

**24 Hours That Changed the World\***  
**The Last Supper**

**Mark 14:12-16**  
**John 13:3-11**  
**John 13:12-17, 20**  
**Mark 14:18-22**  
**Mark 14:22-25**

**February 21, 2010**

**A Reenactment of the Last Supper by the Los Altos Methodist Players**  
**Jesus Monologue by Mark S. Bollwinkel**

*Introduction: The consequences of the last day of Jesus' life changed the world and continue to do so today. The Lenten season focus on confession and reflection in preparation for Easter gives us the perfect time to remember those last 24 hours and ponder their meaning for our lives. Those 24 hours begin with the Last Supper. If Jesus could speak to us about that sacred meal he might say something like this....*

It was quite a week. It began with a very public parade and shouts of Hosanna, palm branches and Alleluias. By the time for the Passover meal came on Thursday, we had to do so in secret and hiding. The authorities were outraged by my teachings in the Temple. The people were disappointed that I was not the kind of Messiah they were expecting. And the Priests...well the Priests had had enough.

I sent Peter and John to prepare the Passover lamb for the meal. They stood with thousands at the temple for the ritual sacrifice of the animals; blood flowed like streams from the temple mount.

I was really looking forward to celebrate the Passover Seder with my friends! (Luke 22:15). To have Passover in Jerusalem remains one of the high points of any Hebrew's life. It is a time of feasting and family and joy!

We tell our story as a people. Someone, usually the youngest begins the ritual by asking out loud, "What makes this night different from all other nights?" And we remember.

We remember how God heard the cry of our oppression and acted to save us. God chose Moses as our liberator. Ten times God sent plagues upon the Egyptians, one of the greatest Civilizations in history, to force them to let God's people go. Finally, with the last plague, the stage was set for the Exodus from our slavery to the promised land of freedom.

On that night Moses instructed the people to urgently prepare for the journey. They could only take what they could carry. There wasn't even time for them to leaven their bread for the last meal. They were to slaughter and feast on a lamb, eating every bit of

it, and washing its blood over the mantel of their doorways. That would be the sign for the angel of death to 'Passover' their homes and spare their children any harm. Finally the powerful Egyptian relented to the One God and our journey to freedom began.

Still to this day when the Hebrew's gather for this annual feast their tables are set with bitter herbs, parsley and horseradish, that they would remember the bitterness of their years of slavery; a small bowl of salt water to remember the tears they shed; an egg, to symbolize the new birth of their liberation; charoset, a thick apple sauce to remind them of the mortar applied to the bricks that built Pharaoh's cities; unleavened bread, to remember the haste of their journey; at least four glasses of wine to recall the four promises of God as they began their exodus (Ex. 6:6-7); and lamb to remember the Passover blood that saved them from harm.

And it was a feast. Along with the ritual meal were many other foods to eat, songs to sing, prayers to pray and laughter to share with those you loved the most.

And yet my last supper still to this day is not remembered for its joy but its sorrow. The mood changed dramatically at the table when I departed from the ritual and picking up the bread, I broke it and said words never heard before, "...this is my body broken for you, take and eat..." And then lifting up a cup of wine said, "...and this is my blood, poured out for you and for many as a new covenant of forgiveness..."

The disciples were shocked and surprised. They didn't know what to think or feel. They would not know until days afterwards that the events of my last 24 hours on earth would fulfill my cousin John's prophecy at my baptism, "...behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world..." (John 1:29).

I was God's new Passover lamb, and it would be my body and blood that would redeem their future.

These were the best friends I ever had and I loved them dearly. Even though one was about to sell me out for a few coins to my enemies, even though my best friend would deny ever knowing me, even though the rest would abandon me when I needed them the most.

Do you know what its like to love even those who have betrayed you, denied you, abandoned you? Maybe you do...all too well. Maybe there were times when you were the one to betray and deny? Maybe you know what its like to get love you don't deserve?

I washed their feet (John 13:3-5) as their servant. I called them my friends and they were (John 15:15). After my death whenever they gathered for a meal together they remembered the events of this Last Supper, honestly took a look at their role in it and made a promise to live up to the love that only God can give.

Don't you do the same, even now, whenever you receive Holy Communion?

The Passover story defines the Hebrew people. The story of my last day defines us as well. And it's not just the hurt and brokenness and disappointment that we remember of that night, but how God used it for the transformation of the world.

We still falter and fail. And we still love beyond measure, we still serve those in need, we still work towards a world of peace, justice and love. The story of grace still defines who we are as a people, too.

I didn't want to face my last 24 hours alone. I choose to be with those I loved the most even knowing what was about to happen. If you knew you only had a day left in your life, who would you invite to your last supper? For everyone you can name...in spite of their fragilities and failings, because of their love and devotion...count them as a blessing in your life for it is in such love that we can see the face of God.

I really looked forward to that last supper with my friends. At Passover Seder the story begins with slaves and ends with liberation. Isn't that true for you and this sacred meal in my name even now?

Each moment of sacrament is like a glimpse into the Kingdom of God, the promises of God for the present and future. All are welcome to this table; outsiders, pious, privileged and poor, righteous or sinners all are welcome to celebrate and share in God's love. The world may still not work that way, but we can and do. All it has ever meant to be one of my disciples is the heart to live in the present as if God's future promise were now.....

*Following this monologue, Holy Communion is served to the disciples and they in turn serve all in attendance...*

\*Based on the book and devotional series of the same title by Rev. Adam Hamilton (Abingdon Press, 2009)