

Broken: For You

Sunday 8.20.2023 - Communion Sunday

Setting the stage:

Luke 22:1-22

22 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. 2 And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people.

Judas to Betray Jesus

3 Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. 4 He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. 5 And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. 6 So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd.

The Passover with the Disciples

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

Institution of the Lord's Supper

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

Here we have a scene of Jewish passover being celebrated by Jesus and His disciples.

Only Jesus has developed a reputation by now, and He and the disciples must prepare the passover meal in secrecy. Jesus shows His sovereignty in His command to prepare the upper room and the sequence of events that lead to them reclining at the table.

So what is Passover? If we look at the Exodus, we can see Passover as a meal that typically points back to a historic set of events where Yahweh delivered His people from slavery Egypt, particularly during the final plague set on Pharaoh promising to take the life of every firstborn in the land. Yahweh made a way to spare His people by giving them a command/instructions - having them live with a lamb that they would ultimately sacrifice, to put its blood on the doorpost so that God would pass over those households covered by the blood of the sacrificed lamb. The meal prepared with this lamb would have been prepared with unleavened bread, and bitter herbs and eaten in haste as God's people were on the run and going to be pursued.

Jesus' passover is a little bit different. Jesus knows the Father's Word, but He doesn't just know the Word, Jesus is The Word, Jesus has identified oneness with the Father, hence Jesus' controversial teachings upsetting many officials - To religious officials at the time, claiming oneness with the Father is heresy. Jesus set up the Passover in such a way where He has placed Himself dead center of this feast, ritual, and ultimately sacrifice.

Jesus administers the feast as normal except when He breaks the bread, He says that this is His Body - given for you, do this in remembrance of me - that would have been a little different than the passover was traditionally celebrated. Then the disciples are urged to take The Cup, a cup which symbolically would have meant wrath in many places in Old Testament Scripture, only Jesus has switched the cup, Jesus is saying this is The Cup of The New Covenant - again, this would have been another place where things have deviated from tradition significantly - New Covenant? Jesus is taking the cup of wrath upon Himself, and giving His followers a new cup, once again fulfilling Old Testament prophecy:

Jeremiah 31:31-35

The New Covenant

31 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. 33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

There is one thing missing from this Passover feast - The lamb

We are actually in the middle of a sacred transformation. The cosmic Passover is being fulfilled with Jesus presenting Himself as the lamb to be slain, having lived among His people for a time, long enough for them to intimately get to know His innocence. During all of this, we are told by Christ Himself, that His body being broken will be spiritual food for us - His death, burial and resurrection will bring us Life eternal, His condemnation will bring our liberation, once and for all.

This is no longer the traditional Passover - and we can actually see Jesus Christ's heart for believers in His High Priestly prayer:

John 17:20-26

20 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. 24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. 26 I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

So why are we here? remembering this particular place in Scripture, and why do we come together to take the bread and the cup in remembrance of Jesus?

What is communion?

com·mun·ion

/kə'myŏnyən/

noun

1.

the sharing or exchanging of intimate thoughts and feelings, especially when the exchange is on a mental or spiritual level.

"in this churchyard communion with the dead was almost palpable"

2.

the service of Christian worship at which bread and wine are consecrated and shared.

"Communion was celebrated once a month"

What is union?

un·ion

/'yŏnyən/

noun

noun: union; plural noun: unions; noun: the Union

1.

the action or fact of joining or being joined, especially in a political context.

"he was opposed to closer political or economic union with Europe"

a state of harmony or agreement.

"they live in perfect union"

"their union had not been blessed with children"

What is unity? - from the latin unus meaning one

u·ni·ty

/ˈyoʊnədə/

noun

noun: unity; noun: unity of time; noun: unity of place; noun: unity of action

1.

the state of being united or joined as a whole.

"European unity"

the state of forming a complete and pleasing whole, especially in an artistic context.

"the repeated phrase gives the piece unity and cohesion"

a thing forming a complex whole.

plural noun: unities

"they speak of the three parts as a unity"

2.

MATHEMATICS

the number one.

"the slope of each dotted line is less than unity"

We come together, to honor and remember Jesus Christ, but in the same way Jesus celebrated the Passover, this isn't just somber remembrance for a historical event, this has implications for now, and even the future.

When Christ ate the Passover with the disciples, He was preparing to be a part of the very suffering they were commemorating at the Last Supper. As believers we are one with Christ, in that intimate way Christ is one with the Father, we are unified in all respects.

Some among us are really suffering, in their suffering they are unified with Christ's suffering and we have the hope and promised glory that suffering is not the end - We are unified with a God of resurrection and power.

If we are one with Christ and He is one with us, we are also one with each other. This means we are ALL intimately linked, and this means sharing with each other is something to take very seriously. Do we want to share in death (in the corrupting sense as with sin) or do we want to share Life? If we suffer on behalf of righteousness sake or for trying to do the right thing, can we find comfort in knowing we are part of a greater Body that is very familiar and acquainted with suffering, a Body that is capable of building up in such distress, a Body that is capable of provision in another's poverty.

This actually shows us how damaging sin is - what are we intimately sharing with each other in sin? Death, destruction, corruption, division?

This shows us why discerning the body and keeping with repentance is so important. This highlights the need for forgiveness, reconciliation, healing, restoration and even resurrection that can only take place by the power of the Holy Spirit. However, do not shrug off these implications and simply just take advantage of the amenities of Christian community. Do not feed yourself while another starves. Do not get drunk while another is suffering. We must discern the body and have a deep reverence for this communion, this unity among believers in Christ Jesus.

In closing, as Paul says "wait for each other", our celebration together is not about self satisfaction or gorging oneself as fast as possible as with other kinds of feasts, in this we may be robbing the poor and putting to shame those who have not. Our time together is not about reveling in debauchery or creating factions so that we can see who is the greatest among us. Our time together is in celebration of His Life, remembrance of His death, and living hope in His promised and assured resurrection. This is also not only something we look to as an outsider, this is a communion - Union as a community - participate in - together - that may we shed our tendencies to be divisive and recognize our standing in a Body far larger than any individual attempting to stand on its own. (Ref. 1 Corinthians 11)