

THE DEMONSTRATION OF ROYAL SERVICE

JOHN 13: 01–17

Introduction

The disciples had been arguing over who would hold the leading positions in the government Jesus was about to set up (Lk. 22:24; Mk. 10:35-45, esp. v. 41). The discussion was heated. They were caught up in the ambition for position and power and authority. How the heart of Jesus must have been cut! He had so little time left for them to learn that the way to glory is through service and not through position and authority. How could He get the message across forcibly enough so that they would never forget the truth? It was this that led Jesus to wash the disciples' feet and to demonstrate what true royalty is: serving others.

- I. The setting: in the Upper Room right before the Passover (v. 1).
- II. The motivation for the royal service (vv. 1-2).
- III. The extreme demonstration of royal service (vv. 3-5).
- IV. The prerequisite for royal service: being washed and cleansed (vv. 6-11).
- V. The meaning of royal service (vv. 12-14).
- VI. The reasons for royal service (vv. 15-17).

I. *John 13:01 The Upper Room*

This demonstration of royal service took place in the Upper Room where so many significant events took place. It occurred right before the Passover.

II. *John 13:01–02 Royal Service and Ministry*

The impetus for royal service. Three things *drove* Jesus to wash the disciples' feet and to demonstrate the royalty of service and ministry.

1. He knew "His time [hour]" had come (See *Hour of Jesus Christ, Jn. 12:23-24*). He was to die and His time was short. Whatever He hoped to teach His disciples had to be taught now, for there would soon be no more time.
 2. He loved His own, that is, His followers upon earth, those for whom He was responsible. *His own* includes *both* the heavenly host and all believers who have gone on to heaven. He is Lord, the Son of the living God to whom all has been given; therefore, His own includes all those both in heaven and earth who are followers of His. And He loves them all. However, the present point is this: He loves "His own...in *the world*." Therefore, He was compelled to zero in on them and to do whatever was necessary to help them, no matter the cost. He was compelled by love to wash their feet, no matter the humiliation and the degree of abasement required.
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3. He knew His enemy, and He knew the enemy was about to strike and betray Him. He had to act before the enemy struck. The disciples had to be strengthened and fortified, shown and taught immediately. Once the enemy struck, it would be too late.

Thought 1. The same three things should *drive* every believer to serve and to serve now:

(1) Knowing the time, the hour, has come, the time is ever so short.

John 4:34 “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”

John 9:4 “As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.”

Rom 13:11-12 *And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light.*

1 Cor 7:29 *What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none.*

Eph 5:16 *Making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.*

Col 4:5 *Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.*

2 Tim 1:6 *For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*

(2) Loving “his own,” those for whom the believer is responsible.

John 15:9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.”

John 15:13 “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”

2 Cor 5:14-15 *For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

1 John 3:16 *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.*

(3) Knowing the enemy, that he is going to strike immediately and with all the force he can.

Mat 13:19 “When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.”

Eph 6:10-11 *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.*

James 4:7 *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

1 Pet 5:8-9 *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

Note that the same facts should drive us to be faithful to our service, labouring all the time, persisting and persevering.

1 Cor 15:58 *Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.*

JOHN 12:23–24 THE HOUR OF JESUS CHRIST

*Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” **John 12:23-24***

The phrase “the hour” or “my hour” or “my time” is a constant symbol of Jesus’ death. “The hour” or “the time” refers to all the events of the cross and all the trouble and sufferings surrounding the cross. Note two facts.

1. “The hour” is a set, fixed time in the purpose of God.
=> Jesus said, “The hour has come” (Jn. 12:23-24, 27; 13:1; 17:1; Mt. 26:18, 45; Mk. 14:41).
=> He had said some time before, “My *time* has not yet come” (Jn. 2:4; see 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20).

The hour of Jesus was inevitable: a definite period of time, a set of events, a number of experiences that He had to face and go through. As He said, He must die in order to bring forth fruit (v. 24).

2. The hour was to have a definite beginning. There was a set time for the trouble to begin (v. 27), a set time for Him to begin suffering for the sins of the world. There was a fixed hour when He was to begin suffering the pain and anguish, the agitation and disturbance, the pressure and weight, the strain and stress of having to be separated from God on behalf of man (Mt. 20:18; 27:46-49). □

III. **John 13:03–05** *The Demonstration of Royal Service*

The extreme demonstration of royal service. The service was *royal* because it was being performed by Jesus Christ, the Son of God Himself. He and He alone is Lord of lords and King of kings. As mentioned above, both the heavenly host and believers, whether on earth or in

heaven, are His. This is the stress of this point: Jesus knew who He was. He knew His glorious Person, yet He humbled and even abased Himself. Note exactly what is said.

Jesus knew that the Father had given all things into His hands: all power and authority and glory and honour – all beings both in heaven and on earth – all administration (ministry) and rule – all judgment and responsibility for saving the universe.

=> Jesus knew that He had come from God. He knew the exalted position from which He had come and the enormous condescension He had made. He knew the great gulf He had spanned in coming to earth.

=> Jesus knew the splendour and brilliance and glory of His Person.

=> Jesus knew that He was going to be returning to God to assume His former position of glory, honour, and rule. He knew that He was to take His place at the right hand of God very soon.

But note: He, who was King of kings and Lord of lords, who was God of very God, took off His “outer clothing” and began to wash the feet of men. He who was ...

- Master became the slave
- the Lord took on the ministry of humiliation
- the Highest took the place of the lowest
- the Sovereign became the subject

Jesus knew who He was, yet He still gave the most extreme demonstration of service possible. He chose the most extreme act possible to demonstrate that royalty is in service and ministry.

Mat 20:28 *“Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

Luke 22:26-27 *“But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.”*

Phil 2:3-4 *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

Rom 12:3 *For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: “Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.”*

James 4:10 *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.*

1 Pet 5:5 *Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”*

JOHN 13:04–05 GREATNESS OF SERVICE

*So he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. **John 13:04–05***

In the hot, dusty country of Palestine, most people wore sandals and their feet became extremely dirty. A water basin sat at the entrance of most Jewish homes. Upon entering a person's home, the poor would wash their own feet, and the rich would have a servant available to wash their feet.

Jesus was assuming the place of a servant or of a *slave* (*doulos*) who had no rights whatsoever. (Rom. 1:1) He was demonstrating the route to royal service, demonstrating that...

- the way to royalty is service
- the way to power is humility
- the way to rule is giving
- the way to greatness is ministry
- the way to position is serving

Luke tells us that the disciples were arguing over who was to assume the leading positions in Jesus' government when He took over the kingdom (Lk. 22:24; see Mk. 10:35-45). The disciples were probably so caught up in their thirst for power and authority that they were beyond considering anything rationally. What Jesus did was demonstrate to them the way of true royalty, the walk of a true statesman. There is royalty in service — a kingly air to ministry — a real dignity in humbling oneself to meet the needs of others. There is such a thing as royal service. □

IV. *John 13:06–11 The Prerequisite for Royal Service: Being Washed, Cleansed and Forgiven*

The prerequisite for royal service is that of being washed and cleansed. What happened now was critical for every person who claimed to be a follower and a servant of the Lord. The crucial point is this statement:

John 13:8 “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”

There is a deeper meaning to what Jesus was doing, a spiritual meaning. A person has to be washed and cleansed by Jesus...

- before he can become a part of Jesus
- before he can serve Jesus

Another way to say the same thing is this: before a person can ever serve Christ, he must be a part of Christ. However, before a person can become a part of Christ, there is a *critical prerequisite*, an absolute essential: a person must be washed and cleansed by Christ.

Now, note what happened.

1. Washing and cleansing are misunderstood. Jesus approached Peter to wash his feet, that is, to clean the dirt and pollution from the lowliest part of his being (his feet). Peter saw Jesus washing him and the others (mankind) and counted it too humiliating a thing for his Lord to do. Therefore, Peter drew his feet back in objection. Never would the Lord of the universe be allowed to do such a thing.

However, Peter saw only the human and physical act of Jesus in serving him and the others (mankind).

Thought 1. Most men misunderstand and object to the cleansing act of Jesus...

- to the humiliation and condescension of “His time (hour)” (the cross v. 1)
- to the cleansing blood of the Lamb, the Lord Himself

Most men misunderstand the mission and service...

- that He came to wash and cleanse men from their sin and death, from condemnation and hell
 - that He came to cleanse men in His blood that they might be acceptable to God eternally
 - that He came to cleanse men that they might be fit to serve God, both now and forever
2. Washing and cleansing have a deeper meaning, a spiritual meaning. Peter did not understand at first, but he did after Jesus’ death and resurrection (1 Pet 2:24; 3:18).

Thought 1. Today there is no excuse for not understanding what Jesus was doing.

Titus 3:3-5 *At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.*

Heb 9:14 *How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

1 John 1:7 *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

3. Washing and cleansing are requested. Every man should cry out as Peter did: “Lord, not just my feet but my hands and my head as well.” Note that Peter cried for a whole cleansing. He craved to be washed all over, through and through.

Thought 1. There is no such thing as holding back a part of one's body or behaviour for oneself, to do as one pleases. There is no such thing as a partial cleansing. The tongue, the eyes, the hands – what one says, looks at, touches – must all be washed and cleansed by Christ, or “you have no part with me.”

Psa 19:12 *Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.*

Psa 51:2 *Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.*

Psa 51:7 *Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*

Psa 79:9 *Help us, O God our Saviour, for the glory of your name; deliver us and forgive our sins for your name's sake.*

4. Washing and cleansing are thorough and permanent. Peter had just cried for a whole and thorough cleansing. Now note a glorious truth, one of the most glorious truths in all of Scripture.

John 13:10 *Jesus answered, “A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.”*

Once a man is washed, he is already cleansed. Peter had already been cleansed; therefore, he did not need another bath (experience of being saved and cleansed). But note what was needed: his feet needed to be cleansed. As he walked through the dirt of the world, he needed to ask Jesus to cleanse him from the pollution that he had picked up. He needed a localized cleansing, a cleansing of the body parts that had become dirty.

2 Cor 7:1 *Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*

2 Tim 2:21-22 *If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

1 John 3:2-3 *Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*

5. Washing and cleansing are not automatic, nor do they come by association. This is clearly seen in Judas. Judas had been with Jesus, working by His side day in and day out. He was a professed follower and servant of the Lord, and so far as could be seen, he had no glaring public sin or corrupt habits. Yet, he never allowed Jesus to wash and cleanse him.

Acts 22:16 *‘And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’*

1 Cor 5:6-7 *Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast – as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*

1 Cor 6:11 *And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

James 4:8 *Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

Isa 1:16 *Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong.*

Jer 4:14 *O Jerusalem, wash the evil from your heart and be saved. How long will you harbour wicked thoughts?*

V. John 13:12–14 The Meaning of Royal Service

The meaning of royal service. Jesus asked the pointed question, “Do you understand what I have done for you?” Then He demanded two things from His followers and servants.

1. The servant of Jesus must *serve Jesus as Teacher and Lord*. Note Jesus’ claim: “*I Am*” Teacher and Lord. The servant of the Lord Jesus is not just a follower of Jesus. He is a servant, a *slave* (doulos) with no rights of his own whatsoever. He is at the beck and call of Jesus. He does not act on his own, nor does his own thing. He does not seek the things of the world: its positions, wealth, power, recognition, honour. He is not existing to *secure* these things; he is existing to serve Jesus and to serve Him alone. (See *Servant, Slave*, Rom. 1:1).

Acts 2:36 *“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”*

1 Cor 8:6 *Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.*

Rom 14:9 *For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.*

1 Cor 1:9 *God, Who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.*

Col 1:18 *And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.*

John 12:26 “Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.”

Eph 6:6-7 Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men.

Col 3:23-24 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

2. The servant of Jesus is to serve other believers royally and sacrificially, leading them to walk in open confession and to be washed and cleansed from the dirt of the world.
 - a. The servant of Jesus is to serve others just as Jesus did by ministering to the human needs of others in all humility.

Mat 10:42 “And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.”

Luke 10:36-37 “Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Mark 10:43-44 “Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.”

John 13:34 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”

Gal 5:13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

Gal 6:2 Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

Gal 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

- b. The servant of Jesus is to minister to the spiritual needs of others by leading them to Christ for washing and cleansing from the dirt of the world.

Mat 20:28 “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

John 20:21 Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

John 21:16 Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

Isa 1:18 “Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”

ROMANS 01:01 SERVANT, SLAVE (DOULOS)

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God. Romans 01:01

Paul was a “servant” or “slave” of Jesus Christ. The word “servant” or “slave” (doulos) means far more than just a servant. It means a slave totally possessed by the master. It is a *bond-servant* bound by law to a master.

A look at the slave market of Paul’s day shows more clearly what Paul meant when he said he was a “slave of Jesus Christ.”

1. The slave was owned by his master; he was totally possessed by his master. This is what Paul meant. Paul was purchased and possessed by Christ. Christ had looked upon him and had seen his degraded and needful condition. And when Christ looked, the most wonderful thing happened: Christ loved him and bought him; therefore, he was now the possession of Christ.
2. The slave existed for his master and he had no other reason for existence. He had no personal rights whatsoever. The same was true with Paul: he existed only for Christ. His rights were the rights of Christ only.
3. The slave served his master and he existed only for the purpose of service. He was at the master’s disposal any hour of the day or night. So it was with Paul: he lived only to serve Christ — hour by hour, day by day and night by night.
4. The slave’s will belonged to his master. He was allowed no will and no ambition other than the will and ambition of the master. He was completely subservient to the Master and owed total obedience to the will of the master. Paul belonged to Christ. In fact, he said that he fought and struggled to “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” (2 Cor 10:5).
5. There is a fifth and most precious thing that Paul meant by “a slave of Jesus Christ.” He meant that he had the highest and most honoured and kingly profession in all the world. Men of God, the greatest men of history, have always been called “the servants of God.” It was the highest title of honour. The believer’s slavery to Jesus Christ is no cringing, cowardly, or shameful subjection. It is the position of honour — the honour that bestows upon a man the privileges and responsibilities of serving the King of kings and Lord of lords.

- => Moses was the slave of God (Deu. 34:5; Psa. 105:26; Mal. 4:4).
- => Joshua was the slave of God (Josh. 24:29).
- => David was the slave of God (2 Sam. 3:18; Psa. 78:70).
- => Paul was the slave of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Tit. 1:1).
- => James was the slave of God (Jas. 1:1).
- => Peter was the slave of Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 1:1).
- => Jude was the slave of God (Jude 1).
- => The prophets were the slaves of God (Amos 3:7; Jer. 7:25).
- => Christian believers are said to be the slaves of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:18; 1 Cor. 7:22; Eph. 6:6; Col. 4:12; 2 Tim. 2:24).

(This point is built upon what William Barclay says in *The Letter to the Romans*. “The Daily Study Bible.” Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1955, p. 2).

John 12:26 *“Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.”*

Eph 6:6-7 *Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men.*

Col 3:23-24 *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

Heb 12:28 *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe.*

Exo 23:25 *Worship the LORD your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you.*

Deu 10:12 *And now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*

Psa 2:11 *Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling.*

Psa 100:2 *Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. □*

VI. John 13:15–17 Reasons for Royal Service

The reasons for royal service are threefold.

1. A believer is to serve because of Jesus’ example. It would be easy to wash Jesus’ feet, but to wash each others’ feet is where the difficulty lies.

=> Is there someone's feet I am unwilling to wash? Remember Jesus washed even Judas' feet.

Mat 16:24 *Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."*

Rom 15:5 *May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus.*

Eph 5:1-2 *Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

Phil 2:5 *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.*

Col 3:12-13 *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

2. A believer is to serve because believers are not as great as the Lord. We are less than Jesus Christ...

- in person and position
- in mission and work

(The same saying is found in Mt. 10:24; Lk. 6:40; Jn. 15:20. See also Lk. 22:26-27 for a picture of the truth.)

3. A believer is to serve because of resulting joy. The Greek tense is continuous, "Blessed are you if you *keep on doing* them [these things, serving]." Just knowing the truth is not enough. We must do the truth and keep on doing the truth. When we do, we are filled with joy. (Jn. 15:11.)

Mat 11:29 *"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."*

John 7:17 *"If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own."*

John 16:24 *"Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete."*

John 17:13 *"I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them."*

Rom 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

***1 Pet 1:8** Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.*

***Isa 61:10** I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

***Jer 15:16** When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God Almighty. ■*

THE MESSIAH'S LAST SUPPER: THE LORD'S SUPPER INSTITUTED MATHEW 26:26–30

Introduction: The Lord's Supper — The Passover

This is the passage where Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, one of the ordinances which He charged His followers to practice on a regular basis (Mt. 26:2). He instituted the Supper in verses 26-30. Note that the preparations made in verses 17-25 are the preparations for the Passover. The disciples knew nothing about the Lord's intentions to institute a new ordinance in His name. They thought Christ was preparing to celebrate the Jewish Passover. This is significant, for it shows that Christ tied both His death and the Lord's Supper to the Passover. By so doing, Christ was saying two things.

1. Jewish tradition held that the Messiah was going to redeem Israel during the Passover. In fact, they believed He would redeem them on the very day that God delivered Israel out of Egyptian bondage. By tying His supper to the Passover, Christ was proclaiming Himself to be the Messiah whom Israel anticipated.
2. The sacrificial lamb used in the Passover was a picture of Christ, the Lamb of God, sacrificing Himself for man. By instituting the Lord's Supper on this day, Christ was not only tying His death to the Passover, He was proclaiming two new things:
 - a. He was proclaiming Himself to be the Lamb of God who was to be slain for the sins of men.
 - b. He was proclaiming the Lord's Supper to be the new celebration which was to be observed by His followers. The Lord's Supper was to replace the Passover, a man's celebration of God's deliverance from bondage.
- I. The Lord's Supper was given as a permanent ordinance (vv. 26-30).

Mathew 26:26–30 The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper was given as a permanent ordinance.

1. It was while "they were eating" the Passover meal that Christ instituted the Lord's Supper. He was replacing the Passover with the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is the new ordinance of God to celebrate His deliverance of man from bondage and slavery (see *Passover and Death of Jesus Christ*, Mt. 26:2).
 2. In God's eternal plan, the sacrificial lamb used in the Passover had always been a picture of Christ, the real Lamb of God who was to be sacrificed for man. By instituting the Lord's Supper during the Passover meal, Christ was not only tying His Supper to, the Passover, He was proclaiming Himself to be the Lamb of God who was to be slain for the sins of men (v. 27-28; see 1 Cor. 5:7; Rev. 13:8).
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3. Christ instituted the Lord's Supper before He died, not after His resurrection. This is very significant. It means that His death was voluntary. He had not yet died; He did not have to die. He could have slipped out of town and escaped, but He chose to willingly lay down His life for the sins of men. Therefore, the Lord's Supper is the great celebration of the *voluntary* sacrifice of God's Son for man. The broken bread and poured wine picture the *willingness* of God's Son to lay down His life for man's sins.

Christ instituted the Lord's Supper by doing five things.

1. Christ took the bread, His body, and He gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to the disciples (v. 26).
 - a. By taking the bread into His hands, Christ was indicating that His death was a voluntary act. His destiny was in His hands.

John 10:15 "Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father — and I lay down my life for the sheep."

John 10:17-18 "The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life — only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

- b. By giving thanks, Christ was offering praise for deliverance and for a life full of provision, a provision that came from God Himself.
 - c. By breaking the bread, Christ was saying that His body was to be broken and sacrificed as a victim for man's deliverance (Isa. 53:5). This act was so significant that the early church sometimes called the Lord's Supper simply "the breaking of bread" (Acts 2:42, 46; 1 Cor. 10:16). Under the Old Testament the broken bread pictured the sufferings of the Israelites. Now, under the New Testament, the bread is to picture the broken body of Christ (1 Cor. 11:24).

Isa 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

- d. By giving the bread and saying, "Take and eat: this is my body," Christ was saying that He is to be received into a man's life. And that moment of redemption is to be remembered in this ordinance. (see *Lord's Supper*, Mt. 26:26).

John 6:50-51 "But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven, If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

2. Christ took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to the disciples (v. 27).
 - a. By taking the cup into His own hands, Christ was again teaching that His death was voluntary (see Jn. 10:11, 17-18).

- b. By giving thanks, Christ was again expressing praise and appreciation for deliverance promised through sacrifice.
- c. By giving the cup and saying, "Drink from it, all of you." Christ was again saying that He must become a part of man's very being if man wished deliverance. Note: the word *offered* (*edoken*) is in the Greek aorist tense which means that Christ gave the cup *once for all*. He died once and only once, and man partakes of His death once and only once.

Rom 6:6 *For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.*

Rom 6:10 *The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.*

- 3. Christ instituted a new covenant: forgiveness (v. 28). Note the Lord's exact words.
 - a. "This is my blood." His blood was to become the sign and symbol of the new covenant. His blood was to take the place of the sacrificial lamb of the Passover.
 - b. "The covenant." His blood, the sacrifice of His life, established a New Testament, a new covenant between God and man (see Heb. 9:11-15). Faith in His blood and sacrifice is the way man is to approach God. Before, under the Old Testament or Old Covenant, a man who wanted a right relationship with God approached God through the sacrifice of an animal's blood. The Old Testament believer believed that God accepted him because of the sacrifice of the animal. Now, under the New Testament, the believer believes that God accepts him because of the sacrifice of Christ. This is what Christ said: "This is my blood of the New Covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (see *Forgiveness*, Mt. 26:28; see Eph. 1:7; 1 Jn. 2:1-2; Heb. 9:22). A man's sins are forgiven and he becomes acceptable to God by believing that Christ's blood was shed for him (1 Jn. 1:7; See *Justification*, Rom. 4:22; 5:1.)

Eph 1:7 *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*

1 John 1:7 *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

1 John 2:1-2 *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

John 6:54-58 *"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever."*

- c. Now note the words. "Drink from it, all of you." A man must receive what Christ has done for him. He must drink, partake, absorb, assimilate Christ's blood into his life. That is, a man must believe and trust the death of Christ to forgive his sins. He must allow Christ's death to become the very nourishment, the innermost part and energy and flow of his life (see *Lord's Supper*, Mt. 26:27-28).
4. Christ promised to celebrate the Supper with His followers in the future (v. 29). This is the glorious promise to all genuine believers: they shall sit down with Christ at the great marriage Feast of the Lamb (Mt. 22:1-14). It is the promise of perfection and of being a part of the new heavens and earth, of sitting with Christ in the Kingdom of God which is to be established in the future. Note that Christ again predicted His death.

Rom 8:16-17 *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.*

Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Col 3:4 *When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

2 Cor 4:17 *For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*

1 Pet 5:1 *To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed.*

2 Pet 1:11 *And you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

5. Christ and His disciples sang a hymn and departed. Christ closed the Lord's Supper with a hymn. In the midst of great sorrow and perplexity, of a heavy and burdening atmosphere, Christ led His people in a hymn. It was probably the Hallel (Psa. 115-118).

John 15:11 *"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."*

2 Cor 6:10 *Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.*

Phil 4:4 *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*

Col 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*

Thought 1. How do we become sons or children of God and receive eternal life? Christ said (1) by receiving Him (Jn. 1:12), and (2) by feeding upon Him (Jn. 6:53-54, 57-58).

Thought 2. Under the Old Testament (covenant), the blood of Christ was symbolized in the blood of animals. Under the New Testament (covenant), the blood of Christ is symbolized in the wine of the Lord's Supper.

Thought 3. Note the glorious confidence and surety of Christ. In the face of being murdered, He promised that He would sit down with his followers in the coming kingdom. The death of Christ was not the end; it was the beginning of eternal life for the person who really believed in the death of Christ. ■

MATHEW 26:02 PASSOVER AND DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

“As you know, the Passover is two days away — and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.” Mathew 26:02

Note Jesus' words “you know.” The disciples did know both facts. The Passover was only two days away, and Jesus had been telling them for months that He was to be killed. Why, then, was He pointing out facts that the disciples already knew? What Jesus was doing was revealing to the disciples that His death was tied to the Passover (Mt. 26:17-19). The Passover throughout history had pictured His death. Christ was fulfilling the Passover with the shedding of His own blood upon the cross.

1. *Historically*, the Passover refers back to the time when God delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage (Exo. 11:1f). God had pronounced judgment, the taking of the first-born, upon the people of Egypt for their injustices. As God prepared to execute the final judgment, those who believed God were instructed to slay a pure lamb and sprinkle its blood over the door frames of their homes. The blood of the innocent lamb would then serve as a sign that the coming judgment had already been carried out. When seeing the blood, God would pass over that house.
2. *Symbolically*, the Passover pictured the coming of Jesus Christ as the Saviour. The “lamb without defect” pictured His sinless life (see Jn. 1:29), and the “blood sprinkled on the door frames” pictured His blood shed for the believer. It was a sign that the life and blood of the innocent lamb had been substituted for the first-born. The “eating of the lamb” pictured the need for spiritual nourishment gained by feeding on Christ, the Bread of Life. The unleavened bread (bread without yeast) pictured the need for putting evil out of one's life and household. □

MATHEW 26:26 THE LORD'S SUPPER

The words “Take and eat: this is my body” are not cannibalism (see Jn. 6:52-58). The words simply mean that a man is to receive Christ into his life. A man's deliverance from the bondage of sin and death is by *taking or eating* of Christ's body. That is, the man must receive, partake, consume, absorb, and assimilate Christ into His life. He must allow Christ to become the very nourishment, the innermost part and energy, the very consumption of his being. □

MATHEW 26:27–28 THE LORD'S SUPPER

The words “Drink from it, all of you” (the blood of Christ) mean to receive the death of Christ in place of one's own death. A man's deliverance from sin and death comes by receiving Christ's death as his own. The man must identify with Christ's death. He must drink, partake, absorb, and assimilate the Lord's death. The death of Christ must become the very nourishment, the innermost part and energy, the very flow of his life. (See 1 Cor. 2:2.) □

MATHEW 26:28 FORGIVENESS (APHESIN)

Forgive means to send off, to send away. The wrong is cut out, sent off, and sent away from the wrongdoer. The sin is separated from the sinner.

There are four main ideas in the Biblical concept of forgiveness.

1. There is the idea of why forgiveness is needed. Forgiveness is needed because of wrongdoing and guilt and the penalty arising from both (see Rom. 3:23; 6:23; 8:1).
2. There is the idea of a *once-for-all* forgiveness, a total forgiveness. A man is *once-for-all* forgiven when he receives Jesus Christ as his Saviour. Belief in Jesus Christ is the only condition for being forgiven *once-for-all* (Eph. 1:7; Rom. 4:5-8).
3. There is the idea of forgiveness that maintains fellowship. Fellowship exists between God as Father and the believer as His child. When the child does wrong, the fellowship is disturbed and broken. The condition for restoring the fellowship is confessing and forsaking the sin (Psa. 66:18; Prov. 28:13; 1 Jn. 1:7).
4. There is the idea of a *releasing from guilt*. This is one of the differences between man's forgiving a man and God's forgiving a man. A man may forgive a person for wronging him, but he can never remove the guilt that his friend feels. And often he cannot remove the resentment he feels within his own heart. Only God can remove the guilt and assure the removal of resentment, and God does both. God forgives and erases the guilt and resentment (Psa. 51:2, 7-12; 103:12; 1 Jn. 1:9). □

ROMANS 04:22 JUSTIFICATION, FAITH, RIGHTEOUSNESS

This is why “it is credited to him as righteous.” Romans 4:22

In simple terms justification means that God takes the believer's faith and counts it as righteousness (Rom. 4:3; see Gen. 15:6)

When a person *really believes* that Jesus Christ is *his Saviour*, God takes that person's faith and counts it for righteousness (Rom. 4:3, 5, 9, 11, 22, 24). The person is not righteous; he has no righteousness of his own. He is still imperfect, still sinful, still

corruptible, still short of God's glory as a sinful human being. But he does believe that Jesus Christ *is his Saviour*. Such belief honours God's Son (whom God loves very much), and because it honours God's Son, God accepts that person's faith for righteousness. God counts that person's faith as righteousness. Therefore, that person becomes acceptable to God. A person's belief — the right kind of belief — is critical.

Gen 15:6 *Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

Rom 5:1 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Gal 3:6 *Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*

1 Cor 6:11 *And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

Phil 3:9 *And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. □*