Luke Lesson 84 (2021)

**DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME**

Luke 22:1-23

Key Verse: 22:19

“And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, ‘saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”’”

In the previous passage, Luke 21:5-36, Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. Stunned by Jesus’ ominous predictions, his disciples asked the end-time signs. Yet Jesus did not give them a detailed timetable. Instead, he warned them not to be confused and dismayed by religious liars or many fake signs that are not the end-time signs but the mere signals that indicate the beginning of the birth pains. The gist of Jesus’ instruction is not to worry but put their absolute trust in God’s protection and provision in any adverse situation. The only sure end-time signs are a celestial disturbance, which will be immediately followed by the glorious second coming of Jesus. Indeed, things that are happening in today’s world are disturbing. Yet, as Christian disciples, we don’t need to worry because we have the promise of God’s great salvation in Jesus Christ, which is the glorious resurrection.

Today’s event is called the Last Supper, which is the basis of the Christian Communion. In the Last Supper, Jesus gives another essential instruction for us to follow until his glorious second coming. He said, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” (19) And “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”(20) Let’s think about the meaning of the Last Supper and why communion is vital for us to observe.

Look at verses 1-2. “Now the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people.” The phrase “Now the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, called the Passover” sounds as if they are the same. But the Passover and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread are not the same, yet closely related. The Passover Feast was to commemorate the plague of death passing over the people of Israel due to the blood marks on their doorpost, while the Feast of the Unleavened Bread was to remember their affliction and suffering slaves in Egypt. The Passover celebration lasts only one day, while the Feast of the Unleavened Bread was held for seven days. Some people considered these two festivals the same because the Passover is on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. By the way, these two festivals were the most significant Jewish festival commemorating their liberation from slavery in Egypt.

But what the Jewish religious leaders were doing during this joyous festival was shameful. The chief priests, who were mainly the Sadducees, didn’t get along with the teachers of the law, who were primarily the Pharisees. Nonetheless, against the common enemy, they became collaborators. In the previous chapter, we saw how they came to Jesus to trap Jesus in his words one after another, yet they were not successful. However, the opportunity arose from an unexpected source, one of Jesus’ disciples.

Look at verses 3-6. “Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. They were delighted and agreed to give him money. He consented and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.” It’s surprising to see that one of the Twelve disciples, whom Jesus handpicked for his kingdom’s work, betrayed him. It’s hard to understand why he did what he did. The Scripture says that Satan entered Judas.

It does not mean that Judas was an innocent victim of the devil. Judas did decide to betray Jesus. Even though I don’t believe that Judas wanted to kill Jesus, his betrayal led Jesus to the hand of evil people. We wonder why Judas betrayed Jesus. Some people say that Judas could be disillusioned, hurt, or jealous of other disciples who had more prominent positions than him. Most of us understand that money was the motive for his betrayal. The Gospel narratives seem to confirm it. For example, John 12:6 states, “He (Judas) did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.” He was the treasurer whom people gave their trust. But he betrayed their trust and stole money from the treasury. He was dishonest and dubious. Jesus commented on Judas’ betrayal in verse 23, “The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him!” (23)

We are all tempted to do certain things. But for the temptation to have any power over us, it must resonate with our evil motive and desire. Being tempted itself is not sinful but giving in to it is a problem. Martin Luther said, *“****You cannot keep birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair.”*** What he meant is that it’s not our fault if a bird flies over our head, but it is our fault if it makes a nest in our thought and will. Therefore, we should struggle to keep our minds healthy and quickly repent of our evil thoughts and desires before the devil victimizes us.

Look at verse 7. “Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.” It is the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Each family was supposed to prepare a lamb, a year-old male without any defect, and make a sacrifice in the temple. Slaughtering the animals was an enormous procedure in the temple. I am not sure where all the Passover pilgrims could share their Passover meal with limited housing in the city. Preparing for the Passover meal could be a daunting task for every family, especially the pilgrims, including Jesus and his disciples.

Verses 8-13 describe how Jesus prepared the Passover meal. Look at verses 8-13. “Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, ‘Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.’ ‘Where do you want us to prepare for it?’ they asked. He replied, ‘As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ He will show a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there.’” It seems that Jesus wanted the place of their Passover meal to be unknown because of Judas Iscariot, who was looking for a chance to hand him over to the chief priests. At first, Peter and John had no idea where they could prepare for the Passover meal that evening. But as they followed Jesus’ unusual instructions, they were able to find a man carrying a water jar without much difficulty. With the help of God, Peter and John were also able to get bitter herbs, wine, and unleavened bread. Now everything is ready. Here, we learn that When God commands us to do things, he has also prepared things ahead of us. So, we should not worry but trust and obey him. It reminds of us ***Jehovah-Jireh***, which means “The Lord will provide.” (Gen. 22:14)

 In verses 14-23, as Jesus shares the Passover meal, Jesus discloses the predetermined plan of God for the redemption of humankind. Look at verse 14. -“When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table.’” It was a very private gathering with his most close friends, away from the crowds of people. Surprisingly enough, Jesus allowed Judas Iscariot, the betrayer, to be there along with other disciples. They were ready to start the annual Passover meal in the upper room. (Pic#1)

I am not sure how the Passover meal, also called “*the Passover Sedar,”* proceeds. It may include reading Scriptures, telling stories related to Exodus's event, singing, and eating and drinking wine. But Jesus started it by expressing his eager desire to have this meal with his disciples. Look at verse 15.

“And he said to them, ‘I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” He announced that this Passover meal would be his last one with them on earth, as he said: “before I suffer.” What did he mean by “before I suffer”? It means before his impending death on the cross.

Verses 16 and 18 are almost identical. Jesus said in verse 16, “For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.” He also said in verse 18, “For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” Jesus repeatedly said the same thing to highlight his impending death, bringing entirely new meaning to the Passover.

By the blood sacrifice of the lamb, the Jews were delivered from their slavery in Egypt. The Passover Feast was strictly for the people of Israel. Now, Jesus himself would be the Passover lamb, shedding blood not just for the Jews but for the people of all nations. The disciples could have never imagined what Jesus was talking about at that time. But before he suffered and died, Jesus had to help his disciples be fully informed about God’s plan of salvation through his death on the cross. Jesus used two resources, bread, and wine, to explain the ultimate meaning of his death (Pic#2),

**First, Bread.** Look at verse 19. “And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’” Jesus took the bread, which is the unleavened bread of the Passover. After taking the bread, he gave thanks and broke it and gave it to them. Then he said something new and eye-opening, stating that the unleavened bread he gave to them symbolizes his own body. “This is my body given for you!”

The phrase “my body given for you” reminds us of Mark 10:45, which states, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” A ransom is a sum of money, or other payment demanded releasing a prisoner. Jesus gave his own life as a ransom to set free those captivated by the power of sin and death.

During the last 1,500 years in history, ever since the people of Israel came out of Egypt, the Jewish people ate the same unleavened bread during the Passover. The unleavened bread didn’t mean much to them any longer. It’s just a tradition. But Jesus now changes the meaning of the unleavened bread. The bread they are about to eat represents Jesus’ own body, his flesh. It’s a complete change of more than a thousand-year of tradition and is the fulfillment of God’s salvation plan. While they put the piece of bread into their mouth, Jesus told them that they should do it in remembrance of him.

When Jesus said, “This is my body given for you,” he also meant that he is the bread of life (Jn. 6:38). Jesus said in John 6:51, “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” We, as Christian disciples, do not observe the Passover. But Jesus commanded us to keep Communion because he wants us to remember the ultimate sacrifice he made for us on the cross. Even though he didn’t say how often we should observe the Communion, we must not forget Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice for our sins. Jesus said, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” (19)

**Second, the wine.** Look at verse 20. “In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.’” Jesus must have divided the cup and given thanks as he did with the unleavened bread. The content of the cup is the fruit of the vine, which refers to grape juice or red wine. Jesus explains a new meaning of the cup by saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” The wine represents the blood of Jesus, which is needed to establish a new covenant of salvation. The phrase “poured out the blood” indicates the meaning *“to be violently murdered.*” It’s incredible that Jesus allowed himself to be rejected, despised, ridiculed, tortured, beaten, and killed by the hand of evil men. His death was bloody. When the crown of thorns was put on his head, huge nails went through his hands, and a spear pierced his side, the blood gushed out from his body. It was the most bloody and violent execution. This violent death also reveals the terrible sinful nature of humankind. Yet, being crucified, Jesus prayed for the forgiveness of the sin of people, “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do.” Through the blood he shed, Jesus sealed the New Covenant of salvation for us.

Hebrews 9:13-15 state, “The blood of goats, bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death so that we may serve the living God! For this reason, Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance – now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed the first covenant.”

Jesus said to his disciples in John 6:53-55, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food, and my blood is real drink.” The communion we observe is a reminder of Jesus’ body and blood. Jesus’ sacrificial death for our sins is the most significant event that deserves our attention throughout our lifetime and beyond.

Apostle Paul said in 1 Timothy 1:15, “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the worst.” He also said in 1 Corinthians 15:8-10, “For I am the least of the apostles, and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God, I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them – yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.” The born blind man also confessed, “Where he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind, but now I see!” (Jn. 9:25) Even though we forget many things, we don’t easily forget certain things, especially bad ones. Forgetting and ignoring certain items may be necessary and even good for us. Yet, one thing we should never forget but always remember is the grace of forgiveness of sins. When we miss it continuously, we slowly lose our spiritual life. On the other hand, the more we remember it, the more spiritual energy we have, and we can be fully alive and become whole people no matter what happens in the world. We may forget and even ignore many things. But may we not forget one thing, God’s grace of forgiveness of sins. Jesus said, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me… This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”