

Luke 22:14-22 – The Last Supper (Maundy Thursday)

Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.



Background: We are now in Holy Week, or Passion Week, the days leading up to Jesus' betrayal, suffering, death, and then resurrection. Today is called Maundy Thursday, and it's the day Jesus had the Last Supper with his disciples.

The word "Maundy" comes from the Latin *mandatum*, or mandate – a charge or command – because on this night Jesus told his disciples, "A new commandment [mandate] I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 13:34-35).

Focus of the study:

¹⁴ And when the hour came, Jesus reclined at table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." ¹⁷ And Jesus took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and share 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 Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁰ And after supper Jesus took another cup of wine, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. ²¹ But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me at the table. ²² For it has been determined that the Son of Man must die."

Questions:

- The writer tells us what meal Jesus and his followers are eating. What special meal is this?*
 - This is the annual Passover meal celebrated by all Jewish people, even to this day.
- I wonder if you know what that meal represents for the Jewish people?*
 - It remembers when God saved the people out of slavery in Egypt. The final plague was an angel of death that passed over houses marked with the lamb's blood (Exodus 12:21-26).
- So, back to Luke's story: What's happening in Jerusalem during this Passover?*
 - Jesus entered the city in triumph just a few days before, when the crowd shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"
 - The leaders of the Jewish people are plotting to kill Jesus, fearing his popularity with the crowd
- What does Jesus tell his disciples during this dinner? How is Jesus feeling about being with them?*
 - v. 15: Jesus "earnestly desires" to eat this Passover before his suffering starts.
- What does Jesus do?*
 - Takes cup, gives thanks, tells them to share it (Passover involves 4 cups of diluted wine).
 - Takes bread, gives thanks, breaks it. *What does Jesus say as he breaks the bread?*
 - "This is my body, given for you."
 - Takes wine again after the meal. *What does Jesus say this time?*

- i. "This cup, poured out, is the new covenant in my blood."
- 6. *What is as covenant?*
 - a. an agreement, a promise, a contract
- 7. *What covenant was already in place between the Jews and Yahweh God?*
 - a. One of blood sacrifice, payment for sin.
 - b. Yom Kippur (usually in September), annual day of asking forgiveness for sins, the holiest day in the Jewish year (Kippur, related to Ke-Purim, "a day like Purim," a day of God's deliverance and salvation).
 - c. The sacrificial lamb took on the sins of humankind through a priestly ritual: Leviticus 16 (innocent life given for guilty life). It's where we get the word "scapegoat"!
- 8. *Jesus says his blood is the new covenant. I wonder what Jesus means by that?*
 - a. *What did God's old covenant/contract state?*
 - i. God forgives people's sins through the blood offering of an innocent goat.
 - b. *So how could Jesus' blood be a new covenant? What is Jesus saying his blood is going to do?*
 - i. Pay for the sins of all humankind, once for all, forever. The innocent life given for ALL guilty lives.
- 9. *What about the bread? I wonder what you think broken bread symbolizes?*
 - a. *What does bread do? What is it for?*
 - i. Nourishment; gives life; basic
 - b. "This is my body, which is given for you." *How is Jesus like bread?*
 - i. His body was broken (beaten up, killed) on the cross; gives life.
- 10. *And what are Jesus' very next words?*
 - a. Prediction of his betrayal and death – the beginning of the end.
- 11. *Everything has been going great; the crowds shouted with joy when Jesus came into the city just a few days ago. Now Jesus is telling them he's going to die. How do you think Jesus' disciples reacted to those words??*
 - a. Shock, struggle, denial. They don't yet see or understand the full extent of Jesus' love, that he would die for them.
- 12. *Who here has celebrated communion / Eucharist / Lord's Supper in church? What has been your experience with that? (Sometimes people started when a child; depending on one's church tradition, might celebrate it every day, week, or month)*
- 13. *What do the physical elements, the bread and the wine, remind us of?*
 - a. What Jesus' willing, innocent, and sacrificial death was doing and continues to do:
 - i. Be a payment for our wrongdoing before God; and therefore ...
 - ii. ... nourish us with life and love ...
 - iii. ... even, like the disciples, in the midst of our failure, fear, betrayal, and denial.

[If you like, end this study with a [Celebration of Communion.](#)]

Song suggestions:

[Let Us Break Bread Together](#)

[When I Survey the Wondrous Cross](#)

[Jesus Paid It All](#)

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