

4. Sacrifice & Service

Luke 22:1-38

What is/was the most important meal of the year in your family (either now or growing up)? Why is/was it so important?

Betrayal & Fulfilment: *Read Verses 1-6*

- (1) So far the religious leaders have been frustrated in their attempts to get rid of Jesus. How does Judas solve their problems?
- (2) Who/what are the various agencies & motivations involved in the betrayal & plan to kill Jesus? (Compare also Luke 4:13 with 22:3,6)
- (3) Consider Luke 22:20-22 & 36-37. What does Jesus highlight about his upcoming death?
- (4) Do you think it's unfair that Judas should be held accountable for his actions? Why/why not?¹

The Passover: *Read Verses 7-23*

The Passover meal was an annual memorial meal, in which a lamb was sacrificed and unleavened bread was eaten, to remember and give thanks for the redemption of God's people out of slavery in Egypt (Exodus 12:1-27). God had determined to send a final plague on Egypt in judgement on Pharaoh and the Egyptians for enslaving his own people. The firstborn of every household would die, but the Israelites were to spread the blood of the sacrificed lamb over their door posts, and the Lord would 'passover' these households and their firstborn would be spared. This meal was an annual reminder and celebration of this act of judgement and mercy.

- (5) The passover was a remembrance of past redemption, but Jesus indicates that it was also meant to look forward to a future reality. What do you think Jesus means by the passover meal finding 'fulfilment in the kingdom of God' in verses 14-17? (See also Revelation 7:13-14, 21:27)
- (6) The custom of the passover meal required explanation and interpretation of the meal at various points as the food and drink were shared out. In verses 19-23 Jesus interprets the meal with his disciples, but in a new way, in connection with his imminent death. In fact, he sees the passover meal and his death and 'mutually interpretative' - that is, they need to be understood in light of each other. *How does Jesus use the passover meal to explain the ultimate reason for his death? And how does he use his upcoming death to explain the true meaning of the passover itself?*

¹ Note: When we compare Mark's account (14:1-11) with Luke's account here, we see that Judas goes to the chief priests after having objected to a woman pouring perfume on Jesus' feet as a waste of money. John's gospel also comments that Judas "did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it." (John 12:4-6)

In verse 20, Jesus says 'this cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.' The prophet Jeremiah speaks about the hope of a new covenant, in contrast with the covenant established through Moses at Mt. Sinai. See esp. Jeremiah 31:31-34.

(7) What is different about the 'new covenant' compared with the old?

(8) Consider each phrase in verse 20 and try to explain it in your own words: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

The Apostle Paul makes it clear that Jesus is establishing a new tradition for Christians to celebrate together, a kind of transformed celebration of the passover, known as "the Lord's Supper".

(9) From what we read here, what are we doing when we share in the Lord's supper, and why should we do it?

(10) What does the Lord's Supper encourage us to remember in the context of daily struggles as a Christian?

Still Unprepared: Read verses 24-34

(11) Why is the dispute amongst the disciples 'as to which of them was considered to be greatest' so terribly inappropriate, especially in this context?²

(12) What does Jesus want them to understand about true greatness? How does this relate to his own example?

Are there areas of life (eg. work, home, church...) where you are tempted to 'lord it over people' or seek recognition and status?

(13) In verses 31-34, Jesus warns Peter that difficult trials are coming and that he is too confident in his own courage. How does this conversation serve as both a warning and an encouragement to us as Christians?

(14) What do we need to remember when (not if!) we fail?

Pray together giving thanks for the sacrifice of Jesus and the blessings of the new covenant in his blood, and ask that we might trust in him and follow his loving and humble example.

² Note: Verses 28-30 remind us that Jesus does not see his disciples as completely hopeless - they have stood by him in his trials (so far!). He also indicates that present sacrifice and service in his name is performed in the hope of future glory and authority in his kingdom.