

Sunday, January 1, 2023

We gather this morning, on the first day of a new year... at the table of the Lord.
We gather to remember Jesus; to remember his sacrifice on our behalf.
We gather to celebrate his victory over sin, death and the devil.

CHRIST OUR HOPE IN LIFE AND DEATH

What we call the Lord's Supper... or the Lord's Table... is rooted in two historical events.

The first took place in Egypt in 1445 BC

Four hundred years earlier, Abraham's extended family had taken refuge in Egypt during a punishing drought and famine.

In time the nation of Egypt, which had welcome them, turned on them and enslaved them.

Long centuries of bondage followed.

Finally, in keeping with his Word and in response to their suffering and desperation, God sent Moses to be their rescuer.

Moses, on God's behalf, demanded that Pharaoh release the people.

Pharaoh refused.

In spite of devastating plagues that exposed, not only Pharaoh's hard heart, but the fallacy of Egypt's gods, Pharaoh would not obey the voice of Yahweh and let the Hebrews go.

Finally, the tenth and final plague was announced to Pharaoh by Moses on God's behalf.

Exodus 11:4-10

So Moses said, "This is what the LORD says: 'About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the female slave, who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of the cattle as well.

There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt—worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any person or animal.' Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. All these officials of yours will come to me, bowing down before me and saying, 'Go, you and all the people who follow you!' After that I will leave." Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh.

The LORD had said to Moses, "Pharaoh will refuse to listen to you—so that my wonders may be multiplied in Egypt." Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh, but the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let the Israelites go out of his country.

After this... through Moses and Aaron... God promised the Hebrews this tenth plague would not touch them.

God himself provided the means by which they would be protected.

Exodus 12:1-3, 5-14, 21-29.

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, “This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire—with the head, legs and internal organs. Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD’s Passover.”

“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD.”

“The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. “This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance.”

Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. None of you shall go out of the door of your house until morning.” When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.

“Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony.

And when your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ then tell them, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.’” Then the people bowed down and worshiped.

The Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.

At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well.

What was God’s provision that protected the Hebrew people?

It was the blood of a one-year-old male lamb or goat, without defect... smeared onto the top and sides of the door that led into their homes.

God promised the Hebrew people that his destroyer would pass over every home where he saw the smeared blood.

When the nation camped before Mt. Sinai in the desert, God explained the Passover in **Leviticus 17:11 – For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.**

God is clear – the penalty of sin is the forfeiting of one’s life.

God warned our first parents regarding the tree from which they were not to eat – **“for when you eat of it you will surely die.” Genesis 2:17**

In the sacrifice of a lamb we encounter this glorious concept of “substitution” – the giving of one life in exchange for another.

The Passover lamb pointed into the future when it would not be an animal that temporarily covered our sin, but God’s Messiah who would give his life in exchange for ours.

ALL I HAVE IS CHRIST

Jesus himself celebrated the Passover every year of his life... until his final one, when he transformed it into something new.

Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:13 – “...devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.”

And so with this command in mind, it is important for us to read of this most awe-filled night when the OT Passover became the Lord’s Supper... the celebration of God’s great act of salvation.

I read from all four gospels: **Matthew, Mark, Luke, John**

On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?” Jesus sent Peter and John saying... “Go into the city to a certain man... carrying a jar of water and follow him. Say to the owner of the house he enters... ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples? My appointed time is near.’ “He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.” The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them.

So they ... prepared the Passover.

When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve.

The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all thing under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so, he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.”

Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” “Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well.”

Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not everyone was clean.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

"I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has turned against me.' I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am. I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."

While they were... reclining at the table ... eating, he said, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me."

They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely you don't mean me, Lord?" Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "You have said so."

As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. "What you are about to do, do quickly," Jesus told him, but no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something to the poor. As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out.

And it was night.

After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body... given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, after the supper he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out... for many for the forgiveness of sins. Drink from it, all of you. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

A dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be the greatest. Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like that of one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift [all of you] as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me."

Teaching of John 14-16

The prayer of Jesus, John 17

Then Jesus asked them, "When I sent you out without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?" "Nothing," they answered.

He said to them, “But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one. It is written: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors;’ and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment.”

The disciples said, “See, Lord, here are two swords.”
“That is enough,” he replied.

When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Through the prophet Isaiah, in chapter 53, it was revealed that God’s servant, the Messiah would take upon himself the role that had been realized by the Passover Lamb.

It was John the Baptist who first identified Jesus, and he did so twice, John 1:29, 36, as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

What a night that was.

- It started with the washing of feet – “do as I have done to you.”
- It was a meal shared with a traitor – which prompted all of them to ask... “is it I?”
- It was a meal of joy and sorrow – “I have eagerly anticipated...;” “...he began to be troubled in spirit”
- It was a meal whose well-known elements were infused with shocking significance – “this is my body; this is my blood.”

- It was a meal which commemorated a new covenant, superseding all others. Jesus had spoken of this right from the start of his public ministry – how he superseded the Sabbath, the temple, the sacrifices... to name a few.
- It was a meal of remembrance... “of him.”
- Disturbingly, it was a meal where a long simmering dispute amongst the disciples over who was the greatest... reared its ugly head
- It was a meal of final instructions.
- It was a meal which culminated in intimate prayer between Jesus and his Father
- It was a meal that led to sacrifice

Prayer

O Lord, grant us eyes to perceive, ears to hear, and minds to conceive all that you have done for us in Jesus Christ.

Help us to remember him, our Passover Lamb, who took away our sin.

Amen

**ALAS AND DID MY SAVIOR BLEED
MAN OF SORROWS**

The Apostles' Creed (adapted)

We believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy universal (catholic) Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

Amen.

The word of God instructs us regarding what we are to do before we eat the bread and drink the cup.

1 Corinthians 11:28-32

Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.

Peter initially refused to allow Jesus to wash his feet.

Then he wanted Jesus to wash, not just his feet, but his hands and head.

In his response to Peter, Jesus spoke of heart realities.

He told Peter, you've already had a bath.

What Jesus meant is that Peter had already been made clean through his faith in Jesus... he just needed to deal with the "dirt on his feet."

Like Peter, through faith in Jesus, all of Jesus' followers are made clean.

Our sins have been removed as far as the east is from the west.

The stain of their guilt has been washed away by an act of grace on the part of God based upon the sacrifice of Jesus.

But "our feet," that is, our heart needs regular washing.

The controlling, enslaving power of sin has been broken within Jesus' followers.

But there remains within every believer, habits of sin, which the Spirit of God intends to displace, with our cooperation, as we learn new habits of grace.

This is what happens when these habits of sin manifest themselves within us.

The Spirit of God first convicts us... that we have done is unacceptable and grievous to the One who died for us... and then acts to persuade us to confess and appropriate God's cleansing grace for what we said, or did or didn't do.

Most particularly, when we come to the Table of the Lord, before we eat and drink and in doing so remember him, the Lord commands us to avail ourselves of the mighty soul cleansing grace of God.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Moments of Silence

(Play from the Maker and the Instrument – Good Good Father)

LORD I NEED YOU

We hear again the invitation of our Lord Jesus:

“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest of soul.” Matthew 11:28-30

This too is the invitation of the Spirit:

“Come! Whoever is thirsty, let them come; and whoever wishes let them take the free gift of the water of life.” Revelation 22:17

Scott Hubbard writes:

Do you hunger for righteousness?

He has already won it.

Do you yearn for identity?

He calls us his own.

Do you seek success?

He shares his victory.

Do worries keep you awake?

His shoulder are strong to carry them.

Do you yearn for the favor of others?

You have his.

Do you feel trapped by your circumstances?

He is a world always new.

He is the God for whom nothing is impossible; the God who is doing a new thing.

As he thought upon Jesus’ invitation, Paul David Trip wrote this poem.

Come to the Table

Deep in every human heart

Is a hunger for the Lord’s table of grace

Where hungry souls eat

And are satisfied

With no work of their own

With no cost to them

The meal paid for by their host

By the price of his life

An expression of the extent of his mercy

**“Come, everyone who thirsts
Come to the waters
And he who has no money
Come, buy and eat
Come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without price**

**Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread
And your labor for that which does not satisfy?
Listen diligently to me
And eat what is good
And delight yourself in rich food**

Isaiah 55:1-2

The bread we are about to eat... represents the body of Christ.
The cup we are about to drink... represents the blood of Jesus shed for the forgiveness of our sins.

Together they are the basis of the new covenant which our God established with the fallen sons and daughters of Adam and Eve.

Through Jesus the way home to God is open.
It is true... no one can come unless the Father draws them.
It is also true... whosoever will ... may come.

Come.

Sing

WAY MAKER

TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS

Jesus is more than our way-maker.
He, who is the friend of sinners, is our home-maker.

Each time the good news of Jesus is told and believed the Holy Spirit puts into the heart who receives Jesus... a home cry... that calls to God... "Abba, Father."

The same Holy Spirit bears witness that he is our Guarantor... that he will bring us, not back to Eden, but to God's home, the new heaven and earth, which will be infinitely better than Eden.

It is the same Holy Spirit who urges all who follow Jesus to keep our eyes upon him... to never lose of our Savior and God.

Prayer of Thanks

Jesus said, **“This is my body, which is for you... This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this... in remembrance of me.”**

Having searched our hearts, and having recalled the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus, having eaten the bread and drunk the cup, we take courage from God’s Word and glory in what he has done for us.

Jesus said, **“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”**

At the Table we hear again the words of our Lord Jesus spoken to his disciples on the day he rose from the dead.

“Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” John 20:21

In response to what the Lord has done for us, let’s read together ...

Our Church Covenant

We commit ourselves to God and to one another to live like Jesus through the presence, guidance, and power of the Holy Spirit.

We will pursue the Great Commission.

We will work together, using our time, gifts and resources to see Jesus' church built here in Sooke.

We will love one another as Jesus loved us.

We will speak well of one another.

We will be careful to not put any stumbling block in one another's way.

We will maintain and guard a spirit of unity based on our common bond in Jesus Christ.

We will meet together regularly.

We will use our spiritual gifts to bless others and to build up one another.

We will pray for each other; be patient with one another; and forgive one another as the Lord forgave us.

We will let the light of our lives shine together to bring glory to God.

SOVEREIGN

The Blessing

Now may the God of peace
Who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus
The great Shepherd of the sheep
By the blood of the eternal covenant
Equip you with everything good that you may do his will
Working in us that which is pleasing in his sight
Through Jesus Christ
To whom be glory forever and ever.
Amen.

Hebrews 13:20-21