

Luke 22: 7-23; Ex. 12:1-14; The Passover Fulfilled I. The Feast Being Celebrated II. The Food that is Received III. The Recipients of this Meal

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, what is the importance of food in your daily routine? How much time do you spend thinking about, preparing and eating this food? Well, food is for good reason called a staple of our society- without food we would quickly waist away. However, food is more than just something you eat- right? Food also means fellowship- communication- even blessing. If you want to start a conversation with someone, invite them over for a cup of coffee and peace of pie. Today we come to the Day of Unleavened Bread- the Thursday before what we call Good Friday- the day on which Jesus celebrates the Last Supper with His disciples. We consider this theme; Jesus Christ celebrates the Passover with His disciples to teach them about His roll as our sacrifice. Passover was really a feast of deliverance and redemption- pointing to the freedom that God's people receive as they pass under the blood.

I. The Feast Being Celebrated

So in our first point, we will be looking at the feast of the Passover and how this feast pointing to the coming of Jesus and His work. Although the Passover would have been part of the fabric and culture of the first century Jews, we find ourselves somewhat at a distance from these events. The Passover as an event is recorded, as we read, in Ex. 12. To pass over- means that Israel was passed over- the word in the Hebrew is "Pesah"- meaning to be covered as with a wing. When the Israelites were first delivered, there was a redemption that was enacted- a deliverance that was very tangible. Israel was passed over- covered by the blood- and their safety was secure! Egypt was drowned in the flood of God's wrath- as the destroying angel took their lives. The LORD is using a physical and earthly event to teach a spiritual- heavenly reality. Passover taught Israel about redemption. They were slaves in Egypt- living under a cruel taskmaster- enduring forced labor, harsh conditions- and even death. Like Pharaoh, Satan has a hold on humanity. We are kept in bondage and slavery to sin, death and hell. The Passover comes, and that slavery is met with liberty, the chains are broken, and the threat of death gives way to joy and thanksgiving in new life! The

God who Is- the Great I Am- reveals Himself to those in slavery- sending a chosen prophet and mouthpiece- to reveal His wonders and His Word. But the central figure that marked this deliverance is the Passover Lamb- as our text says in v. 7- when Passover Lamb was Sacrificed. John the Baptist had already identified Jesus in John 1:29 as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. And back in Ex. 12:5- we read of a pure, spotless lamb- one a year old and without defect- had to be selected and slaughtered. Jesus was this Lamb- as He remained spotless- without blemish or iniquity- even identified by Pilate as innocent. This Pure Lamb would be killed- but not by broken bones. Its blood was to be caught and smeared on the doorframes- its body roasted in the fire as a sign of God's judgement. Even the manner in which Jesus would die on the cross- by shed blood, suffering under God's judgement- without a bone being broken. As the Israelites would soon find out- there is peace and life found for those who are under the blood of the Passover Lamb- but only hostility and death for those who remain outside in their sins. In this way, the Passover becomes a physical lesson that reveals the redemption God's people receive in Jesus Christ! Death to God's enemies- but life to His people- because of this precious blood!

II. The Food that is Received

How important are meals in your home? Children, do you have good memories connected to a meal that you celebrated with your family? The laughter- the fellowship- the stories- and the food! Well, in our text we find Jesus using a meal to teach us- Jesus is speaking through a meal! Last week we considered the means of grace at church- and the visible sign and seal of the Lord's Supper was identified as a promise and picture of God's work for us. That is what we find today as we look at the food that Jesus uses- as He institutes the Lord's Supper during this last Passover meal. First of all, did you notice that the Lamb is strikingly absent from this meal? Jesus does not mention the eating of the Lamb at all in our text- the very meat that would have been central to any OT celebration of the Passover? Well, that's because Jesus is the Lamb! But He does reference both the bread and the wine! There is a symbolic and sacramental relationship between these elements and the body and blood of Jesus- a spiritual connection that Jesus is

establishing. In our reading from Luke 22:18, we find Jesus taking bread- giving thanks- breaking the bread and handing it to His disciples. The Israelites used unleavened bread- because leaven was a sign of sin's corruptive and spreading power. This bread was first blessed- broken- and then distributed as we read back in Ex. 12:8. This blessing, breaking and distributing brings to mind the miraculous feeding of the 5000 in Luke 9. Now bread is a staple food- what we need for our daily diet- as we pray in the Lord's Prayer for God to give us each day our daily bread- so the bread is here a picture of our spiritual needs being supplied by Jesus Christ. But what is shocking is that the bread becomes a picture of Jesus' body- this is my body broken for you- given for you in v. 19. Just as vital as daily bread is to our physical health- so vital is the body of Christ to our spiritual life. Next Jesus takes the cup- actually we find two cups in our passage. Back in v. 17- Jesus takes a cup- this was called the cup of blessing- and usually the host of the supper would have wine poured on his hands as a sign of ritual cleansings. The second cup is found in v. 20- This was called the cup of redemption- as the host would pass the cup around the table to each guest- they would sing songs of praise from the Psalms. Now it does not matter if the wine came before or after the breaking of the bread- or both- but the importance is in the sign of bread and wine being given. During this time in history, there were actually 4 different cups of wine and accompanied singing at most traditional Passover meals. But the point, here, is that Jesus identifies the wine with His blood as the blood of the covenant- it is by the shedding of His blood that the OT covenant would be fulfilled and the New Covenant in His blood would be established. It would be by the shedding of His blood that a new people would be gathered- a holy church from all nations- who would together be washed and made clean! In this cup of wine now called blood- we are reminded of the first miracle recorded in John 2 at the wedding of Cana. Water turned to wine- really good wine that points to the coming feast when Jesus hour has come. As Jesus would say in John 6- my body is true food and my blood true drink. Now the eating of bread and drinking of wine is not all that significant in itself- it is a very common- a normal activity. But within the church, Jesus elevates this meal to a communion between Himself and His people- a fellowship that takes place by faith! This is a rich, deep

and profound event- the Lord's Supper is a foretaste of the wedding supper of the Lamb- where now we eat and are fed by the Spirit- then we will dine and feast by sight! The bread and the wine are spiritual pictures that reveal a lasting truth- those who are united to Christ by faith are fed- nourished unto eternal life because of Christ's one sacrifice on the cross as our Passover Lamb! This is Jesus' last meal. In the prison system, it is still practiced that a prisoner on death row gets his requested last meal. Here, Jesus enjoys his last meal before His trip to the cross- the innocent being condemned as guilty.

III. The Recipients of this Meal

As we come to our last point, we find the recipients of this meal. Who is this Passover feast- now celebrated as the Lord's Supper- designed for? Children, why do you eat? Well, sometimes you eat because you like the taste- you have a desire for something good. Other times you eat because you have a need- you are growing weak. Well, the Lord's Supper is both something that we need and it is something that we should desire! Who is this food for? Our text says in v. 19- my body is given for you. For you- my disciples- for you my people- for you my beloved ones! Jesus laid down His life for His sheep! All those who live by faith- who have embraced the Lord- who have made the good confession- who have believed in their hearts and confessed with their mouths- these are the ones for whom the Lord's Supper is for! Added to this, Mark 14:24 says that the blood of the covenant is poured out for many. This meal is not limited to a few people in an upper room- nor is the Lord's Supper a secret meal for a few, select church members. It is a meal shared by all who live by faith! But that does not mean that everyone truly partakes- this meal is not for everyone indiscriminately. You can eat and drink judgement upon yourselves as I Cor. 11 says. Even Jesus identifies this in v. 21- the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. Not everyone should come to the Lord's Table. Those who are living in unrepentant sin- who do not trust in Christ and desire to fellowship with Him and His people- should keep their distance. But for those who know and love this Passover Lamb, let us eat and drink in remembrance of Him until He returns to take us home.

To conclude, the Lord's Supper is a wonderful gift and a great privilege! Jesus desires- eagerly desires to share this meal with His disciples as v. 15 says- and He eagerly desires to share this meal with His people still today! There is great freedom and redemption on display in this upper room- a deliverance that we still enjoy today by faith! Jesus Christ celebrates the Passover with His disciples to teach them about His roll as our sacrifice. So rejoice in this wonderful sacrifice that was made- and when we have the opportunity let us all come together to eat, drink, remember and believe that Jesus is our Passover Lamb who died for the complete forgiveness of all our sins!