

March 4, 2018 -

Matthew 26:17-30 -

The Lord's Last Supper

Introduction:

I read where Wreckers were preparing to tear down a burned-out bakery in Troy, Illinois, accidentally made a big impression on City Hall, which was right next door. A 65-ton crane backed into the government building, creating a gaping hole in the front wall. According to a supervisor, the crane operator "was just plain careless."

This carelessness reminds me of what happened to the church in first-century Corinth. They were careless in their approach and their hearts attitude towards the Lord's Supper. By the attitude of our hearts, we will either honor His death or do damage to His name. It is important that on occasion we look a little more closely at the meaning of the Lord supper. It has been six months since we broke away to reflect in a sermon on this subject. In light of what God did for us at the cross we should approach the table with respect. Why did Jesus command His followers to participate in what we call the Lord's Supper or Communion?

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Romans 8:[32] --There was nothing he would not give it up in order to provide for your salvation even His precious Son, our Lord Jesus. What he encounter was very difficult but he did it for us and the father.

I The Last Supper defined.

1) The last supper was not, in its observance, a glorious occasion. Regardless of how the artists might have portrayed it, this was a time of confusion, of fear, and of self-seeking on the part of the disciples. Jesus was the only one present who knew the meaning of what He was doing.

(2) The "last supper" was the inauguration of a new "church" ordinance, although it was not recognized as such at the time. The church will go back to this celebration as the historical roots of its celebration of "communion," but the disciples had no grasp of the newness of this celebration at the time.

(3) The "last supper" was the last supper in that it marked the end of one dispensation and the entrance into another. It instituted the age of the "new covenant" and anticipated (at the cross) the end of the period of the "old covenant." The "last supper" is unique, never to be reenacted. It is the closing of one chapter, and the beginning of a new one.

(4)The "last supper" was a modification of the Old Testament observance of the Passover. But there is little information given to us about the "ritual" that was observed by our Lord, or even that Jesus followed the normal Jewish ritual of that time. The part of the celebration that is emphasized is that which was utterly foreign to the Passover celebration, that which our Lord added.

*5) The mood of the "last supper," especially for the disciples, was dominated by the gloom of our Lord's betrayal and of His imminent death on the cross. They did not understand what

Jesus was doing. The disciples did not know what was about to take place, but there was a sadness, a heaviness, in their spirits, knowing that something ominous was about to occur. Let's observed the preparation and the betrayal.

II The Preparation for the Passover w. 17-19 ---The arrangements.

1. Jesus told his disciples Peter and John to make the arrangements and how to find the upper room. These were prearranged, preparations he had worked out in advance. You see there was no attempt on His part to escape death, God's timetable for events had to be honored. The Lord's strategy was to arrange the Passover meal in such a way as not to be disturbed. By doing so, He would be in control of the events. We must remember the scribes, were after Him at this point and so He had to be discreet

[3] Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, [4] And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him. [5] But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

2. The Passover meal was to be eaten inside the walls of Jerusalem. Our text states that Jesus directed the disciples to go into Jerusalem, find a particular man, and state that the Master would keep the Passover at his house (Matt. 26:18). In Marks account, Jesus said, "When you go into the city, you will find a man carrying a jar of water." Now, that would stand out (like a man today carrying a purse on his arm), for this was woman's work. Only women carried jars of water on their heads.

B. Peter and John followed the Lord's instructions (Matt. 26:19) and prepared the meal. They were fortunate to have such an intimate setting for their Passover celebration. The population of Jerusalem swelled to over one million during the Passover season. It was customary for homeowners of the time to make space available, but it was sure over crowded.

Application:

We need to prepare for the Lord Supper and worship. We should not come with a careless attitude. Our hearts must be ready and prepare to received a fresh blessing from God. Example of preparations for[painting.

C. The seating (Matt. 26:20).

1. Peter and John must have left the house to rejoin Jesus and the other disciples, and Mark 14:17 states that Jesus arrived in the evening with the Twelve. After the arrival, Jesus "sat down with the twelve" (Matt. 26:20). We are accustomed to seeing pictures of Jesus and the disciples seated at a long, rectangular table. These pictures, as you may know, give a poor representation of what the situation was really like.

2. First, the Passover in Christ's time was eaten in a reclining position. This was a change in custom from the first Passover, when the Jews were directed to eat in haste (Exod. 12:11). The Hewish Talmud stated, "It is the manner of servants to eat standing, but, now let them (the

Israelites) eat reclining, that they may be known to have passed out of slavery into liberty."

III. The Presentation of The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper preaches to us that Jesus came to forgive and cleanse us from our treachery and betrayal. We have all treated Jesus just as Judas did. But He has become the great sacrifice for our sin and stands ready to forgive us and make us new again.

As He broke the bread centuries ago, He said, "Do this in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. 11:24). And taking the cup, He instructed, "This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me" (v.25). The bread reminds us that the Second Person of the Trinity "became flesh and dwelt among us"

(Jn. 1:14) so that He could bear our sins in His body on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24). The cup symbolizes the blood He shed "for the remission of sins" (Mt. 26:28). We must be careful, therefore, not to partake of the elements "in an unworthy manner" (1 Cor. 11:27). The apostle Paul said that each person should "examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (v.28). When we gather around the Lord's Table to remember Christ's sacrifice for us, we should search our hearts and confess our sins to God.

Conclusion and Invitation:

Why did Jesus command His followers to participate in what we call the Lord's Supper or Communion? Because He wants us to remember His death on the cross and to anticipate His return.