

First Presbyterian Church of Blackwood  
21 E. Church Street  
Blackwood, NJ 08012  
Meditation Notes (Maundy Thursday ~ 03.29.2018)  
Rev. Mouris Yousef, Pastor

**“Christ’s Earnest Desire!”**

Luke 22:14-23

Jesus’ public ministry in Galilee came to an end. A few days earlier, He headed to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover Festival. The public proclamation of the gospel is over. The debates are over. Jesus knew that the hour had come for Him to leave this world and go to His Father. Jesus decided to spend the very last hours of His time on earth with “His own who were in the world whom He loved to the end” John 13:1.

In Luke 22:15, Jesus expressed His longing, His eagerness, His desire to get together with His disciples. “I have earnestly desired,” said Jesus, “to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” In these words, we see how much Jesus longed to spend this Passover with His disciples. The original words of Jesus can be translated as: “with desire, I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” So Jesus was looking forward with great longing to this last Passover with His disciples.

Another thing to notice here, Matthew and Mark specifically say that Jesus “reclined at table with the twelve” and Luke says the “apostles with Him.” Jesus did not invite His mother or Mary Magdalene or any of His other disciples and followers to this Passover, only His disciples. This was to be a private and intimate moment between Jesus and His twelve disciples, a very precious moment for our Lord to be with His disciples.

Why spending such a private time was so important to Jesus? Why did Jesus so earnestly desire to eat this last Passover with His disciples? We could come up with a number of reasons but let me briefly share with you tonight three observations:

**First: It was an Act of Affirmation of His Love**

Jesus spent three years with His disciples. He knew them really well. He knew their sin. He knew their weaknesses. He knew their rough ways and their prejudices. He knew they did not yet fully understand who He was and what His mission was, but He loved them anyway. Jesus knew their sincere hearts, their love for Him, their willingness to learn, and their love for God His Father. Jesus loved these twelve men as His disciples, as His friends, and as His companions.

In just a few hours they would fall asleep while His soul wrestled sorrowfully unto death in prayer. In a few hours, the disciples will be leaving Him alone in the hour of His greatest human need for support. They would all soon desert Him and Peter would even betray Him not once but three times. Jesus knew all those things and yet He loved them deeply and wanted to be with them for this last meal.

The fact that Jesus loved His disciples in spite of their flaws and wanted to spend His last meal with them is a great comfort to us. It reminds us that Jesus truly deeply loves us as His disciples, followers, His bride, and His body. That is why He calls us to gather together with Him at this Table as often as we can. This Table is an affirmation of His love.

## **Second: It was an Act of Fellowship and Deeper Communion**

Jesus said to His disciples, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer” (Luke 22:14). Jesus wanted this final private session with the disciples to fellowship and commune with them. They are about to face the most shattering experience of their lives. Their world will literally fall apart. He wants to prepare them for what is about to happen, as much as anyone can be prepared for such a terrible event.

Jesus wanted to encourage the disciples and to prepare them for the task ahead of them. It is the Lord’s desire for His disciples to spend some time with Him. Revelation 3:20, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.” The New Living Translation puts it this way, “Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.”

We are to do for and with each other what Jesus did for and with His disciples. We’ve got to find a time fellowship and commune with each other. We’ve got to find ways to encourage each other as we face those dark moments of our lives. What Jesus did that Thursday, encourage and challenge us to the core today. We live in a very busy culture. Sharing a meal is so important in the Middle Eastern culture. As family and friends sit around the table, they not only share a meal, but also they share each other’s life.

Luke tells us that Jesus had prepared for this time with His disciples. Jesus had given two disciples instructions on where to go and how to find the place for their meal. Luke 22:13 tells us that the disciples found everything exactly as He described. There was an upper room. There was enough room for all of them. There was a table big enough for all of them. Food and drink was available. We don’t know how Jesus prepared it, but it was all prepared for them. We don’t know if Jesus talked with people beforehand or if this was a miracle Jesus divinely performed, but when it came time for Jesus and His disciples to eat the Passover meal, it was all prepared. He worked hard on that and we are to follow His example. He looked forward to it. He felt anticipation over it.

## **Third: It is a Reminder that this is Not the End of the Story**

This last Passover was celebrated with an anticipation of the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God. The cross is not the end of the story. Jesus says in Luke 22:16 and 18, “for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God ... I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

Jesus wanted His disciples to anticipate the gathering again, not only the original disciples that were at the Last Passover but all of us together when the fullness of the Kingdom of God has come. Revelation 19:9 says, “And the angel said to me, ‘Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ And he said to me, ‘These are the true words of God.’” The angel wanted John to record this and reminds John that these are the true words of God. There is no question that God’s people are going to sit down with Jesus in the new age and the Kingdom of God and physically be with Him again and forever.

Friends, as we participate in the Lord’s Supper tonight, let us remember afresh that Jesus deeply loves us; let’s remember the depth of fellowship we have with Jesus even now as we gather together around the Lord’s Table. And let us be encouraged tonight as we anticipate our gathering together at the marriage supper of the Lamb and look forward to eternity in the presence of God. “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain.” Amen.