

The Upper Room: Mark 14.1-31

Thanks to Kate for today's TFTD



In most societies, feasting and receptions over food and drink are great occasions and they always leave a lasting memory. In the time of our Lord, he too was a guest at the wedding in Cana in Galilee. That wedding has lasting memories for those attended when Jesus performed his first miracle by turning the water into wine.

But in today's passage, the Last Supper stands out from all other meals. It was a meal that Jesus was especially eager to share with his disciples, and for which he made careful arrangements to share it undisturbed. There was an air of finality about this particular meal, talk of betrayal and suffering and of death. But there was also an atmosphere of expectation; a sense that this meal marked the beginning of a new chapter in the story of God's dealings with the human race. At this meal, Jesus was not a guest, but the host. And it was at this meal that Jesus instituted what is now known today as the "Breaking of Bread, the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion or the Eucharist."

The significance of the Last Supper is that.. it teaches us to look back and remember Christ's death and all that it means. It prompts us to remember Christ's once and for all, his perfect sacrifice of himself for our sins on the cross of Calvary. Which prompts us to reflect on our own deliverance from the bondage and slavery of sin. And so we are to see in the bread and the wine, not only symbols of Christ's atoning death but also tokens of his nourishing, sustaining presence.

It also prompts us to look to the future. Jesus expressed this forward-looking aspect when he spoke of not eating the Passover again “until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”

“I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” Jesus is looking forward to the great festivities which will take place at the end of the age when he returns and is reunited with his people perfectly and forever.

The church is the bride, he is the groom, and that great homecoming will be celebrated in the ‘marriage supper of the Lamb’, Rev 19:9.

In the meantime, Jesus has instructed us to gather for an anticipatory meal ‘until he comes’. And that is the reason when we come to the Lord’s Table, we do so hopefully and expectantly as he offers himself to us through the sharing of the bread and wine in Holy Communion.

"And when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

1 Corinthians 11:24-26

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