

THE LAST SUPPER

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Lesson: Luke 22:14-20

The Jewish people were celebrating one of their holidays. It was called the Passover. It recalled the angel of death passing over the Jewish people in Egypt during the tenth plague. At the same time, many of the Jewish priests and scribes were very angry at the Lord. He told them things that upset them, although His words taught people the way to heaven.

Even one of the Lord's disciples, Judas Iscariot, was ready to turn his back on the Lord. This pleased the chief priests. They promised to give him money to betray the Lord.

The disciples of the Lord, from the Thursday before His resurrection, were gathering to celebrate the Passover. Peter and John were sent to find a place where they could sit down together for a meal. The instructions were very simple. They were to enter Jerusalem. When they saw a man carrying a pitcher of water, they should follow him into the house. Then they should ask him to prepare an upper room where the disciples could eat together.

This was more than a celebration of the Jewish feast of unleavened bread. It was the last time that the Lord would have His disciples gathered together. He wanted to tell them things and to prepare them for what was to happen next.

In the lesson from the gospel of Luke, we read how He took the cup that was filled with wine. He told them to divide it among themselves. He also took bread, and after blessing it, He broke it and gave it to them to eat. When He did this, however, He said a very strange thing. He said, "This is My Body, which was given for you. This do in remembrance of Me." And when He passed the cup of wine, He said, "This cup is the New Testament in My Blood, which is shed for you."

You can imagine how His disciples must have felt on this very special evening. Several times the Lord said that He would be killed, and then rise three days later. The fear of losing their great Leader was in their hearts. They had seen Jesus Christ do amazing miracles. Yet He seemed like a man, eating and sleeping just as they did.

The Lord knew, of course, that He would soon be captured, receive an unfair trial, be tortured and killed. But He also knew that the God of the heavens, Who created all, and Who was speaking to mankind through Jesus Christ,

could not be harmed. So how did the Lord teach His simple disciples that He really was the God of the heavens?

They did not realize it at the time, but when the Lord was celebrating the Jewish feast of the Passover, He was also teaching them great truths. The truths were shown by passing around the wine and bread, and saying the words that He said.

Nearly two thousand years later, people who love and believe in the Lord still remember that evening by acting out the same scene. They come to church and receive wine and bread from the minister. He says the words that the Lord did that first Holy Supper evening.

The Lord was trying to tell His disciples, and the whole world at the same time, that He loved them very much and wanted to lead them to heaven. But He could not force them to heaven—that would be going against His own rules. Now each person must see that the Lord loves them and that He has told us the way to heaven. He has offered us the rules, through His Word, in the same way that He offered the cup of wine to His disciples. They had to take the cup and drink from it, just as we thirst for knowledges in the Lord's Word. We must come to His Old and New Testament to fill our minds with truths.

He was also teaching them that the Lord's love was there for all who would receive it. If we truly hunger for love—good loves—then we must learn how to be fed by Him. It is true that the Lord offered a piece of bread to His disciples. But the bread was a symbol of food for the body, like love is food for the heart. This was the special message the Lord was giving to everyone when He passed around the plate of bread and the cup of wine.

When we say the Lord's Prayer, we ask Him to give us our daily bread. We are not just asking for food. What we are really asking for is the Lord's love to come into our hearts, bringing happiness and the joy of giving.

When the Lord made our bodies, He knew that they would need nourishment—food and drink—to stay alive. And so we feed our bodies every day. He also created minds in our bodies which will live after our bodies are left to the grave. And spiritual bodies, or minds, need to be fed and nourished as well, because that is the way the Lord made us.

The food and drink that is needed to keep the mind or spiritual body can only come from the Lord. Our mind thirsts for knowledges, and later greater truths, which the Lord provides through His Word. And the Lord also provides love—good loves—that keep our spiritual body alive to eternity. This was like the bread that the Lord passed around to His disciples. And He said, "This is My Body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

We can easily test this teaching. Have you ever met a person who did not want to be loved? The human heart hungers for love daily. The Lord expects us to share our love with others every day of our life. As your parents love you, so do you love your parents. As you give love to your friends, so do you receive love. But to give love to others, we must receive it from the Lord, the Giver of all love. That is why we ask for it daily in the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord taught us many things in the stories of Easter. The Last Supper with His disciples is just one of them. But this is an important lesson. The Lord rose on the third day, showing He was the God of all the heavens and above the bonds of death itself. He also is the Giver of the bread of heaven, which is love, to all who seek it from Him. And it is for this reason that adult members of the church act out that first Holy Supper. They approach the Lord in His Word on bended knee. They receive bread and wine from His representatives, the ministers.

We thank the Lord for the food we receive each day. We also thank Him for the love which we receive from Him to feed our spiritual body, or mind. With bread from heaven, which is love from the Lord, we will live to eternity. *Amen.*