

Isaiah 53:4-9(Opening)

- 4 *Surely he has borne our griefs
 and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
 smitten by God, and afflicted.*
- 5 *But he was pierced for our transgressions;
 he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
 and with his wounds we are healed.*
- 6 *All we like sheep have gone astray;
 we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
 the iniquity of us all.*
- 7 *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
 yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
 and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
 so he opened not his mouth.*
- 8 *By oppression and judgment he was taken away;
 and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off of the land of the living,
 stricken for the transgression of my people?*
- 9 *And they made his grave with the wicked
 and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
 and there was no deceit in his mouth.*

Last week we looked at a Jewish Passover Seder, and went over all of the pieces and little rules and regulations that govern that celebration.

Traditionally, a lot of churches will look at the events of Jesus death on the cross, his burial, and his resurrection. Well, I'm not that traditional, as you may know already. Today we're going to look at the Passover Seder that Jesus shared with his disciples, and the way He instituted what we call the Lord's Supper.

One thing I pointed out last week is that at the end of the Passover celebration, a cup of wine is poured for Elijah, and the door is opened to welcome him into the house. The prophet Malachi explains why in chapter 4, verses 5 and 6.

Malachi 4:5-6

⁵ "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."

Elijah was to be the one to announce the coming Messiah. Now turn with me to John chapter 1, starting in verse 29.

John 1:29-34

²⁹ The next day he [John] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" ³⁰ This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' ³¹ I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." ³² And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³ I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes

with the Holy Spirit.’³⁴ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

John the Baptizer was the personification of Elijah in the prophecy of Malachi.

Selecting the Lamb

Now we’ll go back to the Passover celebration specifically. Remember how the Passover process worked.

Exodus 12:3-6

³ Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb for a household. ⁴ And if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his nearest neighbor shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, ⁶ and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight.

If Jesus was to be the Lamb of God, the Passover sacrifice for the world, he would need to be selected by the people for that role.

John 12:12-15

¹² The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³ So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” ¹⁴ And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,

¹⁵ “Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!”

This is what today is called Palm Sunday, and the Triumphant Entry. The people were singing and praising Jesus and declaring that He was the King of Israel. He was selected by the people.

The day before the Passover celebration, the house is cleansed; all the leavening is removed. Paul takes that process and uses it as an analogy for us so that we can understand the cleansing process that Jesus' sacrifice does for us.

1 Corinthians 5:7-8

⁷ Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

⁸ Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Now that the house is clean of leaven, we can start the celebration.

The cup of sanctification

The first cup of wine that we talked about last week is the cup of sanctification. That cup reminds the people eating the Passover that they were set apart from Egypt; they were sanctified. Jesus, as master of the celebration, would have offered a blessing for the first cup and shared it with the twelve disciples.

Hand washing

Before eating any of the food on the Passover table, the Law requires washing the hands. Like I said last week, this particular hand-washing doesn't include any of the usual blessings or prayers. However, there is a powerful difference with what Jesus did during this hand-washing.

John 13:3-11

³ *Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God,* ⁴ *rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist.* ⁵ *Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.* ⁶ *He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?"* ⁷ *Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand."* ⁸ *Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."* ⁹ *Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"* ¹⁰ *Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you."* ¹¹ *For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."*

Generally, when you came into a Jewish person's house for a meal back in the first century, the host of the house would have a gentile slave wash your feet. Sandals were the normal footwear during that time, and the grime and crud of the street would stick to your feet. Washing the feet was considered something so low that a Jewish servant wouldn't be required to do it; just gentile slave.

Jesus showed His true servant nature by humbling himself to the point of a gentile slave. The master of the house would never lower himself to that point. Jesus shows His disciples an example of what He expected from them when He was gone. Serve others, and place everyone else as more important than you.

Philippians 2:3-11

³ *Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.* ⁴ *Let each of you look not only*

to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Breaking the middle Matzah

Now that the hands are clean (and the disciples' feet), they share the parsley dipped in salt water. Next Jesus, the Master of this Passover celebration, takes the three matzot, and breaks the middle piece.

The three matzot are said to represent Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, respectively. The middle matzah (representing Isaac) is broken to recall how he was offered himself in sacrifice in obedience to the will of his father. The binding of Isaac is a foreshadowing of how Jesus yielded himself to be sacrificed by God, the Father.

In Hebrew, the middle of something is its 'heart'. When we break the middle matzah, we recall the broken heart of God for the pain Jesus endured by taking our sins upon Him at the cross.

Look at the matzah and see that it is striped: 'By his stripes we are healed.' Look at the matzah and see that it is pierced: 'They shall look upon me whom they've pierced.' Look at the matzah, and see that it is pure, without any traces of leaven, as his body was without any sin."

2 Corinthians 5:21

²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

What else can we learn from the matzah?

Matzah is unleavened bread, that is, it has no yeast in it. It's believed that the Egyptians were the first to discover the fermentation process and use it for making bread. Bread made with yeast was a form of money in the early Egyptian culture. It was the bread of the taskmasters who oppressed the Israelites.

Yeast produces fermentation through the natural process of decay. The Jewish Rabbis identified leaven with the evil impulse that gives "rise" to the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life just like leavened bread rises. Jesus was free from sin, therefore He was unleavened. On top of that, when Jesus died and was buried, His body did not decompose; there was no corruption in His body; He didn't return to dust like all the other sons and daughters of Adam have been cursed to do.

The Jews call the unleavened bread during Passover the "bread of affliction" or the "bread of humility". Eating the bread allows us to identify with the suffering and afflictions that Jesus went through for us, so that we don't have to. The matzah is the bread of His afflictions, not ours.

Unlike leavened bread that relies on an outside element, unleavened bread is simple and pure: flour and water, mixed, rolled, and baked. In ancient times, the only way to have yeast or leavening was to save a pinch of bread dough from the dough prepared for the next time you make bread. When you add the sour dough into the bread, you bring the history of all the bread you've made before into that new loaf. Unleavened bread doesn't carry that history; it's a new lump of dough, free from the decay that the sour dough brings with it. The unleavened

bread reminds us of a break from our old life; we start over, without the history of decay from the past.

The cup of deliverance and The story of the Passover

After breaking the middle matzah, they would have poured the second cup of wine, the Cup of Deliverance, and after it was poured, but before it was shared, they would have retold the story of the first Passover, the ten plagues, and the journey to and through the Red Sea, ending with the death of the Egyptian army in the sea, and freedom.

Just as the Israelites were made free from the tyranny of Pharaoh when they crossed the Sea – being “baptized into the death of the waters” so they could be reborn to serve God in freedom – likewise those who trust in Jesus and are “baptized into His death” are reborn to serve God by the power of the Holy Spirit. Our redemption, our deliverance is meant to set us free to be God’s treasured people.

Second hand washing

Having shared the cup of Deliverance, they would again wash their hands preparing for the ceremonial meal.

Sharing the matzah dipped in the bitter herbs (maror)

Jesus, as the Master of the Passover celebration, would have passed matzah around to his disciples to share and dip into and eat the bitter herbs or maror.

John 13:21-30

²¹ After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” ²² The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. ²³ One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus’ side, ²⁴ so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. ²⁵ So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him,

“Lord, who is it?”²⁶ Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.²⁷ Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.”²⁸ Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him.²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the moneybag, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor.³⁰ So, after receiving the morsel of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

Judas leaves and doesn't come back until after they meet again in the garden, where Jesus is betrayed.

Eating the Passover

When the Passover lamb was sacrificed, the person would bring the lamb to the Temple the afternoon before the meal. Each lamb was killed, and the blood of each lamb was caught in a basin that was passed from one priest to the next until it reached the last priest who poured it out on the lower part of the altar. After that, each lamb was skinned, salted, and parts were burned on the altar. What was left was given back to the person who brought it, to take home and roast whole over an open fire.

Now we'll tie in the Passover or Last Supper of Jesus with the communion we share every week.

[Men come up to help with communion]

The Afikoman

If you remember from last week, the Afikoman is the “dessert matzah”, the larger piece of the broken middle piece of matzah. This is the piece of bread that Jesus uses in Matthew 26:26.

Matthew 26:26

²⁶ Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."

John 6:51

⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

Let's pray together.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, creator of the bread of the earth. Thank you, Father, for bringing us the true Bread from Heaven. Help us to remember His wounds, His stripes, and His purity as we share this bread together. I pray through Jesus' name; Amen.

[Share the Afikomen]

The cup of Redemption

After the Afikomen they shared the third cup of wine. The third cup of wine is the cup of Redemption; it was the last wine that Jesus shared with his disciples.

Matthew 26:27-29

²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

The Mishnah, the written version of the Jewish oral tradition, says that the wine in the cup of Redemption represents the shed blood of the lamb that was painted on the doorposts in Egypt, causing the plague of death to pass over. In the same way, Jesus associates this cup with the blood that he would shed on the cross, causing death to pass over those who trust and obey Him.

Let's pray together.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, creator of the fruit of the vine. Help us to remember the blood that was shed for us, to cleanse us of our sins. Lord, we pray that we can take this blood and paint it on the doorposts of our heart. We thank You, Father, for Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. I pray through Jesus' name; Amen.

[Share the cup of Redemption]

We've shared the portion of the Passover meal that Jesus told us we were to share and remember Him. But the Passover celebration isn't over. After the cup of Redemption, the Jews sing a Psalm together.

Matthew 26:30

³⁰ And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

And so they left the celebration.

Cup of Restoration

But wait! Last week, we saw that after singing the Psalm together, the Passover celebration has one more cup, and then the invitation for Elijah!

Like Jesus said in Matthew 26:29, He wouldn't drink wine again until they drink it together in His Father's kingdom. Jesus also told his

disciples on the way to the Mount of Olives that they would all scatter from Him. The fourth cup of wine is the Cup of Restoration. That cup would be more meaningful after that night was over.

The meaning for Cup of Restoration comes from Exodus 6:7.

Exodus 6:7

⁷ I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

They also didn't need to pour a cup for Elijah, obviously, because Elijah had already come, in the person of John the Baptizer. They all knew who Messiah was, they didn't need to ask for Elijah to bring Him; He was already there!

I hope what we've talked about over the past three weeks, and today specifically, has helped you see Jesus in the Passover celebration, and also has shown you a new way to look at the Lord's Supper that we share every week.

I hope that these new insights will help you focus more on the sacrifice of Jesus for us, and why we share this meal when we meet for worship.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (Closing)

¹³ *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁵ For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore encourage one another with these words.*

Questions

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