

THE LAST SUPPER WITH THE DISCIPLES

Matthew 26:14-30; John 13:1-20.

LESSON 118 -- Primary Course

MEMORY VERSE: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

The Passover

Shall we look in on a little home that was in Bethany, in the land of Palestine, many, many years ago? Perhaps we shall see Jesus sitting before an open fire, with Mary at His feet. She does not want to miss any of His beautiful words. Some of Jesus' disciples are there too.

It would soon be time to eat the Passover Supper. Don't you think they are recalling the time long before when their grandfathers and grandmothers were working very, very hard under cruel men in Egypt? They had cried to God to help them. God sent trouble upon the Egyptian people because they were cruel to the Children of Israel and did not want to let them go out of the land. At last the plagues of frogs, flies, hail, and many other things, caused such great trouble that the Egyptians asked the Children of Israel to go.

On the same day each year after that, the Israelites roasted a lamb, just as they had that night in Egypt when they left, and ate it with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. The bitter herbs were probably the bad-tasting fruit of a kind of small bush; and the unleavened bread was made without yeast so it did not rise, something like our crackers. This was called the Passover Supper. It helped them to remember that God had made the bad Egyptian king let them go.

Getting Ready

The disciples asked Jesus where He would eat the Passover Supper. Jesus did not have a home of His own. He was so busy doing good for other people – healing the sick, and telling them how to be good – that He had not made a home for Himself. But He had many friends, and He told His disciples to go to the home of a certain man in Jerusalem, and tell him, "I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples."

Can we not imagine we see Peter and John walking down the road toward Jerusalem, through the olive trees, across the brook, and up through the city gate? As they walk along the narrow streets, they come to the house of which Jesus told them. Perhaps the father in this home is Jesus' friend, and he is glad that Jesus will eat the Passover at his house.

Many homes in Jerusalem had a large upstairs-room especially for visitors who came for supper, or to stay all night. No doubt it was in such a room that the disciples made the Passover Supper of whole roast lamb, bitter herbs, and unleavened bread. In the evening, Jesus and His twelve disciples sat down to eat. Their hearts were sad, but they did not know why.

Once a Friend

Judas was there, of course. He was one of Jesus' disciples, and had once loved Jesus. He thought that Jesus was going to be made king of the Jews. Then probably he would have been a great man and taken care of all the money. When people saw him walking down the street, they would have said, "Is not Judas a great man?" Judas would have liked that, although he may not have cared about being kind to his brothers and sisters, or giving some of his food and some of his clothes to his neighbours who did not have enough. Jesus did not want to be famous. He wanted only to be good and kind to everyone.

Judas had not told Jesus nor the other disciples that he did not love them now, but he had already talked with the men who were angry with Jesus, and told them he would help them to take Jesus.

Do you think Jesus knew what Judas had done and what he was thinking about? Yes, He knew, and it made Him sad. While they were eating, Jesus said, "One of you shall betray me." He meant Judas would turn against Him. All the rest of them loved Jesus very much, and thought Judas loved Him, too. They were surprised and wondered how any one of them could turn against their beloved Friend, Jesus.

The Lord's Supper

When they had finished supper, Jesus took some of the unleavened bread, blessed it, and broke a piece for each of the disciples. As they had eaten the roast lamb, they thought of the night many years before when God had made the Egyptians let the Children of Israel go. This broken bread was to remind them, or make them think of Jesus – His body which was to be broken for them and for us all when He was put on the cross the next morning. Then He took a cup of grape juice, and gave thanks, and gave it to them. They all drank of it to remind them of His Blood which was to flow from the cross for them and for us all.

Today, we who love Jesus with all our hearts and are saved come together at Church and eat of unleavened bread and drink of the grape juice. We do this so that we may keep fresh in our mind that because Jesus let cruel men put Him on the cross and shed His Blood, we can be saved, and be good and holy, without sin.

Washing the Disciples' Feet

After the supper, Jesus left the table and took off His outside robe, or coat. He put a towel around His waist and took a basin of water and began to wash the disciples' feet. His disciples wondered why Jesus was washing their feet. It is likely that the servant in the home where they were staying had washed their feet when they first came into the house. People did not wear shoes and stockings in those days. They wore sandals on their bare feet. The roads and streets were often dusty, so a basin of water was provided, and usually the servant washed the feet of anyone who came to visit in a home.

When Jesus came to Peter, Peter did not want his Lord and Master, who he knew was the Son of God, to wash his feet, as a servant would do. Jesus showed Peter that if he wanted to be His friend, he must do what Jesus wanted him to do, because Jesus is very wise and always knows what is best. Peter truly did want to be Jesus' friend, so he let Him wash his feet.

Jesus finished washing the disciples' feet, and put aside the towel and the basin of water. He put on His robe and sat down again at the table. He said, "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. . . . If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

A Servant

Jesus came to earth to help every little boy and girl, man and woman. He came as a Servant to you and me. We all need help, don't we? When we are very small, we need our mothers to help us put on our clothes, give us food to eat, and teach us about Jesus. When we are older and go to school, we need our teachers to help us learn how to read. We need Jesus to make us good.

Jesus is the greatest helper of all because He helps us to live good and holy, without sin, so that we may be in Heaven with Him forever. It made Him very happy to be a Servant to us all, and he showed us that we, too, will be happy if we serve, or help, one another.

QUESTIONS

1. Where were the Children of Israel when they ate the first Passover Supper? Exodus 12:27.
2. Where did Jesus eat the Last Supper with His disciples? Matthew 26:18.
3. Why were Jesus and His disciples sad at this time? Matthew 26:21.
4. Of what does the unleavened bread and grape juice remind us? Matthew 26:26-28.
5. What makes us happy? John 13:17.