

HOLY (MAUNDY) THURSDAY MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE MARK 14:22-25

MAUNDY THURSDAY IS ONE OF THE MOST LITURGICALLY RICH SERVICES OF THE YEAR. MOSES SHOWS US GOD'S SAVING LOVE FOR ISRAEL, WHO HAD BEEN CAPTIVE IN EGYPT AND WAS PRESERVED FROM DEATH UNDER THE PASSOVER BLOOD OF SACRIFICED LAMBS.

PSALM 116 SUGGESTS THE LORD'S SUPPER, WHERE WE LIFT UP THE CUP OF SALVATION AND CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD. PAUL PROVIDES TEACHING ON WORTHY RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENT. JOHN SHOWS US THE MAUNDY OR MANDATE OF LOVE FROM JESUS IS SHOWN IN THE GIVING OF HIS OWN BODY AND BLOOD, MOVING US TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

IMMEDIATELY BEFORE HE INSTITUTES THE SACRAMENT, JESUS PREDICTS HIS BETRAYAL, AND AS THEY WERE EATING THE PASSOVER MEAL, HE ESTABLISHES HOLY COMMUNION. HIS *DO THIS* REFERS NOT TO PASSOVER, BUT TO THE CONSECRATION OF THE BREAD THAT IS HIS BODY AND THE WINE THAT IS HIS BLOOD. HE SAYS, *REMEMBER ME*, NOT THE LAMBS THAT LOOKED FORWARD TO ME.

WE USE UNLEAVENED BREAD BECAUSE THATS WHAT JESUS USED AND BECAUSE LEAVEN (YEAST) IS OFTEN A METAPHOR FOR WICKEDNESS THAT CAN SPREAD THROUGH A CONGREGATION. *CLEANSE OUT THE OLD LEAVEN THAT YOU MAY BE A NEW LUMP, AS YOU REALLY ARE UNLEAVENED. FOR CHRIST, YOUR PASSOVER LAMB, HAS BEEN SACRIFICED FOR YOU.*

IT'S NICE TO RELIVE THE SCENE WITH A 'SEDER MEAL,' BUT, WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF WHAT LITURGY WAS USED IN THE FIRST CENTURY. IT'S MORE IMPORTANT TO FOLLOW THE WORDS OF JESUS AND TAKE HIS BODY AND BLOOD.

MANY PEOPLE THINK THE 'IS' IN CHRIST'S, *THIS IS MY BODY, MY BLOOD*, SHOULD BE SYMBOLIC. THERE IS NO BIBLICAL REASON FOR THIS. PAUL ASKS, *THE BREAD THAT WE BREAK, IS IT NOT A PARTICIPATION IN THE BODY OF CHRIST?* IT'S HARD TO PARTICIPATE IN SOMETHING WITHOUT IT BEING THERE. PAUL SAYS: *WHOEVER EATS THE BREAD OR DRINKS THE CUP IN AN UNWORTHY MANNER IS GUILTY CONCERNING THE LORD'S BODY AND BLOOD.* IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO BE GUILTY OF REJECTING SOMETHING THAT IS NOT THERE.

THIS ONE-WAY COVENANT OR TESTAMENT, LIKE ANY LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT, CANNOT BE ALTERED AFTER HIS DEATH. WE REJOICE IN A SACRAMENT SO FULL OF GRACE – FOR IT GIVES US LIFE IN THE BLOOD.

WHEN GOD INTRODUCED THE SACRIFICE OF LAMBS, HE SAID: *THE LIFE OF FLESH IS IN THE BLOOD.* THERE'S BLOOD ALL OVER THE PLACE TONIGHT. IF THE SIGHT OF BLOOD MAKES YOU SQUEAMISH, YOU NEED TO LOOK AT THIS BLOOD WITH THE MICROSCOPE OF GOD'S WORD. THERE'S MORE HERE THAN MEETS THE EYE.

THE FINAL PLAGUE WHICH SET ISRAEL FREE FROM EGYPT WAS THE PASSOVER. EVERY HOUSE THAT WAS NOT PROTECTED BY LAMB'S BLOOD HAD THEIR FIRSTBORN SON STRUCK DOWN. GOD COMMANDED A PASSOVER FESTIVAL WITH A LAMB MEAL TO REMEMBER HIS MERCY AND TO TRUST HIS FUTURE GRACE.

2 **LOOK AT THE PASSOVER; YOU SEE BLOOD AND VIOLENCE. IT SHOCKS YOUR PEACE-LOVING SENSIBILITIES. WHAT KIND OF GOD WOULD DO THIS TO HELPLESS CHILDREN? ISN'T IT MORBID TO MEMORIALIZE SUCH A BLOODY EVENT?**

LOOK DEEPER; THERE'S MORE HERE THAN MEETS THE EYE. AFTER MOSES ANNOUNCED THIS PLAGUE, THE PEOPLE BOWED THEIR HEADS AND WORSHIPPED. THE PASSOVER IS ABOUT, *YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS.*

THE LORD HAD SAID: *I WILL EXECUTE JUSTICE ON ALL THE FALSE GODS OF EGYPT. I AM THE LORD!* IN THE LAST PLAGUE, YOU DO NOT SEE INNOCENT VICTIMS, BUT IMPENITENT SINNERS RECEIVING JUST JUDGMENT FROM THE ONE HOLY GOD.

THIS NEW PASSOVER SHOWS YOU THE ULTIMATE JUDGMENT. YOU ARE PARDONED; THE INNOCENT FIRSTBORN OF GOD DIES A BLOODY VIOLENT DEATH! YOU SEE THE JUDGMENT YOU DESERVE. YOU, SO OFTEN, REFUSE TO FEAR, LOVE, AND TRUST IN THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART.

ISRAEL DESERVED THE SAME FATE AS THE EGYPTIANS. BUT, THE BLOOD OF THE PASSOVER LAMB REVEALS MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE. THIS STICKY RED FLUID JOINED WITH GOD'S WORD, GAVE HIS PEOPLE LOVE RATHER THAN WRATH! IN, WITH AND UNDER THE PASSOVER BLOOD IS THE PROMISE OF LIFE, PARDON, FREEDOM AND PEACE. NONE OF IT BECAUSE THE ISRAELITES WERE WORTHY.

THERE'S MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE IN THE UPPER ROOM. THE DISCIPLES KNEW THE LITURGY OF PASSOVER, SO WHEN JESUS REVISED THE SERVICE, THEIR EYES WERE OPENED TO SEE HE WAS UP TO SOMETHING...AGAIN!

WHEN JESUS SAID OVER THE BREAD, *TAKE AND EAT; THIS IS MY BODY*, THE DISCIPLES MUST HAVE LOOKED AT ONE ANOTHER WITH BEWILDERED GLANCES. THEN JESUS GIVES THEM HIS COVENANT BLOOD. THEY LOOK, BUT DON'T SEE.

WITH THE SPIRIT'S HELP, LATER, THEY SEE AND TELL US WHAT'S HIDING IN ALL THIS. THE CROSS IS IN THE BREAD AND CUP. JESUS IS GOD'S FINAL JUDGMENT ON SIN, AND FROM THAT DAY, THE ONLY SIN THAT CONDEMNS TO HELL IS IDOLATRY; CHOOSING OTHER THAN GOD'S GIFT OF GRACE IN HIS SON AS PASSOVER TO LIFE.

THEY SHOW US THE MYSTERY THAT IS MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE. IN, WITH AND UNDER THE SIMPLE BREAD AND WINE, BY THE POWER OF HIS WORD, JESUS GIVES HIS BODY AND BLOOD FOR FORGIVENESS, LIFE AND SALVATION.

THEY EXPLAIN THAT THE PASSOVER, AS ALL OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES, ONLY PREFIGURED THE LORD'S ONCE-FOR-ALL SACRIFICIAL DEATH. THE OLD CEREMONIES MUST GIVE WAY TO THE NEW TESTAMENT IN HIS BLOOD.

YOU HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE IN THE BREAD AND WINE. YOU HAVE GOD'S LOVE IN THIS MEAL. IT IS YOUR PEACE WITH GOD. SO, IT STIRS THE DESIRE IN YOU TO LOVE IN HIS NAME - TO SACRIFICE YOURSELF, AND TO LOVE OTHERS FOR HIM.

SINNERS DON'T HAVE TO GET WHAT THEY DESERVE; JESUS HAS RANSOMED THEM FROM DEATH AND WANTS TO GATHER THEM INTO HIS FORGIVEN FAMILY. TOGETHER, IN THIS MYSTERIOUS MEAL, WE SEE MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE. THE LIFE OF OUR FLESH IS IN THE BLOOD! AMEN