

Holy Thursday

4/9/2020

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THE PREPARATION

The Psalm 116:10-17

How shall I repay the LORD?
For all the good things he has done for me?
I will lift up the cup of salvation
And call upon the name of the LORD.
I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
In the presence of all his people.
Precious in the sight of the LORD
Is the death of his servants.
O LORD, I am your servant:
I am your servant and the child of your
handmaid; you have freed me from my bonds.
I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving
And call upon the name of the LORD,
I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
In the presence of all his people.
In the courts of the LORD'S house,
In the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Hallelujah!

Hymn:

“In the Cross of God I Glory” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sInix4z0OE0>

Matt. 26:17-19

It was time for the feast of the Passover during which Jews would make their annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem. This was to celebrate God's protection of the Jews in Egypt against the plague of death and their escape from bondage. Jesus and His disciples were among the pilgrims although Jesus knew His impending fate by being in that city. He had evidently already made arrangements for the place to celebrate the Passover feast. On the day of the Passover he sent his disciples to that house with the password to the proprietor, “The Teacher says, my time is near.”

The disciples did as Jesus directed and began to prepare the feast. They had to prepare the unleavened bread, symbolizing the great hurry the Jews were in leaving Egypt – no time for the bread to raise. Next they had to have a lamb killed in the Temple and then prepared for the table. Finally, they had to assemble the four items of the Passover liturgy:

1. Salt water – symbolizing the tears of slavery
2. Bitter herbs- horseradish, chicory, endive lettuce, and horehound – symbolizing the bitterness of slavery
3. The preparation of Charosheth (charoset) a paste made out of apples, dates, pomegranates, and nuts- symbolizing the bricks that they were enslaved to make.
4. Pour four cups of wine – symbolizing the four promises of God of Exodus:
 - a. “I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians and deliver you from slavery to them.”
 - b. “I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.”
 - c. “I will take you as my people,
 - d. And I will be your God.”

The disciples did as Jesus requested spending the day in preparing the Passover feast. They may have known that Jesus was in danger but they were not aware that this would be His last meal.

Matt. 26: 20-25

Just after sundown that same day Jesus and His disciples gathered in the upper room and began their Passover celebration with the liturgy and the feast. It is a celebration which is still observed by our Jewish brother and sisters to this day. During this holy celebration Jesus shocked His disciples by announcing that one of them would betray him. They first must have thought to themselves that surely no one here would do such a thing. But they also knew there was a bounty on His head. Then they began to respond one after another: “Surely not I Lord.” “You can’t believe that I would do such a thing, surely not I.”

But Jesus insisted, “The one who is eating with me will do just that, betray me. It will be sad for him for he will no longer be able to live with what he is going to do.” Judas then came forth, “Surely not I, Rabbi?” Jesus responded, “You have said so.” “Or, you really don’t think I believe you Judas just because you denied it?”

Like Judas, often when we are confronted about our intentions we succumb to the pressures of our surroundings and our desires. We fail to face who we really are and say “Surely not I.”

It would only be a matter of a few hours before the real truth was to be known, “Surely not I.” For a few pieces of silver Judas had sold his soul.

Hymn: “Just As I am” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxA0TFe3-Uo>

Matt. 26:26-29

The Passover feast was ending. The celebration of God’s covenant with the ancient Hebrews and Moses was concluding when Jesus spoke giving ceremony to a new covenant between God and His people. This new relationship would replace that of the lamb’s blood of the Passover. This new covenant would free mankind from the bondage of sin. The disciples that night experienced being transformed from the Passover to a new feast which would celebrate Christ’s life, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of love and forgiveness. This was just not a kingdom on earth but the promise of an eternal kingdom for God’s children.

“He took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and said to his disciples ‘Take and eat. This is my body.’ Then He took the cup and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying ‘Drink from it all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’”

In this act Jesus declared the old is passing away and the new covenant with God is at hand.

Hymn: “Let Us Break Bread Together” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Egk-pX_1nHg

Matt.26: 31-46

Jesus and His disciples left that upper room and went to the Garden of Gethsemane. It was here that Jesus would wrestle with the decision as to what was ahead of him. He knew His time was a hand so He fervently prayed; “My Father, if it is possible let this cup pass from me, yet not what I want but what you want.” With this came His ultimate acceptance.

Judas appeared with the soldiers of the court. To identify Jesus he went up to Jesus and kissed Him with the words “Rabbi”. Jesus was arrested and then tried during which he heard those who had just days before shout “Hosanna” now shouted ‘Crucify him, Crucify Him.’”

Hymn: “Go to Dark Gethsemane” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alPjNxQStRY>

Prayer: Most merciful God, on revisiting this Passover night, which began to be a tragic sequence of events, we are reminded that you take tragedy and turn it into an ultimate victory. Lead us to that realization as we live amidst today’s crisis. Surround our lives with your comforting presence of hope and new life during this

sacrificial time. Protect and give strength and wisdom to all health care workers as well as those who are helping to sustain the availability of the necessities of life. We pray that your healing wisdom be with the scientists who are working to help find a remedy to bring healing and well-being to all of us. We also pray for the safety and well-being for all of our family of believers. If it be your will may we pray for this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Tenebrae: Tonight begins the period of mourning and darkness, Tenebrae. During the next days ahead we need to reflect upon the passion story, the trial, crucifixion, death, and burial of Jesus while looking forward to the celebration of the resurrection

Now May God Bless you with His love and peace. Amen