

The Upper Room

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[0 : 00] And again for a little to the chapter that we read in Mark's Gospel, Mark chapter 14. And if we could read again in verse 12, Mark chapter 14, verse 12.

And on the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?

And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, Go into the city and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. And wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, the teacher says, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?

And so on. Now as we know, thousands of Passover pilgrims were making their way into Jerusalem at this time for the feast.

But there was one person alone who stood viewing everything and anticipating everything in a very different way to everybody else. And of course, that was Jesus.

[1 : 11] Because Jesus knew that his whole purpose for coming into this world, that the high point of it, the climax to it, what it was all centering in was just about to come.

This awesome, fearful moment where he was to be made the ultimate sacrifice for sin. Jesus was keeping to a heavenly timetable and he knew that the appointed time was approaching.

But the chapter opens with the scheming of the religious men. It's one of the sad things that follows the whole life of Jesus is where we see the constant opposition that Jesus faced from those who should have embraced him and those who should have been seeking to sort of, well, I shouldn't say enhance his work, but to highlight his work more and more and should have been embracing him so that they would have been involved with him.

But they worked in constant opposition to him. And one of the chief reasons why they wanted rid of Jesus, we're told elsewhere in the scripture, is because they were envious of him.

Jesus taught with an authority. Remember, it tells us that he taught with an authority that none of the Pharisees, none of the chief priests, none of the religious leaders could match.

[2 : 36] And they were aware, even the religious leaders were often bewildered, and they were saying, who taught you these things? Where did they learn? Where did you learn? They couldn't understand the authority that came with Jesus' teaching.

And so there was an envy. Pilate, we're told, knew that he had been delivered up because of envy. And so they were scheming, and they were desperate, because time was going on, and Jesus' influence had become so powerful.

And the longer it went on, the more these men were determined to get rid of him. And it's a chapter that's full of contrasts, because you have on the one hand, you have the scheming, plotting of the religious leaders, and on the other hand, following straight on from that, you have that marvelous moment where Jesus is being anointed in Bethany.

And as we remember, not looking at that tonight, but we remember that Mary of Bethany, who anointed Jesus, that she did this in light of his burial.

That's what Jesus says. It really, it was one of the, I suppose, one of the great moments of faith in the word. Let her alone, leave her alone.

[3 : 54] He said, why do you trouble me? Because he said, she has done a beautiful thing. And he said, she has done what she could. She has anointed my body beforehand for burial.

There were several ladies who wanted to anoint the body of Jesus, but they weren't able to. The only one who was able to was Mary. Because the other woman, you remember, wanted to anoint the body of Jesus after his death.

And remember how they made their way to the tomb, with the intention of anointing the body of Jesus. And of course, when they got there, the stone had been rolled away, and Jesus was no longer there.

As they were told, he is not here, he is risen. But Mary had this extraordinary display of faith, where she alone, well, I shouldn't say alone, but it's recorded for us, she alone understood.

At a level that, we've often said that before, at a level that the others didn't understand. She understood Christ's mission. At a level that even Peter and John didn't.

[5 : 02] Mary understood that Jesus was going to die, and that he was going to be buried. The other, even the close disciples, didn't understand this. Even, you remember how, when Jesus told the disciples what was going to happen, Peter was trying to say, well, put these things away from you.

But Mary is here, anointing Jesus in light of his burial. I believe it's one of the great moments of faith in the New Testament.

And then, of course, you have side by side with that, you have Judas, who is in the business of trying to betray Jesus. As we see, it's a chapter full of contrasts and extremes, of lavish love.

And then the betrayal from a friend, from one who was within the twelve. If Jesus' betrayal had come from somebody outside the twelve, it would have been bad enough.

But here is somebody from that group, that inner group. That went everywhere with Jesus, with the exceptions of the times when Jesus took that, as it were, that inner three of Peter, James, and John.

[6 : 17] And this, let us not in any way underestimate the pain that the betrayal of Jesus, the betrayal of Judas, would have caused Jesus.

That's where we're told in Scripture about being wounded, that he was, where it talks about being wounded in the house of your friend. And Judas, remember, he went everywhere with Jesus.

He would have shared, in the feeding, as we were hearing, that last Sabbath, just one of the things, he would have shared, in the feeding.

Jesus would have given, some of that bread, as Jesus broke that bread, and it was dispersed, to the huge crowds, that were gathered there. The disciples were, feeding the thousands.

Judas would have been one, who would have been, taking the bread from Jesus, and he would have been, going around feeding the others. Judas was in that boat, as Jesus walked across the water. Judas saw the miracles.

[7 : 17] Judas heard the teaching. Judas, we believe, was one of those, who went out preaching, when Jesus sent, the disciples out. Judas was involved, in everything, with Jesus, throughout these three years.

And so, it would have pained, the heart of Jesus. Even although, he knew, who Judas really was, it would still have hurt, the heart of Jesus.

because he was touched, with our weaknesses, touched with the feeling, of our infirmities. He was, he was, in other words, he was an emotional person.

We see Jesus weeping. And this would have gone, like a knife, into, into his heart. So there were all these, sort of things, happening around here. But of course, as they were prepared, as the time had come, for the Passover, it's very interesting, this great moment, of the Passover, had come, that the Jewish, religious leaders, who were desperate, to take Jesus, at the very beginning, it says, the chief priests, and the scribes, were seeking him, to arrest him, by stealth, and kill him.

For they said, not during the feast, lest there be an uproar, from the people. So they were busy, trying to work out, how do we get him, but we can't, take him, during the feast, or there'll be a riot.

[8 : 40] But very interestingly, the heavenly timetable, is different. Because the heavenly timetable, is saying, yes it's during, the feast. The religious leaders, are saying, not during the feast.

God is saying, yes, it's during the feast. Because of course, we know that, the whole Passover, was speaking, about the Lord Jesus Christ.

And of course, we know that, was the great, the great event, in the life of the Jew, the Passover, that night in Egypt. Remember when the, angel of death, passed over, every house, where the blood of the lamb, had been placed.

And that, the Lord had, decreed that this would be, remembered by them, throughout their generations. And so, this is where we are, right down, all these years, have taken place.

Generations have come, and gone. There's been the exiles, there's been all sorts of things, we're now, into, as we say, so many years have passed, and still the Passover.

[9 : 47] And, the disciples are asking Jesus, very simply, well, what about us? Where are we? Where will you have us go, and prepare, the Passover, for you to eat?

Because there were various things, there wasn't just the, the lamb that was to be eaten, everything had to be prepared, there was the unleavened bread, there were the bitter herbs, there was the wine, there were various things, and they had to set out everything, and prepare everything, for it.

So, we're told, in fact, in Luke's gospel, that the two disciples, were Peter and John. And as they went into the city, they were told, when you go into the city, you will see a man, carrying, a jar, these would be these, great earthen pots, and it would be full of water.

And that will be, your signal, that is, you follow that man, and you approach that man, and you, follow that man, to the house that he, goes to, and ask, for the room.

Now, it's very, I would say, it's quite obvious, what is happening here. Jesus is giving instructions, to these two disciples. Instructions, that are definite enough, for them to understand, and to follow.

[11 : 01] But, indefinite, or sufficiently, indefinite, so that, everybody's not exactly sure, where this house is going to be.

Jesus didn't say, yes, we're going to have the, I'll tell you where the Passover is, you, Peter and John, go in, go down, and it'll be on the fourth, street on your left, as you go down the main street, the fourth, street on the left, and then it's the fifth house, down there, where you're going to have the Passover.

He doesn't give instructions like that. There's a vagueness about what he gives, and I believe that this was deliberate. Because Judas was there, and Jesus knew, that Judas was going to betray him.

And, Jesus is here, making sure, that Judas doesn't go off, and, strike up his deal, with the enemies of Jesus, too early.

Because, think about it, if Judas, had gone right off, there and then, and gone to the chief priests, and the elders, and he said, hey, do you know this, do you know where Jesus is going to be?

[12 : 10] And he's going to be, all alone with the other disciples. And it's going to be in this house, such and such, down the street, along there, and so on. And if you leave it till the evening, when there's nobody about, everybody's going to be behind closed doors, you can go in, and you can get him there.

Jesus is preventing that happening. Not that, supposing Jesus was taken then, it wouldn't, change anything, with regard to the sacrifice of Christ.

It wouldn't change anything, with regard to, our way of salvation, because, the cross, and the sacrifice, and everything would have taken place, and our salvation, would still be complete.

But just think of how impoverished, we would be, had Jesus been taken, in the upper room, before the Passover. Because, if Jesus had been taken then, we wouldn't be doing, what we're planning doing tomorrow.

Jesus would not, have been able to institute, the Lord's Supper, which came, right at the, close of the Passover. They celebrated the Passover, and then he instituted, the Lord's Supper.

[13 : 28] So, if Jesus had been taken, prior to that, then we wouldn't be meeting, in the way that we do. We'd be meeting, yes, we could still be meeting, of course we'd still be meeting, on Lord's Day, but we wouldn't have, this, great, supper, this, which is a means of grace, to strengthen our faith, to hold before us, at the forefront of our thinking, what Jesus did.

And also, when you think about it, we wouldn't have, in our Bible, these glorious chapters, of, John chapter 14, 15, 16, and the high priestly prayer, of 17.

We wouldn't have, these majestic, pieces of scripture. Let not your heart, be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house, are many mansions.

If it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. All these, wonderful truths. As we say, our salvation, wouldn't have been affected.

But we would have been, impoverished, wouldn't we? If we didn't have these, great, wonderful truths. And you know, when you think about it, if you apply that logic, you know, these truths, when you think about it, these truths are so precious to us, aren't they?

[14 : 46] And yet, there are many people tonight, these truths are such, they're meaningless, they don't care, whether these chapters, have been removed, or kept from us.

There are people tonight, and you say, John chapter 14, 15, 16, they say, never heard of them. Don't care about them. And yet, this really is, in an amazing way, just so separates the believer from the unbeliever.

To us, they're precious jewels. To us, the rich feeding. To us, the very heart of who we are, and what we are as Christians. They help us, and propel us, through this dark, dreary world, and yet, for many people, they mean nothing.

And that distinguishes, those who love the Lord, and those who don't. But, to a certain extent, what we're saying here, didn't come to pass, because there was a heavenly timetable.

And the Lord, was fulfilling, everything, according to, what he had been given. So we know that, he couldn't be taken, before his time. And that is why, the Lord is, in his wisdom, why Jesus, in his wisdom, is giving, both definite, and indefinite, instructions, to Peter and John, as they go.

[16 : 07] And the instruction, very simply is, that you'll see this person, carrying, this water pot. Now, this man. And again, that would stand out, because at this particular time, it was normally the women, who carried, the water pots, not the men.

So, they wouldn't have a problem, in trying to, to find out, because, you know sometimes, I remember, about two or three years ago, when I was away, I was doing something, for somebody, and I was told to wait, for a white van.

This person was going to come, in a white van. And it was at that moment, I was brought to realize, or understand, that nearly every van, is a white van. And it's just, it was one of the most difficult things, assignments, that was given to me to do, to work out, what was the, what was in a city.

And it's, to a certain extent, if every man, in those days, was carrying a water pot, it'd be very, very difficult. You'd be saying, well you'd go into the city, and say, my word, just everybody. But this would be, an exception.

Because as I say, it was the women, who normally carried the water pot. So, to see the man, that would straight away, would lead them. And, again, at this particular time, we know that, in Israel, it was the rule, that if, if people had, say, an extra room in a house, at the time of the Passover, they were to, as it were, let out that room, or give out that room, for people to, celebrate, and keep the Passover, and no charge.

[17 : 41] They weren't allowed to charge, for the use of that room. So, Jesus was, was keeping within, within the customs, and I'm, perfectly sure, this person, I believe this was all arranged, this person was a, a follower, of Jesus, a person who, owned the house, would have been, it was a large house, and there was this large, upper room, which was away from all, distractions, not on ground level, but, upstairs, and so they would enjoy, all the privacy.

And so we find, that the, disciples go, and they prepare, they go to prepare, the Passover. Now of course, we know that the Passover, was that which, reminded, Israel, of that great night, in Egypt.

And that's what the Lord's Supper, does for us. Because just as a Passover, reminded, in the very first place, reminded, Israel, of their slavery, and their bondage.

They were never to forget that. That God, had set them free. If you go back to Exodus, you read of the cry, of the Israelites, ascending to heaven.

Through the oppression, through the bondage, that they were in. There was a program, of genocide, had begun. They were, their conditions, were horrific. And they were crying, to God.

[19 : 03] And God delivered them, and he set them free. And this was part, of what they were, to never forget. And it's the same, for us, when we come, to the Lord's Supper.

And you know, it's possible for us, and that's one of the beauties, of the Lord's Supper. Because you know, as a Christian, we can drift along, we can amble along. We can be out, for a leisurely stroll, where we, you know, sometimes you can go, for a stroll, and, your mind, can be everywhere.

And when you come back, somebody say, where did you go? Well, I know where I started from, and I know where I finished, but I can't, I was, sorry, but my mind was away.

Do you know, we can go through, our Christian life like that. Or go through, periods of our Christian life, where we're just, as it were, marking time. We're just, passing along. We're just going along.

And we're forgetting, where we were. Are we forgetting, as we sang at the beginning, that we were taken, from a fearful pit, and miry clay. Sometimes we need to remember, where we were, because we become complacent.

[20 : 16] And we forget, the agony of soul, that we could be in, of just the, the hopelessness, the despair, of being lost.

Can you remember tonight, that feeling, that feeling, in your life, when you felt lost, and you knew, you were lost, from God. You know, we forget that.

We go on, and say, oh, I'm a Christian, and we, we forget, that God, that God rescued us, from ourselves, and rescued us, from the lostness, of the hell, that was beckoning us.

And that's one of the things, that the Lord's Supper, does for us. It reminds us, where we were, and what we've been, taken out, from.

And that's essential, because, as I say, we can become, complacent, we can, dot the I's, and stroke the T's, and go through the motions, and just, sort of, amble along.

[21 : 20] And that's one of the beauties, of the Lord's Supper. The Lord's given us, a means of grace, to stimulate us again, and to refocus us again, upon what we've received, where we've been taken from, and where we're going.

And so it was, that's what was happening, for Israel. They were to always remember, what had happened. And just as they, remember the angel of death, passed over.

There was this, it's as if God, stopped, the angel from striking, whenever the blood was seen. And, that's a wonderful thing, that has happened to us.

The wrath of God, has been removed. Tonight, here, we have been delivered. The wrath of God, has been lifted of us, through the propitiation of, propitiation of, the work of Christ.

That's what, propitiation is. It's a, as it were, diverting the wrath, removing the wrath. There is now, no condemnation, to them, that are in Christ Jesus. It's been taken away.

[22 : 29] We've been delivered. We've been set free. And so, this is part of, as we, prepare for the sacrament, as we, prepare for the Lord's supper.

And as we, come to the supper, and anticipate the supper, this should be at our thinking of, not only what the Lord, has delivered us from, but, what he has, taken us, taken us to.

And again, when you look at the, the Passover, you see that all the elements, that were used, were, were symbolic. You see the lamb, of course the first thing was, the lamb was slain.

Of course the lamb, that was pointing to, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was, the great lamb of God. But of course, the lamb was also eaten. Because, so we're going to have, a long journey.

And that lamb was prepared, and they ate the lamb. The Israelites ate the lamb, before the journey. And you and I, have to eat, and feed upon Jesus Christ, in the very same way, because we, are on a long, journey.

[23 : 36] And it is a journey, that we cannot, possibly make, or engage in, or involve ourselves in, unless we are feeding, upon Jesus Christ. Now as I say, we can know, the A to Z, of the Christian faith.

We can know, all the books of the Bible, and we can have read, every book of the Bible. But unless we're, really, feeding, you know, I love, watching athletics.

I love, watching most sports, but I love, watching athletics. But you know this, I could watch athletics, till I'm blue in the face. But it wouldn't make me, a good athlete.

I could talk, about athletics, to people, and all the different, different types of, events that take place, and all the world records, and times, and so, that wouldn't make me, a good athlete.

Unless you actually, started to do, until you started to run, or involve yourself, or train, or whatever. And it's the same, you know, we can talk about, the Christian faith.

[24 : 43] And we can talk about, the importance of, steeping ourselves, in the word of God. We can talk, we're blue in the face, about the importance, of meditating. I could preach, every night, in the week, about the importance, of filling, and saturating, our mind, upon the truth, and meditating, upon the truth, and praying, the word of God, and feasting upon it.

But unless, I actually, do it, myself. And unless, you do it, we will not, be nourished, we will not, be sustained, we will not, have the strength.

And sometimes, you'll hear Christians saying, oh, I don't know, what's wrong. But we're not eating, we're not feeding, we're not devouring, we're not, getting the sustenance, that we need.

And we will not grow. And we won't enjoy, the journey. You know, if you're, if you're weak, physically, supposing you feel, supposing you've been ill, and you're weak, you cannot really enjoy life, in the same way, as you do, when you're, full health, and robust.

When you're, if you're struggling, through weakness, life becomes a burden. And so it is, spiritually. If we're not eating, if we're not nourishing yourself, sustaining yourself, upon Christ, our Christian life, will become a burden.

[26 : 09] We're going to be, struggling, we're going to be, spiritually weak, and tired. It's absolutely, essential, that we feed, upon Christ.

So this is what Israel, were doing, before they went, on that long journey. Again, they had the likes, of the bitter herbs, and they had, the unleavened bread. The unleavened bread, of course, spoke about the haste, the rush, that they were in.

They didn't have time, to make bread, properly, and so that it would, rise up, and all that. It was a rush job, because everything, there was this, emphasis upon the haste, of, before leaving Egypt.

Bitter herbs, I suppose, to a certain extent, would remind them, of the bitter, bitter bondage, that they were in, the, how suppressed, they were, the hurt, and the pains, of Egypt.

You might say to yourself, that's a strange thing, to have to remind yourself, of that. Well, a few moments ago, that's the very thing, I was talking about, how important, it is to try, and remember, what it's like, to be lost.

[27 : 16] Because, this was the amazing thing, with Israel, they weren't very long, out of Egypt, when some of them, were wanting back.

It's quite extraordinary, when you think, that in Egypt, they were crying, to God, for deliverance, as this program, of infinite, infant genocide, was underway, and their slavery, was so oppressive, they went out, of Egypt singing, they were rejoicing, they were full of, the wonder, of God's glory, and deliverance, but they weren't long, in the desert, when they were beginning, to say, you know, it was better for us, in Egypt.

They started, to look back, all was a danger, Satan is very, very good, at helping us, to look back, and to remove, the sting, out of the equation, to remove, the bitterness, out of the equation, and just to bring us, to where the good things, and saying, ah, remember, before you became, a Christian, it's a lot easier, and Satan's great, at hiding from you, the feeling, of lostness, what it was like, to be estranged, from God, and so, the bitter herbs, would remind them, of what it was like, or to make them, think of what it was like, as it were, to be lost, and so we have, the disciples, there in the preparing, the supper, and of course, then we know, that tells us, and as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing, he broke it, and he gave it to them, and said, take, this is my body, and he took a cup, when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank, of it, this is my, blood, of the covenant, and that's what you and I, are going to do, tomorrow, if spared and well, we're going to take, of that bread, which Jesus broke, broken bread, speaking, such as, it's such a simple, ordinary, everyday thing, took it,

Jesus was always using, for his illustrative, purposes, normal, everyday things, but here he takes, probably the most, everyday thing you can get, bread, breaks it, but he says, take it, eat it, and as you do so, do this by faith, and reflect upon, me, my broken body, and as you take it, you're, taking in by faith, and, involving yourself, by faith, in what I did, and again, takes a wine, which is, again, such a common thing, take, take a drink of it, this is my, this is my blood, poured out, this is, this is what, what I have done for you, broken my body, and poured out my blood, and we are to take this, by faith, that is why, when we, we pray, we're asking, just these, ordinary, things, that, we have, before us, in life, but they're put, put aside, for a sacred, and a solemn use, for us to, take by faith, and to see,

Jesus, in this work, and you know, it's amazing to think, we're linked, way back, 2000 years ago, to that upper room, what a wonderful room, did any room ever, have fellowship, and ever, walls of, any room ever, well not that walls, can hear, but, if there was any room, that I could choose, to go to, it would be that room, and if there was any situation, that I could involve myself in, I think it would be, to be part of that company, and it would be great, now, if you were able to go, now, back, in time, knowing what we do, but of course, we can't, and they're in the company, of Jesus, listening to these words, of course, that's, these are only dreams, which cannot happen, and, it just couldn't be, sort of thing, but what, what I, and yet, we're linked, in a wonderful way, when Jesus, instituted that supper, that night, 2000 years ago, here we are, this amazing link, into the past, and here we are, it's all tied, into the present, and also, to the future, it's in many ways, where time, is marrying, into eternity, as well, and here we are, we're all part, of this wonderful link,

[32 : 02] Jesus says, take, and eat, my dear friend, if there's anybody, here tonight, and Jesus has died, for you, Jesus has given, his life, for you, you know he has, you have come, to receive him, by faith, you have accepted him, as your Lord, and Savior, he does say, do this, in remembrance, of me, we're told that, if we went to, Corinthians, if we read, there are of course, different readings, we read Corinthians, tomorrow, and that's what, we're told there, this is my body, which is for you, do this, in remembrance, of me, it's, it's a command, that the Lord, gives to his people, and we're not at liberty, to pick and choose, what we do, and what we don't do, with his word, so if tonight, you know, in your own heart, in your soul, that Jesus, Christ, has broken his body, and poured out his blood, for you, and that you are, sheltering, under his finished work, then the Lord's table, is for you, let's pray,

Lord, our God, we, we give thanks, for the word of God, and we pray, that as we've come under it, tonight, that it's, riches, that it's, goodness, will indeed, affect us, we pray, that we will have a hunger, an appetite, for the word, and that this word, will, help us to grow, and to develop, as Christians, be near to us, we pray, and encourage all you people, tonight, oh Lord, keep the evil one, away from us, because we know, that he, he is the accuser, of the brethren, he is the disturber, of our peace, watch over us, we pray, and forgive us our sin, in Jesus name, we ask it, Amen.