

## In Remembrance – Luke 22:14-20

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. “*Much Better Snack*”

1. Seven year old Kathy decided to go to big church with her parents one Sunday.
2. It was a Communion service and when the elements had been passed around, Kathy sat there with a little piece of matzo in one hand and a tiny cup of grape juice in the other.
3. She looked intently at them, then said to her mother, “Next week I want to go back to Sunday School. The snack is much better and we get a lot more juice.”

#### B. *Today*

1. We’re looking at the Last Supper today,
2. Whatever label we give it – Communion, the Lord’s Table, the Eucharist,
3. It’s one of the sacraments Jesus gave us so we would remember what makes our faith real & effective.

### II. TEXT

#### A. V. 14

**14 When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him.**

1. The ‘hour’ Luke means here was the *time* for the Passover meal.
2. But not just *any* Passover; this was a *special one* – the most important of *all Passovers* because in God’s plan, it was the *Last Passover*.
3. The *original* Passover had been observed over 1400 years before, when Israel had been liberated from bondage in Egypt.
  - a. You know the story – The Jews were slaves whom Moses had been sent to set free.
  - b. Through a series of plagues, God *hammered* Egypt, but Pharaoh refused to let them go.
  - c. The last of the plagues was the death of the firstborn.
  - d. God told His people to take a lamb & offer it in the evening, putting some of it’s blood on the doorposts and lintel of their front doors.

- e. When the judgment of God visited the Land that night, it would “pass over” any home that bore the blood.
  4. Following their departure from Egypt, God then told them they were to *commemorate* their deliverance every year by eating a special meal called “The Passover.”
    - a. The main course was roast lamb to remember the original lamb that had saved them.
    - b. The rest of the meal and its different courses were symbolic of their past bondage and present freedom.
  5. So every year the Jews celebrated the Passover, commemorating their deliverance from bondage.
  6. But God intended the Passover to not only look *back*; It was meant to look *forward* as well.
  7. The Exodus from Egypt only *foreshadowed* an even *greater deliverance* yet to come, one that had been promised to the *first* man & woman.
    - a. With Paradise lying in ruins at the feet of Adam & Eve because of their sin,
    - b. God came with the promise of redemption.
    - c. He told them one day a Savior would come who would lift the curse & liberate Creation from bondage to sin & death.
  8. Passover looked *forward* to the fulfillment of that primeval promise, when the Lamb of God would place His blood on the doorway to eternal life, the Cross.
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9. Well, the *time* for the *Last Passover* has come, & Jesus and His disciples take their place round the table.
  10. Following the custom of the time, they would have sat around a 3 sided table called a ‘triclinium.’
    - a. Picture a square with no right side – like a block letter “C.”
    - b. The table was about a foot high, and the 13 were seated around the outside of it –
    - c. Their heads were toward the table, legs pointed away, lying on their left sides on pillows.
    - d. Their left hands were under the table, while they reached and ate with their right hands.
    - e. The clues we pick up from the gospels indicate Jesus sat at the second to last place on the bottom of the C, in the position of the host.

- f. To His right, at the very end of the table was young John.
- g. To His left, in the position of honor was Judas.
- h. And across the table in the very lowest position because it was farthest from the host, was Peter.
- i. Where the rest of the disciples sat is anyone's guess.

## **B. Vs. 15-26**

**<sup>15</sup> Then He said to them, "With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; <sup>16</sup> for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."**

1. The Passover meal began with an opening prayer, followed by the 1<sup>st</sup> of 4 cups of wine & a small dish of herbs & sauce.
2. The Gospels tell us that as the meal passed, Jesus became increasingly moved.
  - a. This was an emotional time for Him because He understood what was soon to come.
  - b. Like grains of sand in an hourglass, the last minutes of His life were ticking away.
  - c. He had much that was important to say to these guys.
  - d. He loved them **SO** much. Sure they were a bunch of knuckleheads, but they were **HIS** knuckleheads & He'd become deeply attached to them.
3. So as they gather to begin the meal, the last He will share with them, He tells them just how special this moment is to Him.
4. Jesus had been looking forward to this moment for a long time.
  - a. You see, this was the ***Real*** Passover – the one all the previous Passovers had merely ***foreshadowed***.
  - b. From the moment Adam & Eve fell & plunged creation under the curse of sin & death, all of History had been moving forward to ***this moment***,
  - c. When the Redeemer would come & perform a dramatic rescue, lifting the curse and breaking the shackles of death.
5. But that act of Redemption would cost Him His life.
6. And this is the last meal Jesus will share with these young men He's just spent virtually every moment of the last 3 years with.
7. They had enjoyed ***many*** meals together, but this is the last they will share, for a long, long time.

8. After this, everything changes.
9. They will not eat together again until they sit down to the Victory meal they will share when Jesus reigns as King over all the Earth.

### **C. Vs. 17-18**

**17 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide *it* among yourselves; 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."**

1. The feast commenced with Jesus lifting the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 4 Passover cups & giving the Prayer of Thanksgiving.
  2. The word "thanks" here in v. 17 & again in 19 is the Greek word "Eucharist."
    - a. It means *to be grateful, to give thanks*
    - b. Not as an act of mere politeness, but to have ***a deep sense of gratefulness*** to another for what they've done.
  3. The Christian practice of "saying grace" before a meal comes from what we read here.
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4. My mother died on the morning of Thanksgiving Day a couple years ago.
    - a. As we sat at dinner that night, I couldn't help but miss her because she was a regular fixture at our Thanksgiving table.
    - b. I remember sitting there, thinking back to the ***previous*** Thanksgiving, and wishing I'd known **THAT** was the last one we'd have together.
  5. That's where Jesus was as they sat at the Passover table.
  6. He ***knew*** this was the last meal they would share for a long time.
  7. This was the last time they'd eat & drink together like this.
  8. And as it would be for any of us who're saying goodbye to close friends, the coming departure was difficult for Jesus.
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### **D. V. 19**

1. Following the prayer & 1<sup>st</sup> cup, the story of the Passover was recited, they sang the 113<sup>th</sup> Psalm, & a 2<sup>nd</sup> cup was shared.
2. Then, another prayer of thanks was given & the main meal was eaten.
  - a. This meal had several courses, accompanied by lots of unleavened bread.

b. It was during the meal that Jesus inserted something *new* into the celebration.

**19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”**

3. There was a set & sacred script for the Passover, and what Jesus says here was not a part of it.
4. It was obvious to the disciples that He was doing something new.
5. Just God had commanded them to celebrate Passover to remember their deliverance from bondage,
6. They realized Jesus was now *adding to it* & calling them to commemorate a new & different kind of deliverance.
7. He said, “Do this *in remembrance* of Me.”
8. There was no mistaking that He was setting the rite of Christian Communion on the same level as the Jewish Passover.
9. Really, Communion looks *back to* and commemorates what the Passover looked *forward to* – the Redemption the Savior brought.
10. Jesus is saying here that He is the *fulfillment* of the promise God made to Adam & Eve.
11. **He** – is the *final* Passover sacrifice.
12. In order to understand what Jesus means here by the broken bread, we need to understand what “salvation” meant to the Jews.
  - a. Most people today hear the word “*salvation*” and think of it in purely religious terms.
    - 1) It refers to having one’s sins paid for.
    - 2) And gaining the promise of heaven.
  - b. But it meant far more than that to the Jews. Salvation referred to being *whole*; to being in a place of peace, health, prosperity, free of *anything* that would trouble or distress.
  - c. Salvation was **LIBERATION**: Freedom from all that limits & harms **INTO** all we were created for.
  - d. To the Jew, salvation was a *return to Paradise*, a world untouched by the curse.
13. As Jesus spoke these words to the disciples, He meant that He’d come to SAVE!
  - a. God had become man, with a real physical body, to reclaim and return what had been lost in the Fall.
  - b. Earth had been given to man, forfeited by man, and could only

- be reclaimed by a man.
- c. Jesus *was* that man – who offered up His body as a sacrifice to be broken, so that out of our brokenness we could be made *whole* once again.
14. You see, at the Cross, God put the entire burden & effect of all our sin on Christ, & bestowed His unblemished wholeness on us.
  15. The transaction is made complete when we believe in Christ, when we touch the Cross by faith.
  16. It's important we realize that when Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of Me" He used words that spoke beyond just that moment & meal to an *on-going practice*.
    - a. The disciples understood Jesus was calling them to do this *regularly & often*.
    - b. The *language* makes that clear, as does their *practice* in the weeks, months and years that followed.
    - c. They celebrated Communion nearly every time they met.

#### **E. V. 20**

**20 Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.**

1. As the main meal drew to a close, a 3<sup>rd</sup> cup was shared. That's the cup referred to here.
2. Known as the "Cup of Redemption" it's the one Jesus used to *seal* the celebration of Communion.
3. The 3<sup>rd</sup> cup represented the blood of the Passover lamb that had secured deliverance from divine judgment.
4. Now Jesus takes *that cup* & applies it to the work He is about to do at the cross.
5. His blood would provide for our redemption, and make atonement for our sins so that we would not fall under the judgment of God.
6. And just as ancient Israel had passed *out of bondage in Egypt* into a national covenant with God, so we have passed *out of bondage to sin* into a new personal covenant with Him.
7. It's the blood *of* Christ that pays for the guilt of our sin.
8. And it's faith *in* Christ that allows the *effect*, the *benefit* of Christ's blood to flow to us.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

## **A. In Remembrance**

1. Most religions of the world have elaborate rituals their adherents are required to perform if they're to gain salvation.
  2. The Hindu must meditate & visit the temples & shrines of certain gods, offering special gifts on specific altars.
    - a. Bathing in the Ganges, chanting endless mantras,
    - b. All these are the means by which the Hindu hopes to break free of the cycle of reincarnation and merge with the cosmic consciousness.
  3. The Buddhist must intone the sacred phrase in front of his/her gohonzin for thousands of hours.
  4. The Muslim must observe the 5 pillars of Islam.
  5. The Mormon must wear special clothes, learn the secret, sacred handshake, go on a mission, get married, have lots of kids, & spend many hours locked away in the temple performing secret rites.
  6. The Jehovah's Witness has to go to thousands of doors selling the Watchtower's magazines.
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7. What does Jesus tell us we have to **do** to be saved?
    - a. Believe in Him!
    - b. It isn't what **we do**, it's what **He's done** that makes the difference.
    - c. Believing in Him causes its benefit to flow to us.
  8. But Jesus knows the **tendency** of the human heart to make salvation a **reward** for work.
  9. We see this in the fact that **all** the religions of the world, save one, make salvation something one attains by effort.
  10. **Only** Christianity says that Salvation is a **GIFT** God **gives** those who simply believe.
  11. Knowing that the human heart is set on a **default** of works-based righteousness, Jesus gave His followers a way to remember that their relationship with God is based all on what He did – Communion.
  12. Communion is an **abiding memorial** that reminds us, often, that who and what we are is the work of Christ, not ourselves.
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13. When we see a rainbow spanning the sky, we're **reminded** of the **promise** God made to never judge the Earth with a flood again.
  14. When I see this ring on my finger, I'm reminded of the promise

I made to Lynn 25 years ago on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1980. It reminds me of the covenant we share as husband and wife.

15. When we take the bread & cup of Communion, it's to remind us of the promise God made to save us & the covenant we now share with Him.
16. When the great British Admiral Nelson was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral in London, a group of his sailors carried his coffin to the tomb.
  - a. With the utmost care and dignity they lowered the casket into the grave.
  - b. Then surprising all those who stood near, the soldiers seized the English flag that lay draped over the coffin and tore it to fragments.
  - c. Each soldier then took a piece of the flag as a memento of their Commander.
  - d. For the rest of their lives that little bit of cloth spoke of the Admiral they had loved.
17. This is an olive wood cup; taken from a Communion service at the Garden tomb in Jerusalem.
18. It sits on the bookshelf near my desk, reminding me of my Commander, my Friend, my Lord & Savior who gave His life that I might live.

### **B. The Debate**

1. Some of the greatest debates that have split the church have been over how to understand Communion.
2. Some say that when the ritual words of a priest are spoken over the elements they become the *actual, physical* body & blood of Christ, and that it's partaking of these that imparts eternal life.
3. If that were true, then salvation would once again be the result of something we do, an act we perform.
4. And that would stand contrary to *everything* Jesus intended by instituting Communion in the first place – to focus our attention *on what He has done*, not what we do!
5. Jesus didn't say, "Eat the bread & drink the cup because these things impart life."
6. He said the whole purpose of Communion was to function as a *memorial!*



7. He said, “Do this in *remembrance* of Me.”

### **C. Your Commemoration**

1. Now, it would be the *expected* thing for us to end today by taking Communion. But if we did, we’d be taking it in the context we always do, at Church.
2. As I meditated on *how to apply* what we’ve looked at this morning, I realized the best thing would be to simply encourage **YOU** to take Communion yourself sometime in the next few days.
  - a. Maybe tonight or tomorrow morning.
  - b. Maybe one evening later this week, or during your lunch break at work.
3. You could do it together as a family, or by yourself.
4. The point is – take a piece of bread and a cup of juice, and set yourself before the Lord, asking Him to use that time to speak to you about His great love and desire for you.
5. Let’s end with vs. 15 & 16 again -  
**Then He said to them, “With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; <sup>16</sup> for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”**
6. What Jesus said to them, He says to you & I.
7. Jesus comes to us in a special way when we take Communion.
  - a. Not when we just go through the motions of some religious ritual.
  - b. But when we use the time and elements to connect to Christ thru the work He did.