his last 24 hours. He altered the impact of this traditional meal forever – new meaning.

I pray that every one of you comes to this wonderful saving faith in Jesus our Savior and Lord, and each one renew your commitment to Him today as we prepare to receive Holy Communion together.