

The Covenant

Mark 14:12-25

How many of you like big change? Not just painting the walls a different color. More like a job change...location change...relationship change. Since I accepted the call to be a pastor, big change has happened 5 times since 1997 (Abby to PG, PG to ACTS, Abby to St Cath, St Cath-Abby-Brandon, Brandon to Lillooet). Major relationship, location and job change. Change is challenging. New is exciting and daunting too. You have to rethink so many things you took for granted. The way I keep my sanity is to recognize God's direction when service is coming to a close. I draw near to Him and He sends me help - to finish well when it would be easy to get bitter. And when I arrive at the new ministry...no turning back. I can't be looking over my shoulder while I'm focused on what God has for me in the present. I must trust Him with past situations and people. Leave victories and grudges at the cross. God has a track record of faithfulness. I trust Him. I came to know Jesus as my Savior 43 years ago. I have His living word and 2000 years of His proof behind that.

Those disciple's we've been riding along with (often disappointed with) are on the other side of the resurrection...without the Holy Spirit. They are going through a huge change

in their expectations about God's Savior and how everything is going to work out. They've had warnings about the present and the future. But what He tells them tonight will change their relationship with God forever.

To this day, we set aside our regular service each month to let those words sink into our hearts and souls.

Pray —You made the sacrifice for superior relationship. Show us how to fully enter (receive from you, reject what gets in the way and please You)

Festivals and Dates

Everyone is piling into Jerusalem and the surrounding area for the Festival. God commanded Israel that He would establish for them a place to have two back-to-back gatherings for remembering God's faithfulness to rescue them from slavery in Egypt. I will simply read the instructions they were to follow:

Read Lev 23:3-8

One interesting thing I had missed was this special Sabbath. So if the Passover was on any other day than Friday, there could be two Sabbaths and two days of preparation in one week. There are several mysteries about how Jesus' last week tie into the Jewish Festivals. I spent some time down that rabbit hole this past week and I would issue a warning. Be careful about researching the Bible

just to satisfy our western ideas: everything lined up neat and tidy. Study to know God. Focusing our energies on trying to make the Gospels fit our reasoning...is dangerously close to placing our faith in humanity rather than God. If we stick to what God wants us to focus on in Scripture, our faith is secure.

Read v12 Where?

Mark is writing to include Gentiles with little knowledge of Jewish holidays. For simplicity, he calls it all the Festival of Unleavened Bread. The custom is that the head of the household kills the animal and prepares it. It is brought to the temple (priest sprinkles blood against base of altar, it's fat is burned on the alter for offering). Then it is brought home and roasted for eating that night. The Passover meal begins after sunset (remember the night of the last plague (death angel) that convinced Pharaoh to let Israel go). No meat is to be left for the morning. Some of the commentators are nervous about long the group has waited to get this all lined up. Does the Son of God seem panicked? No, it's the disciples who bring it up. There's no mention of the special day of preparation and Sabbath rest the following day...for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Normally this would also be the time for households to get rid of anything associated with

leaven. Today it's called removing Chametz...anything made from the 5 main grains...and it also symbolizes removing pride. They even have to get rid of utensils used to cook chametz. Can take days and even weeks. The disciples give us a great principle for living as a church. They ask Jesus (the head), what's the plan? And so should we.

Remember how Jesus mysteriously arranged for the donkey ride into Jerusalem? Jesus has this under control too, following the Father's plan.

Read v13-16 Preparations

First tip this is a prearranged secretive deal is the man carrying the jar of water. Women carried water in jars upon their head, men carried in skins held in their hands. And why not just say to the owner that Jesus is looking for a room? Precautions are taken so Jesus and the twelve will have time alone. Only Peter and John (Lk 22:8), Jesus and the room renter knew the arrangements. We need time away to be with our Lord too. Where no one and nothing can interrupt. For Jesus, it was before anyone else was up in the morning (Mk 1:35) or after work, up a mountain alone (Mk 6:46).

What preparations were being made? There isn't much to go on...from the Gospels. It has become popular to see Jesus and His disciples doing a full-out

Seder meal...14 parts all in special order. Today, the Jews follow a book for this called the Haggadah. Certainly, Jesus would lead them through what was appropriate for acknowledging God's faithfulness. But the Gospel writers are not concerned about this. Jesus has an appointment...a ransom to pay...a cross to bear. He will be in a tomb in less than 24 hours. Between Mark 14:17 and 18 are details of the washing of the disciples' feet and the lesson on humility (John 13:1-20). Following that lesson, Jesus became deeply troubled. It was time to flush out the traitor.

v17-20 Eating with a Traitor

Could you imagine just for a moment...the heart beats of the twelve? What's Jesus going to do with him? And if the traitor is successful, the whole group is in danger.

Who is it? Is there any one that could say they never had doubts?

"Surely not I."

They want Jesus to answer their question for their own relief.

How is Judas keeping it together? He plays along just like the others, "Surely you don't mean me?" And no one could tell at the time. His heart is hardened. When did this begin? Right from the start? When Jesus began predicting His death instead of raising an army? Was it the perfume incident the night before?

It is interesting how Jesus just lays it out there. Instead of naming Judas, it becomes an opportunity for each disciple to examine their loyalty, their motives.

Communion is a time to ask: "Have I been loyal to God?" We can fool those around us but we can't fool God. We can be so close to surrendering our life to Him...hanging around believers, attending services, good deeds and even reading the Bible. Close but not in.

The Apostle Paul was concerned about the news that there were divisions in Corinthian church. Without using names, he pointed out the shameful way they treated one another at fellowship meals and communion (11:17-34). Communion is supposed to be a testimony to the Gospel...including His return. Jesus should return finding us doing what He would want us to do...as if He were physically there. Paul does not strike them with a lightning rod of judgement. He gives the church a warning...an opportunity for repentance.

Read 1 Cor 11:27-34

Judas had his warning but he answered, surely not I. He will not repent.

21a it is written...

Over 300 prophecies point to the anointed one. Starting in Genesis... Key scriptures: How Jesus will go:

Zech 11:12 - betrayed for 30 shekels of silver. Ps 41:9 - betrayed by a friend
Psalm 22 - hands and feet pierced, no bones broken, casting lots for his clothing, but he will be delivered.
Isaiah 53 - rejected, killed as a sacrifice for the sins of His people, silent before His accusers, buried with the rich, with criminals in His death...but as a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see light and be satisfied. He will rise!
Psalm 16:8-11 - you will not allow your holy one to decay (used by Peter and Paul)

21b But woe...

Judas will not turn. He does not beg for mercy. Like Pharaoh, he is becoming Satan's toy truck to wreck what God is building. Even after investing all that time in him, God allows the Judas the freedom to put on the shackles of Satan, sin and death. Our right to choose – being made in God's image - is a privilege and responsibility.

On the road to Jerusalem (Mk 8:36) Jesus said, *For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the Gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? ...the Son of Man will be ashamed of them* (v38) *And be thrown into hell, where the worms that eat them do not die, and the fire is not quenched* (9:48).

If you have never been born again, one day you will wish you had not been born at all. Warren W. Wiersbe
Judas is going to feel the weight of his choice shortly. Who knows what tomorrow may bring for any of us...it could be our last.

v22 Body

The head of the household for each meal took bread and said, "Praise be Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who causes bread to come forth from the earth." After the Amen response, the bread was broken and distributed, passing the blessing to each one who ate. The same was true over the wine ("the fruit of the vine"). Jesus gives the traditional blessing of the bread a new twist by saying, "This is my body." In effect, he says, "This is myself." Garland,

The bread is broken up and distributed for their benefit. Later it will hit them that this was a simple acted parable...Christ giving Himself for their eternal benefit...and all believers.

v23-24 Blood Covenant

This is the big change I was talking about in the beginning.
Do they see Jesus is going to be God's blood covenant to begin a new relationship with His people? Jesus is going to pay the ransom for their sins with His blood...not the unblemished lambs and goats being brought to the

Temple year after year for sacrifice and feasting.

Jesus is the final lamb. See Heb 8, 9:15

Read Heb 8:6-13

The New Covenant in His blood does what the Old Covenant sacrifices could not do—take away sin and cleanse the heart and conscience of the believer. Righteous before God. We are not saved from our sins by participating in a religious ceremony or works but by trusting Jesus Christ as our Savior, our perfect high priest and sacrifice before God. ^{Wiersbe} And Who intercedes for us who believe.

1. His death is the new, once-for-all sacrifice offered to God
2. We share Christ's cup of suffering and salvation
3. (Blood sealed the covenant Ex 24). Jesus' blood seals a new relationship with God – far better than the old.

v25 Last Supper

One day, we will share that meal with our Lord.

Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My

Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. Jn 14:1-3

And not just any meal...

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God." Rev 19:6-9