

Remembered

Luke 22: 7 - 20

The Baptist church has two primary ordinances: the believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper. Since we just recently celebrated Easter and the resurrection of Jesus Christ following the events of His trial and crucifixion, and as we make preparations ourselves for reinstituting this ordinance under COVID guidelines, we recall His presentation of Holy Communion to His disciples in the upper room.



Through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, we demonstrate obedience and memorialize in remembrance Jesus' death as a sacrifice for our sins. Remembrance – our most accurate understanding of our present, and our purpose in it, is through remembering where we have come from and our history.

Prepared read Luke 22: 7 – 13

As we “set the stage” for the lesson, think about your established habits and norms when preparing for special events or holidays. Just as you may make specific preparations for events that set them apart from ordinary days, Passover was a time in Jewish history that required very specific steps leading up to the celebration. The Feast of Unleavened Bread lasted 7 days. This is a time from Jewish history when they celebrated their freedom from bondage and their haste as they fled Egypt: there was no time to allow for the yeast to rise in their bread, hence the unleavened bread. Unleavened bread today



resembles a dry firm cracker and is



purchased as matzo. Bread without leavening, which symbolizes the contamination of Egypt, offers the people pure bread of life represented as manna from heaven during their journey in the desert. The feast itself is at the end of Passover, where the lamb is sacrificed and his blood placed on the doorposts as an act of obedience to God and a message to protect the household from the angel of the Lord. We now know that the sacrificial lamb is Jesus Christ himself who was slain for our salvation.

In this scriptural passage, it is noteworthy that Jesus sent out Peter and John with specific instructions for how to prepare the Passover and how this would be accomplished in a city where they were guests. They were to encounter a man carrying a jar (usually a task performed by women) and follow him into the house where he entered (they did not know this man). That this would be fulfilled and a large furnished upper room would be available for a “party of 13” considering the household

would be making preparations for their own Passover meal is quite amazing. But Peter and John's lack of questioning and their obedience, though they may surely have wondered, are examples for us in our worship. And, just as the donkey was available for Jesus to ride into the city, this happened just as Jesus had said it would. I am struck by how amazing an experience this would be: imagine having three years of similar experiences! Following the Passover meal, Jesus would institute the Lord's Supper.

How do you prepare yourself for this ordinance so that you can partake in a worthy manner?

Looking Forward read Luke 22: 14 – 18

Looking closely at this section of the scriptural passage, we get a sense of the intense emotion expressed by Jesus. Think about the setting and timing. Passover Seder meals were traditional Jewish celebrations of their freedom from slavery and exodus from Egypt. Extended families often gathered together for this feast. Jesus has gathered his 12 apostles for this intimate meal and He has an important message for them. If you participated in the Seder service we had a couple years ago here at Gloucester Point Baptist Church, then you may remember there are several "cups" where fruit of the vine is used to celebrate the exodus as well as other symbolic elements associated with the ceremony.

Jesus' burden is great as we read this message because He knows what lies ahead. "When the hour had come" He sat down and raised the cup. This is the cup that they will all drink from and represents His blood sacrificed for us. He "desires" to share this with them before He suffers. Jesus has told them before that He will suffer and die but this time feels more urgent. He has also foretold of His resurrection but we know on Easter morning they are not prepared for what happened. This is Jesus' last meal and He makes sure to tell them that He will not drink from the fruit of the vine again until the Kingdom of God comes. Even though we view this event historically, Jesus is telling the people He has been with from the beginning of His ministry what is about to happen. Bear in mind also that Jesus performed other ministry services for his 12 apostles at this dinner even though they are not included in Luke. Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, an act of great humility and intimacy, and He made reference to the one who would betray Him. So, when He sat down and raised the cup it was the culmination of a very important and meaningful lesson.



Do you look forward to the Lord's Supper? Does this knowledge affect our thankfulness for the event?

Looking Back read Luke 22: 19 - 20

This final act by Jesus of establishing one of Christianity's most sacred ordinances was given to His apostles while He was still alive though He would be dead in less than 24 hours: they would recall this symbolic act after His death. The bread that He used was the unleavened bread from the Passover meal, to which He declared "this is my body". He was telling the remaining 11 apostles, after Judas had departed, that His sacrifice would provide atonement for sin. He instructed them to "do this in

remembrance of me.” How poignant an act of love and obedience! And, how personal, as this was done for each of us so that we can be saved from sin.

The final cup and bread were not traditionally included in the Jewish Passover Seder but they are included in a Christian Seder. We recognize this, as the apostles did after His resurrection, that He had died in our place. Holy Communion is not reserved for a once a year act at Passover. Every time we participate in this important ordinance, we should do so with self-reflection of our worthiness and in recognition of His sacrifice. We look back at His death but we also look forward to His return.

