

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VILLA RICA, PCA

The Last Passover

By

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Luke 22:14-30

The Lord's Supper signifies eloquently and beautifully for us the mission of Christ. Christ himself is the Passover Lamb. In taking the bread and wine set apart in the proper way we by faith symbolically and spiritually eat and drink his sacrificial body and blood.

The institution of the Lord's Supper on that night long ago in the upper room signaled the end of the old dispensation and the beginning of the new. The Passover has now become the Lord's Supper. Our approach to God is no longer through the Old Testament priesthood and sacrificial system. Why? Because he is the Passover Lamb, because his blood cleanses from all sin so that even the conscience is cleansed, which was never permanent and final under the Old Testament types and shadows of the blood of bulls and goats. Under the Old dispensation the Day of Atonement had to be repeated each and every year. But Christ's sacrifice is to be once and forever. **It Is Finished** he said on the cross.

He told the disciples, **"I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; ¹⁶for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."**

He had anticipated this moment and had longed for it to come. Why? Because the Lord's Supper climaxes his public ministry and marks the beginning of the series of events that will put him on the cross by the next day. Before the night is over he will be in custody and the Lamb will be led to the slaughter.

His whole ministry was moving toward this moment. From the moment he was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin until this Passover, it was pre-destined that this hour must come.

He must have thought much about it. He says he did. He must have turned over in his mind the proceedings many times, how he would be betrayed by one of his own select twelve apostles, how he would be treated discourteously and roughly by the highest Court of the Jews and then be taken and accused before the Roman power of sedition and treason, and then the merciless Roman scourging and mockery. But he knew he would survive that because he had to die on the cursed tree. Then the long walk to Golgotha, the nails driven into his hands and feet, and

then the hell of the cross; the drinking of the cup of suffering as he made his body and soul an offering for sin.

What holy ambition is this? Who has ever desired such a thing before or since? Why would he desire it? Oh, beloved was it not because it was the will of the Father. He had come to do the will of God and this was his will.

He gave himself to this mission with all his heart, with all his zeal, with every ounce of his strength. He pressed toward this moment. It was ever before him. As he said, **"I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished! Luke 12:50 (NASB)**

He is strained, he is pressed, and he is distressed to come to this hour. Nothing else mattered but that he be found obedient in this most trying moment. It is his mission. It is his goal. It is his obedience to the one he loved supremely, his Father.

It was not that death was longed for. It was not that death was desired; it was that his death involved so much. Man's future was involved and his own obedience was on display. This was what gave meaning and purpose to his mission. Without the cross there is no salvation, there is no victory. There was no other plan. This was it. And he is alone in drinking the cup, facing the awful blackness of being forsaken by God even as he obeys God. What an hour! No wonder he was glad to see it come in order that it might be over, in order that he it might be tasted and experienced once and for all.

Doesn't that grip you? Doesn't that chill you! Isn't that sublime in its awful denouement? Who can behold the Son of God on the cross of Calvary and remain untouched? What forces touch each other here? Life and death meet each other. Heaven and hell, God and Satan do their utmost to defeat each other and it is on the Devil's ground. Hell is his domain. Death is his possession. No one has ever recovered from his stroke before. Once a man under the sentence of death for sin has sunk beneath its billows and waves there was no return, no hope. He is the keeper of the bottomless pit.

There was another spirit of ambition present at the Last supper. No sooner had Christ instituted the Lord's Supper than he declared that the hand of his Betrayer was with him at the Table. They wondered about that and asked themselves which one of them would do such a thing.

And then we read, **²⁴And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest.**

The nature of man is ambitious. We all want to excel in what we do. And even in the Christian life there is this carryover. We might term this holy ambition. Christians who have ambition ought to have it for the Lord. Our Lord did not

rebuke this spirit of ambition, but he did teach them the road to success in being great in the kingdom of God.

If you want to be great in the Kingdom here is how to succeed, **the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant.** ²⁷“**For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves.**

This is just the opposite of the world's method. He told us that the world thinks that the way to be great is to achieve a position of leadership and to exercise authority upon others, so that he be looked up to and be privileged. It is to be accorded the place of honor and be waited upon. But Christ's advice, and it is God's advice, is to assume the role of a servant; to take the lowest station and be the server instead of the served.

We each must be like our Lord, who after he had supped girded himself with a towel and went from one to the other washing their feet. This was the lowliest job of all, yet he gave us an example of what we should be to one another, especially if we want to be great in the Kingdom of God.

Let us come to the Lord's Table today with a sense of thanksgiving, humility and gratitude for what our Lord has done for us, and then let us consecrate our holy ambition. Let us resolve to follow our Lord's advice. Let us serve one another, and thereby know greatness in the Kingdom of God.

Beloved in the Lord, hear what gracious words our Savior Jesus Christ says to all who truly turn to Him.

Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

I am the bread of life: He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst. Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled

Truly, truly, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this

bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

We invite all who repent of their sins and who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and desire to live as becometh followers of Christ; also all communicants in good standing in any evangelical church to participate. We also invite all non-communicants to remain as well.

Hymn #254 “Alas and Did My Savior Bleed”

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

1st Corinthians 11:23-34

Let Us Pray -- Most gracious Father, who callest us to the Holy Table of our Savior, to show His death and to receive His gift of life: enable us to come with earnest faith and kindled devotion,. Help us to make the memorial of our Savior's sacrifice with adoration and praise. Open our eyes to behold the vision of His love, and pour into our souls the fullness of His grace. And grant that, yielding ourselves to Thee, we may henceforth live as those who are not their own, but are brought with a price; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*

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