

Maundy Thursday

March 29th, 2018

Matthew Ude

Return from Exile: Meal to Meal: Passover to Lord's Supper

Texts: Exodus 12:1–13; Mark 14:12–26

Throughout the years there are many different things that we celebrate, Christmas, New Years, birthdays, anniversaries, Easter, confirmation, and these celebrations are very different. Consider Easter egg hunts versus Christmas stockings. But there is one thing they virtually all share, food

Food has an important place in our life. Its more than substance for our body it is fellowship.

When was the last time you went to a party that didn't involve food of some sort or another? To break bread isn't just about sharing food, it's about sharing our lives.

God knows the importance of food, it is a theme that weaves its way through scripture. In the very beginning God showed his goodness and grace to man in creating a garden with every kind of delicious food ready and waiting for man to pick and eat.

Man rebelled against God by choosing the one food that he was not supposed to eat.

Man was cursed through the production of food, what he needed for his body would no longer grow easily for him. But he and his family would be fed only through the sweat of his brow.

And one of the ways that God choose to proclaim His message of salvation, the gospel, is through a very specific meal, which begins 2500 years after man ate the fruit, the Passover.

The Israelites were slaves in the land of Egypt; the victims are some terrible racism. They were foreign immigrants who were reproducing rapidly. In 215 years the Israelites increased from 75 males to over 600,000. The Egyptians were afraid of these foreigners taking over their land and began to oppress them. But although this was wrong of the Egyptians and although God certainly didn't want the Egyptians to act in this way, nevertheless God used their evil for the

good of His people, including us. If they had not been persecuted the Israelites would have lived their lives contentedly in that place. But God had something better in store for them.

And so when the persecution reached its most severe, to the point where the Egyptians were even slaughtering babies, the Lord sent Moses and through Him delivered his people.

Ten plagues He sent on the land of Egypt. Did you notice in our text, **“against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the LORD.” Exodus 12:12**

The Lord specifically chose the ten plagues to show that He was the Lord God and that the Egyptian God's had no power. He specifically chose things that the Egyptians would have said well Ra or so and so has the power of this thing. I'm not an expert on all the gods of Egypt so I don't know specifically which gods were supposed to have power over which plagues. But I can point out a couple. In the first plague the Lord turned the Nile and all the water of Egypt into blood. In the 7th He brought hail which was supposed to be the purview of Seth. In the ninth He brought darkness over all the land, which was a direct assault on the greatest of the Egyptian gods, Ra, the sun god. But Ra doesn't control the sun the Lord does. And so the Lord showed His power over all the favorite gods of Egypt except one, Pharaoh. Finally in the tenth plague the Lord attacked Pharaoh himself, killing all the firstborn of Egypt even Pharaoh's heir.

It was during this tenth plague that the Lord instituted the Passover. Through the Passover the firstborn of the Israelites would be saved. Not the Israelites alone but all who humbled themselves and listened to the word of the Lord. And not only were their firstborn saved from death but they were through this Passover set free from Egypt.

Notice the threefold blessing of the Passover:

1. They were spared from death
2. They were set free from captivity
3. They were marked as the people of God

God accomplished all of this through a meal.

They were to eat the meal with their sandals on their feet, their staff in their hands. They were to eat it in a hurry. They were to cook it over a fire and cook only enough to eat that night. They were to eat it with unleavened bread. All of this was so that they would be ready to travel. It was through this meal that the Lord would save them from slavery and set them free. So the meal was prepared in a way that they would be ready to go.

They were to spread the blood of the Lamb on the door post. The price of sin was death, and only through death could the people be spared from the judgment of the Lord. If the people were not to die than something else must take their place. Thus the blood of the Lamb to show that the price had been paid.

All of this was to be a sign. It is this that would distinguish them as the people of God. There were probably some Israelites who did not do as they were told and there were definitely some Egyptians who did listen and did this thing. It was those who heard the word and believed and humbled themselves under the hand of God, who became the people of God and were set free and entered into the promised land.

And this was true not only for that first Passover but for all the years that followed. It was though the Passover, which was celebrated annually, that the people dedicated themselves to the Lord. It was one of the distinguishing marks which made them the people of God. It was through this meal that the Lord proclaimed the Gospel , that they were His people and He was their God, that their sins were forgiven, that they were reunited with God.

There is one more very important aspect about the Passover that we skimmed over. It was to be a lamb and only a lamb (a goat or a sheep) but a lamb. Elsewhere the Lord called for the sacrifice of a lamb but there was usually the option for a poor family to give two doves or something else in place of a lamb, but not so here, here they were to sacrifice a lamb. Because the Passover meal was not only a reminder of their salvation from Egypt but also and more importantly a prophecy about their deliverance from sin.

Fast forward 1500 years, Jesus is about to celebrate the Passover with his disciples, but he doesn't just celebrate it, he transforms it.

The true Passover was about to be fulfilled. We were to be delivered not from Egypt but from this sin filled world. We were to be set free, not from other humans but from slavery to sin. The lesser act of deliverance paled in comparison to this far greater act of deliverance, and so the Passover must be rebranded accordingly.

And so the Lord instituted a new meal, or perhaps we should say He gave the Passover its true shape. He stripped away the symbols that focused back on that deliverance from Egypt, and made it all about Him.

Still there is blood but not the blood of lamb, but the blood of the Lamb, the Son of God.

Still there is the threefold blessing:

1. To deliver us from death
2. To set us free from sin
3. To mark us as the people of God
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Nor is this the final transformation, for yet again this Passover, this Lords Supper, will be transformed. The day is coming when it will become the marriage feast of the Lamb. And what a glorious thing that will be, when we sit with Christ and with one another, in perfect joy and fellowship. Right now there is so much discord and envy and strife even among us. We sit for a meal even with our family or for a potluck here at church and that meal is not what it should be. We do not know how to share our lives with one another. But on that day it shall not be like this, for we shall know even as we are known.

Isaiah 25:6-9 ⁶ And in this mountain The LORD of hosts will make for all people A feast of choice pieces, A feast of wines on the lees, Of fat things full of marrow, Of well-refined wines on the lees. ⁷ And He will destroy on this mountain The surface of the covering cast over all people, And the veil that is spread over all nations. ⁸ He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken. ⁹ And it will be said in that day: "Behold, this *is* our God; We have waited for Him, and He will save us. This *is* the LORD; We have waited for Him; We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."