

## The Last Supper

### Mark 14:12-25

This is the final meal Jesus eats with his disciples, his companions, where he prepares them for what is coming (Jn. 13:19). This scene was made famous in the painting by Leonardo da Vinci in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, one of the most studied in the world, chocked with suspense, tragedy and hope. The Passover meal looked back to the liberation of Israel, but Jesus transforms it into the Lord's Supper as fulfillment draws near (Heb. 10:4). The disciples (and soon the whole church) receive the wonderful gift of communion with Jesus.

#### Preparation for Passover vv12-16

Mark points out that the day they sacrifice the lamb is the same day they had their Passover meal (Nisan 14; v12). The point is that Jesus dies during the feast of liberation. Their observance is informed by Exodus 12, but they recline at table because of the freedom enjoyed in the present. They also look forward to the future, twelve apostles of the New Israel (Eph. 2:20). Our celebrations inhabit the spectrum of time, and to neglect where we come from, are, or are going misses God's full story. What connects us to this event? What makes a church apostolic? Not the same beard, or the laying on of hands, but *faith* that sees Jesus and builds on him. Jesus makes plans to observe Passover with his disciples. We don't know if he arranged the room right then or had previously, but his work reveals its importance (cf. 1 Sam. 10:1-8). The meal doesn't magically come together. Jesus prepared this for them just like our communion volunteers did for us today. Selfless spontaneity is great, but this is the loving human prudence of Jesus at play.

#### Prediction of Betrayal vv17-21

As they recline at table Mark reports two incidents at the meal: the betrayal and the institution of the Supper, both introduced "as they were eating" (vv18, 22). Jesus says one of them would betray him, which causes each to be sorrowful and ask if it was him (vv18-19). We've known from the beginning what Judas would do, but the disciples didn't, and his betrayal was acute (3:18; cf. Ps. 41:9). He was the social justice guy who always complained about what other people were doing but never did anything himself. Just talking about Judas can unsettle us too. Jesus wants the presumptuous like Judas to be unsettled, and those like the apostles with true but faltering devotion to take heart and be assured, even if they scatter for a time (v27). Four truths about Judas and his sin.

1. Being around Jesus didn't make him better; if anything, it elevated his hypocrisy.
2. The Bible teaches both divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Judas does exactly what he wants and goes just as it was written of him. God used his great evil for greater good—salvation for the world.
3. To accuse God we have to assume his goodness even while blaming him.
4. Embracing God's sovereignty and goodness thickens the roots of our faith (Gen. 50:20).

#### Partaking of Jesus vv22-25

If we understand Jesus, this scene is profoundly comforting. He knows the sheep will be scattered, and yet he feeds them. Verse 22 shows his action: he took, blessed, broke, and gave, the way the Supper is always described. His blessing is parallel to his thanksgiving, and the word for thank is *eucharisteo* from which we get Eucharist--the meal of thanksgiving. It's not magical bread or wine; the power is in the rite, like vows at a wedding. The word accompanies the sacrament, but the word is not enough. We *do* this, consume the bread and wine because God is saving us body and soul. Jesus makes the blood of the covenant, the Passover, all about him (Jer. 31:31-34). He poured it out for many, not just the eleven, his death for our salvation (v24; 14:36; Ps. 116:13, 23:5). Wonderfully, Jesus says he'll drink it anew in the kingdom, and we know he rose from the dead eating and drinking.

## NOTES FOR LITTLE SAINTS

### **Today's Passage: Mark 14:17-25**

*17 And when it was evening, he came with the twelve. 18 And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." 19 They began to be sorrowful and to say to him one after another, "Is it I?" 20 He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me. 21 For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." 22 And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." 23 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. 24 And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. 25 Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."*

1. This is the last meal Jesus ate with his disciples. Do you remember what we call the bread and wine we eat together at church every week?
2. What was the name of the disciple who betrayed Jesus? What had he been doing during Jesus' ministry (John 12:6)?
3. When people fall away or stop believing in and following God, He still has a perfect plan to bless his people. Jesus remembered this when his friend Judas was betraying him. When have you done something difficult when it was good to remember God's plan and love for you?
4. Draw a picture of Jesus and disciples laying down around a table, eating the Supper together.

### **Memory Verse to Recite Next Week:**

*And he said to them, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many." --Mark 14:24*