

THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

WEEK NINE - THE UPPER ROOM

After three years of ministry Jesus gathers with the 12 for what is known as The Last Supper or The Upper Room. In just 15 hours Jesus will be nailed to a cross. But before that happens, He has much to say to the Apostles who will build the foundation of His church.

1) The setting of the Upper Room – Luke 21:37-22:6

In 21:37-22:2 Luke summarizes the first four days of Passion Week – Palm Sunday and the Triumphal Entry; Monday with Jesus appealing to the nation of Israel for the final time; Tuesday and the day long confrontation with the Jewish leaders; and Wednesday, a quiet day spent outside of the city.

- a) During the day Jesus had continued to draw crowds as He taught in the Temple. Then at night He and the 12 had withdrawn to the area around the Mount of Olives, out of sight from the Leaders. vs. 37-38
- b) Those Leaders were determined Jesus had to die. They were looking for someone who would betray Jesus to them by revealing His location at night, when the crowds were not there. vs. 1-2
- c) Judas, yielding to Satan, determines to betray Christ and makes arrangements with the Leaders. From a human perspective, perhaps he was disillusioned by Jesus' failure to declare His Kingdom. Whatever the reason, the stage is set for Christ's arrest later that night. vs. 3-6

2) Jesus celebrates the Passover Meal with the 12 – Luke 22:7-20

Passover was one of the three major feasts in Israel, along with Pentecost and the Feast of Booths. Passover commemorated Israel's deliverance from Egypt by God under the leadership of Moses. This eight day celebration began with the Passover meal, where the family gathered to eat the Passover lamb and remember the night God judged Egypt by slaying their first born. The Jews were spared, as long as they had applied the blood of a lamb on the door posts of their home. Earlier that day thousands of lambs had been sacrificed at the Temple and the meat taken home to eat at this special meal. Among those securing a lamb were Peter and John.

a) Preparations are made – Luke 22:7-13

Jesus, laying low outside the city, send Peter and John into Jerusalem to prepare for that night's Passover meal. Probably these two trusted men are sent so Judas will not know where the meal is going to be held. This insures they will not be disturbed. As soon as Judas knows where they are going after the meal he will go to the Jewish leaders and betray Christ. This preparation included:

1. Finding a man carrying a water pot. This was a pre-arranged signal. Men did not carry water pots – that job was held exclusively by women. This man would not have been hard to spot. Peter and John are then taken to the Upper Room.
2. They would have gone to the Temple to purchase a lamb and then have it sacrificed. They then take the meat back to the house to cook it for the meal that evening.
3. They would have gone to the Market to purchase wine, bread and other items used during the meal.
4. Having secured everything needed they now prepare the table for the meal. A basin of water along with a towel are placed at the door so their feet can be washed as they entered later that night.

b) The meal is eaten – Luke 22:14-23

For centuries this meal had been eaten with a view to God's redeeming Israel from slavery to Egypt. Jesus now take this meal and gives it new meaning – looking to His Cross, and the redemption He will provide by paying the penalty for our sins.

1. There were several stages in the Passover meal, with specific blessings, prayers, Scripture readings and short teaching or devotional thoughts given by the host of the meal. The teaching given by Jesus in John 13-17 would have been interspersed throughout the evening.

2. Jesus is filled with emotion as He starts the meal in verse 15. **‘Earnestly’** – This word carries deep feeling and desire. This meal means much more than leaving the 12 with the elements of the Lord’s Table! He loves these men, and knows this is the last time they will share a time like this together until His second coming. The cup of wine mentioned in verse 17 was called ‘the cup of blessing’. **‘Giving Thanks’** – is ‘eucharisteo, which is where we get the word ‘Eucharist’.
3. Jesus then declares that the ‘New Covenant’ is about to be established through His death on the cross. This New Covenant is declared through the elements of the bread and cup that are not used to celebrate Communion, The Lord’s Table, The Eucharist.
 - The bread represents Christ’s body, which is **‘given for you’**. This declares the atonement – the death of Jesus was going to satisfy God’s demand that sin be punished. That satisfaction would then be given to all who place saving faith in Christ. This was not taken from Jesus. Jesus freely gives it.
 - The cup represents the blood of Jesus, which paid the price for sin. It was **‘poured out for you’** – again, Jesus emphasizes that He is freely giving of Himself for our redemption.
 - **‘Remembrance’** – This word refers to remembering an experience one has had by placing themselves in the scene. It is much more than a mental memory, but includes feeling the emotion of that moment as well. For us today, Communion is an opportunity to place ourselves in the Upper Room and hear these words of Jesus. It means placing ourselves at the Cross and watching Him die for us. It means standing outside of the empty tomb and celebrating His resurrection, for our eternal life is found in His.
4. All during this time Judas has been reclining next to Jesus. Jesus now confronts him, though indirectly.
 - **‘The hand of him who betrays me’ (vs. 21)** – To eat a meal together was a sign of friendship. That Judas would eat with Jesus and then betray Him made his actions that much more despicable.
 - **‘The Son of Man of man goes as it has been determined’** – The coming arrest, trials and crucifixion was not the result of men’s crafty plan, but the determined and sovereign plan of God.
 - **‘But woe to that man’** –Cursed, condemned, Hell-bound is that man.
 - The 12 begin to talk to each other as to which one would do such a thing!

3) Jesus teaches the 12 about humble, servant leadership – Luke 22:24-30; John 13:1-20

Their chatter about who would betray Jesus soon became an argument as to which of them was the greatest and most devoted follower of Jesus. They fail to consider the grief Jesus had to be feeling over this coming betrayal, and instead focus their attention on positioning themselves for their Kingdom assignments. Jesus washes their feet (John 13) at some point in this exchange.

- a) The 12 are acting like the Roman authorities, with the emphasis on a hierarchy of authority that was carefully followed. Those higher up the ladder were called **‘benefactors’** which indicated they were people of influence who controlled the lives of others. This is ‘top down’ leadership, with an emphasis on authority. (Luke 22:24)
- b) **Jesus washes their feet – John 13:1-20**
 1. When Peter and John set-up the room for the meal they placed the basin and towel for washing their feet. If a family was rich enough to have servants the lowest level servant was given the responsibility of washing the feet of everyone as they entered. If there were no servants, then the youngest weaned child (5-6 years old) was given this responsibility. Their argument about who was the greatest of the Disciples reveals the pride that prevented any of them from playing the role of ‘feet washer’ that night.
 2. In the middle of this argument Jesus gets up and assumes the role of the lowest man in the room. His actions stunned the 12 into silence as He moves from man to man around the table.
 3. This silence is broken by Peter in verse 6. **‘Lord, do you wash my feet?’** communicates shock and embarrassment. Jesus is Lord, not a lowly servant. Jesus, knowing how He is going to use this as a ‘teachable moment’ tells Peter to just be still, and he will understand what Jesus is doing in a moment.

4. Peter then rebukes Jesus, **'You shall never wash my feet.'** is very strong – 'you will never, NEVER wash my feet' Jesus replies that, **'If I do not wash you, you have no share with me'**, which communicates:
 - Jesus is correcting Peter's stubborn miss-understanding of Jesus and His ministry. Jesus had come in humility to serve and to die for people and their sins.
 - Washing with water is a common metaphor for spiritual cleansing. Only faith in Jesus' work of redemption brings the spiritual cleansing one needs.
 5. In verses 12-17 Jesus makes it clear that His action was intended to be an object lesson on humble servanthood, and that we are to show this level of humility and servanthood to each other. Luke 22:25-30 becomes far more impacting when we understand Jesus spoke them after washing their feet.
- c) Jesus teaches that in His Kingdom, that is turned upside down. **'The greatest among you become as the youngest'** – The higher leaders are to display humility, not pride. **'The leader as one who serves'** –The emphasis on being a leader is servanthood, not authority. (Luke 22:25-30)
 - d) **'I am among you as One who serves'** – Jesus has modeled this throughout His ministry. In addition He has modeled it by washing their feet earlier that evening.
 - e) In the Millennial Kingdom the 12 (Minus Judas of course) will indeed have high positions of authority as they each rule over one of the 12 tribes of Israel. However these roles are being given to them, they do not have to 'jockey for position'. (vs. 29-30)

4) Jesus foretells Peter's denial – Luke 22:31-34

No one was more boisterous of their undying support than Peter. Jesus now turns His attention to him.

- a) **'Simon, Simon'** – When Peter was operating out of his old nature and ways, Jesus often refers to him as Simon, as a way of getting his attention.
- b) **'Satan demanded to have you'** – a great picture of this is Job chapter 1, where Satan does the same with Job. Satan is unable to demand anything from God, and can do nothing to one of God's children without God's permission. The word **'demand'** could be translated, 'earnestly requested'. Also, the word 'you' is plural.
- c) **'Sift you like wheat'** – When harvesting wheat, the grain was separated from the chaff and both were tossed into the air. The wind would blow away the lighter chaff, leaving just the wheat grain on the floor. It became an expression of one's character being tested by challenging circumstances. Satan wanted to 'toss the 12 into the air' to see if their faith would fail. As time would tell, it would!
- d) **'I have prayed for you'** – Jesus continually intercedes for us (Heb.7:25) and He prayed for the Disciples. It was the same when He sent the 12 out onto the Sea of Galilee and into a storm (Mark 6:45-52). **'That your faith may not fail'** – While their faith would waver, it would not fail. Satan's best efforts would not destroy them nor their faith.
- e) **'When you have turned again, strengthen your brothers'** – Because Peter's faith is real, he will repent of his sin of denying Christ. When he does, Jesus instructs him to reach out and restore the others.
- f) When Peter still insists Jesus is wrong (vs. 33) Jesus tells him he will deny him not just once, but three times.

5) Jesus warns the Disciples that the world will no longer receive them graciously, but with hostility – Luke 22:35-38

When the Disciples had been traveling with Jesus, people had generally received them with hospitality and provisions, as they did all Rabbis and their students. That was about to change however, for after rejecting Jesus and crucifying Him, Israel as a nation would also reject and persecute His followers. This meant being more self-sufficient and on guard.

- **'Moneybag'** – While this includes having your money for the provisions you need, it also signaled that the Christian Community would have to provide for itself and its needs. This is seen early in the book of Acts (2:45; 4:32-37)
- **'Sword'** – As will be seen in the Garden, Jesus is not referring to actual swords and fighting (Luke 22:51). He is saying Christians are to be on guard and wisely seek to protect themselves. Paul did this when he used his Roman citizenship as protection from unlawful punishment and imprisonment (Acts 16:35-39; 22:22-29)

6) Judas leaves to betray Jesus – John 13:21-30

- a) Jesus now moves to the reality of being betrayed by Judas, one of the 12. **'Jesus was troubled in His spirit' (vs.21)** communicates severe mental, emotional and spiritual turmoil. As the moment arrives when Judas will take action against Him, Jesus is deeply affected. This is His humanity on display. He then declares, **'One of you will betray me.'**
- b) Once again the 12 are thrown by Jesus' words. John is seated at Christ's right, so Peter motions for him to ask Jesus who was about to do this evil thing. Things then happen quickly. Jesus quietly tells John the sign, and gives the piece of bread to Judas. In that moment Judas gives in to Satan and is determined to follow through with his plan. He has experienced everything – the teaching on the New Covenant; explanation of the Cross and resurrection; had his feet washed by Jesus; heard Jesus teach on being a servant Who had come to save. However, none of this changes Judas' mind and he rejects Jesus as Messiah. His heart closed, there is no turning back for him now. Knowing this, Jesus tells Judas to do what He needs to do.
- c) All of this conversation had taken place with only John and Judas hearing the words of Jesus. So as Judas leaves, the others assume Jesus had quietly directed him to buy more provisions or to go make a gift to the poor, which was commonly done. Perhaps even John failed to immediately put all the pieces together.

JESUS TEACHES THE 11 DISCIPLES

John 13:31 through John 17 contains what is known as 'The Upper Room Discourse'. Jesus gives the 11 remaining Apostles key instructions on how they are to live once He has died, risen and ascended back to Heaven. These instructions are critical for us as Fully Devoted Followers of Christ.

7) Jesus gives them a new commandment to love each other – John 13:31-35

What makes this commandment new is Jesus raising the standard of what loving others is. In the Old Testament God had commanded Israel to love others as they love themselves. Jesus had repeated this as He gave the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:34-40). Now that He has demonstrated humility by washing their feet and is about to show sacrificial love by going to the cross Jesus makes Himself the standard. We are to love others as Jesus has loved us. This grace filled love will be the clearest evidence in our lives that we are a follower of Jesus.

8) Jesus comforts and assures them He will return for them – John 14:1-15

Much has happened that night to trouble the Disciples! Jesus has talked of leaving them; them betraying – denying – deserting Him. Having entered the room expecting Jesus to announce His taking the throne of The Kingdom, this does not make any sense to them. Was Jesus deserting them? What are they to do in His absence? The words of Jesus continue to speak to us as we wait for His return.

- a) Keep the faith – in both the Father and in Jesus (vs. 1)

- b) Trust in Jesus' promise to return for them (vs. 2-3)
- c) Believe that faith in Jesus as the Way and Truth and Life will bring them into an eternal relationship with God (vs.4-7)
- d) Remember everything they have seen in Jesus as God's Son. To have seen and experienced Jesus was to have seen and experience God the Father. (vs.8-11)
- e) Trust Jesus to provide everything they will need for the Journey. The key is prayer. (vs.12-14)
- f) We are to demonstrate our love for Jesus by obeying His commandments. This focus on obedience gives clarity to us when the challenges of life begin to make us 'feel troubled'. (vs. 15)

9) Jesus promises His presence, provision, enablement and peace through the ministry of the Holy Spirit – John 14:16-31

Jesus continues to give encouragement to the 11 by explaining how He will be present through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

- a) They will have the permanent presence of the Holy Spirit in them (vs. 16-17)
 1. **'Helper'** – Called alongside to help, comforter, counselor, intercessor, advocate. The Holy Spirit is all of this to a Believer.
 2. **'Another'** – Means another of the same kind. The Holy Spirit will be the same divine presence as Jesus had been to them.
 3. **'Spirit of truth'** – The Holy Spirit reveals spiritual truth and enables Believers to have spiritual understanding.
 4. **'He dwells in you'** – The Holy Spirit abides in/dwells in the Believer. Those without saving faith are not able to know Him, but believers are able to know and experience Him.
- b) Jesus would not leave them permanently (vs. 18-20).
 1. In just a few hours Jesus would leave them to be crucified. However, they would see Him again after His resurrection (vs. 19). Jesus will also be present with them through the indwelling Holy Spirit.
 2. **'I am in my Father, and you in me and I in you'** – Through the indwelling of the Spirit, we are united with Christ – we are in the Body of Christ.
- c) They will be loved by The Father (vs. 21-24)
 1. Jesus links our loving Him with obeying Him. Our obedience does not save us, but one who has placed saving faith in Jesus will bear spiritual fruit. One of those fruits is a desire to obey God (Eph. 2:8-10).
 2. The Father not only loves us but will be present with us. (vs. 23)
- d) They will be guided to the truth (vs. 25-26)
 1. The Holy Spirit will continue the teaching ministry of Jesus by enabling Believers to understand spiritual truth (vs. 25-26a)
 2. The Holy Spirit will give the Apostles the ability to remember, teach and write the words spoken by Jesus. This includes the inspiration to write what we now know as Scripture (vs. 26b)
- e) Jesus promises to give His peace to His followers. This is the same peace that He experienced during His earthly life and ministry (vs.27). This peace of Jesus counters the trouble life can cause.

NOTE: As John 14 draws to a close Jesus and the 11 Apostles leave the upper room and begin to make their way to the Garden of Gethsemane.

10) Jesus teaches on what it means to abide in Him – John 15:1-11

To **abide** means to remain where one is; to endure. To abide in Christ is to remain in constant communion with Him. Jesus uses a picture that everyone in the first century would have been familiar with – vineyards. Jesus uses this image to share that we are in a personal, fruitful, growing relationship with Him.

- a) There are three main characters in this illustration:
 1. The Vine is Jesus Christ. He is the one true source of spiritual life.
 2. The Vinedresser is The Father. He prunes fruitful branches to promote more fruit; removes those branches not producing fruit; provide the proper nourishment for the vineyard.
 3. The branches are Followers of Jesus.
- b) Jesus reveals three distinguishing marks of the true braches:
 1. They bear spiritual fruit. This includes The Fruit of the Spirit; Beatitudes; Christ-like love; obedience (vs. 2,4,5,8)
 2. They remain in Christ's love (vs. 9)
 3. They receive nourishment from the vine, resulting in obedience (vs.10)
- c) The Father prunes each branch so it bears more fruit (2b). This means removing anything that would drain our spiritual energy. The knowledge that God uses the trials and challenges of life to prune us for further growth should be a great encouragement.
- d) We cannot bear spiritual fruit on our own, but only through the grace-filled nourishment and enablement of Jesus.
- e) Abiding in Jesus leads to answered prayer (vs. 7). Jesus gives two pre-requisites to this answered prayer:
 1. Abide in Him – In a personal relationship with Christ and be in closely walking with Him.
 2. Know and walk in obedience to Christ's Word.Jesus is talking primarily about prying for spiritual fruitfulness that will glorify the Father (vs. 8)
- f) We are to abide in Christ's love. Receiving this nourishment from His love comes as we lovingly obey Him (vs. 9-11)
- g) Abiding in Jesus will produce spiritual joy. This is the same joy that Jesus experienced during His life and ministry.
NOTE: Jesus has expressed His desire to give us His love, peace and joy. These become a way of measuring our closeness to – abiding in Christ.

11) Jesus calls us His friends as He calls us to a life of love – John 15:12-17

Jesus continues the theme of abiding in Him by repeating His command to love one another as He has loved us.

- a) This connects the command to love as Jesus loves with God's enablement. We are able to love like Jesus because we are relationally connected to Jesus and it is His life and grace that flows through us.
- b) Jesus then reveals that we are also connected to Jesus as His friends (vs.15), having been chosen by Him (vs. 16) and appointed by Jesus to bear spiritual fruit (vs. 16) which includes loving others (vs. 17).

12) We are to be prepared to suffer rejection and persecution from a world that has first rejected Christ – John 15:18 – 16:4a

Since Jesus went to the cross, an estimated 70 million Christians have been martyred for their faith. Countless others have been persecuted in other ways. Of these, 2/3 have lost their lives since 1900. Every year 100,000 Christians are martyred around the world. (From Commentary on John 12-21 by John MacArthur p. 170)

- a) In these verses Jesus not only warns of this coming persecution, but gives three reasons why it will occur:

1. The world rejects those who are not part of it (vs. 18-19a)
 2. The world hates Christians because it hated Christ first (18, 20)
 3. The world hates Christians because it does not know God (21-25)
- b) The Holy Spirit will bear witness for Christ, as will we who know Him. This comes in the midst of the world's rejection (vs. 26-27)
- c) Jesus is sharing this warning so that when we face rejection and persecution we will not fall away from our faith (16:1-4a)

13) Jesus then describes the work of the Holy Spirit – John 16:4b-15

In verses 4-6 Jesus gently rebukes them for not showing concern for Him (**None of you ask me 'where are you going?'**). Their total focus is on the warning about coming persecution (**because I have said these things to you sorrow fills your heart**). Jesus then shares about the Holy Spirit.

- a) The Holy Spirit will not come until Jesus has returned to The Father (vs.7)
- b) The Holy Spirit will convict people (vs. 8-11):
1. **Concerning sin** – This refers primarily to our guilt before God and need for forgiveness
 2. **And righteousness** – This is the righteousness of Christ, which we need to be brought into a right relationship with God.
 3. **And Judgement** – That is to come to all who do not place saving faith in Christ
- c) The Holy Spirit will reveal truth (vs. 12-15). There were still many things for the Apostles to learn, but would not be ready to understand until after the crucifixion and resurrection. Much of this new teaching became our New Testament, written as the Holy Spirit inspired the authors (2 Tim.3:16-17)

14) Jesus promises that the sorrow the Disciples are about to experience will soon turn to joy – John 16:16-24

There is much discussion as to whether Jesus is talking about His crucifixion and resurrection in these verses or His second coming. This much is clear however, while there are seasons when it seems Believers are suffering while the World is laughing this will turn around, and Believers will be filled with joy.

- a) In verse 16-17 Jesus makes a statement that leaves the men perplexed. Instead of asking Jesus directly, they begin to discuss among themselves what Jesus, means by saying they will see Him no more and then in a little while they will see Him.
- b) We are living in a time when much of the World rejects Jesus, His Gospel and we His followers. This leads to times of sorrow. However, out of this time will come great joy when Jesus returns or we go to be with Him through death. Jesus uses a picture of a woman's labor and delivery to illustrate His point (vs.18-21)
- c) This will take place when Jesus is crucified and then rises from the dead. It will also take place when Jesus returns to establish His Kingdom (vs. 22).
- d) In the time we live in between the two comings of Jesus Christ we can pray to the Father in the name of Jesus. This means we pray as the redeemed children of God through Christ. As we experience God's provision, our joy will be full. Real joy comes from knowing we are a child of God and He loves and cares for us.

15) Jesus promises that because He has overcome the World, so will we – John 16:25-33

Jesus now plainly tells them He is leaving them soon to return to His Father. However, because He has overcome the World, so will they. They will experience three things that will enable them to do this:

- a) They will experience the love of The Father (vs.25-27)
- b) Their faith in Christ will be encouraged and built up (vs. 27-32)
- c) They will experience the peace of Jesus even in the midst of tribulation (vs. 33)

16) Jesus prays for the 11 and for us today – John 17:1-26

As this teaching session draws towards a close Jesus pauses and prays for the 11 men with Him and for all who will believe in their testimony, which includes us today (vs.20). Jesus prays:

- a) Jesus prays for The Father to glorify Himself through Christ by completing the plan of Redemption (vs. 1-5)
 1. So Jesus can offer eternal life to all The Father has given to Him (vs.2)
 2. Jesus then define eternal life – **‘That they know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent’** (vs.3)
 3. Jesus has completed everything The Father gave Him to do, and now looked forward to returning to the Throne Room and receive back His glory)
- b) Jesus acknowledges that He is praying for all those The Father has given to Him (vs. 6-10)
 1. Jesus had come proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Disciples had believed Him (vs. 6-8)
 2. Jesus is praying for those who have come to Him in faith (vs.9-10)
- c) Jesus prays for The Father to ‘keep them’, care for them, since Jesus is returning to Heaven (vs. 11-19)
 1. Jesus prays for us to be held secure by The Father and kept unified (vs. 11-13)
 2. Jesus asks The Father to keep us secure in the world (vs. 14-15)
 3. Jesus asks The Father to sanctify us – transform us and keep us pure – through His Word as Jesus was sanctified and pure (vs.16-19).
- d) Jesus prays that all Believers would be united (vs. 20-23)
 1. Jesus now states He is praying for all Believers of every generation who come to Faith in Him (vs.20)
 2. Jesus prays that we would experience the same unity in the Church that He, The Father (and Holy Spirit) experience within the Trinity.
 3. When this unity is present it is a powerful witness to the world that Jesus is everything He claims to be. It also proves that Jesus loves His flowers in the same way The Father loves Christ.
- e) Jesus prays that all of His followers will join Him in the glory of Heaven (vs. 24-26)
 1. So we will see Jesus in all of His glory (vs. 24)
 2. In the meanwhile, the love and presence of Jesus will be in us. (vs. 26)