

## REMEMBERING OUR LORD

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### LUKE 22:7 - 20

Luke 22:7 - 20 (NIV) 7Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover." 9"Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked. 10He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, 11and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'" 12He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there." 13They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. 14When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. 15And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." 17After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. 18For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." 20In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

All across Israel it was the season to celebrate Passover. Jesus and the disciples were in Jerusalem to take the meal together.

The Israelites have always celebrated the miraculous deliverance from their Egyptian slavery by God's intervention. It's called the Day of Unleavened Bread...

...or the Passover because when God's death angel visited the land of Egypt the first born, human and animal, of every household, died unless there was the blood of the lamb on the door posts of the house.

Those who believed and painted their doorposts were spared. The death angel passed over their house. Of course the Egyptians laughed at such superstitious fear-mongering.

Death came to their homes that night because of their refusal to believe. Even the Pharaoh's first born son, the heir to the throne, died.

We know this was God's 10th and final plague to convince Pharaoh to let release His people. After this final plague the Egyptians were so anxious for the Israelites to leave they gave their gold and jewelry to hurry them on their way.

Jewish people all over the world celebrate this great and glorious event from their history. It's a celebration of their miraculous freedom from captivity and slavery.

This was the celebration meal that the disciples and Jesus were gathering to eat together. An upper room was

reserved. The meal was prepared and ready. The disciples looked forward to the feast.

They didn't know that Jesus was going to use this celebration of God's deliverance of the Israelites to create a new and better reminder of God's forever deliverance. Jesus saw the Passover differently than these special companions and friends.

It was time for Him to fulfill His purpose. His death and resurrection would provide another type of Passover—deliverance of all believing humankind from slavery to sin.

Jesus was eager for this Passover meal (v. 15). Here at this special, final meal shared with His closest friends, Jesus would institute the Lord's Supper. He said in v. 17, "...do this in remembrance of me."

Today He invites us to His special table. We come to this time of Lord's Supper not because we are strong, but because we are weak. We come not because of any goodness on our part, but because we need mercy and help.

We come to the table because Jesus loves us and gave himself for us, and He invites us to come. We come because we remember our Savior's sacrifice on our behalf. We come to remember our Lord. (Dancers: "Oh Holy Night"; 11:00 child. chrch)

## Reflection: His humble birth and His agony.

The night of our Savior's birth was a blessed night, a "Holy Night." But the manner of it was completely unexpected. The Messiah, it was prophesied, would be "Christ the Lord."

He would be the One to whom every knee would bow and every tongue confess. No one anticipated His humble birth.

He was born to a lowly Jewish mother in a dirty stable in an insignificant village called Bethlehem. Surely the Messiah would arrive clothed in robes of majesty, not wrapped in swaddling cloths in a dirty stable.

Even His life didn't fit the mold. He became a refugee baby living in Egypt. Later he was brought up in the obscure village of Nazareth. It was said that nothing good could come from there.

He had the callused hands of a carpenter from supporting his mother, brothers and sisters. At about the age of 30 He became an itinerant preacher with few possessions or comforts.

He was misunderstood, misrepresented, despised. His own people rejected Him. His friends deserted Him. It's important that we remember His humble birth and His life.

We must also remember Our Lord's agony. After the Supper, Jesus suffered indescribable agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. He wrestled in prayer with the heavenly Father, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless not My will, but thine."

Jesus knew what faced Him—the taunts of the mob, the cruelty of the soldiers, the terrible pain of the cross. He also knew this was the very reason He came into the world.

He knew that only He could pay the price for our sins. Only the perfect Lamb of God could pay the redemption price. Because of His love for us, Jesus willingly went to His death, weighted down by the sins of the world.

When we ask “why?” we have to understand that the ‘why’ of the cross is us. His love for us is amazing. Even in His agony, He took time to care for the repentant thief on the cross—think of it—right there the thief was promised eternal life.

Because of our Lord’s death and resurrection we, too, are promised life forever. Not because of any goodness or righteousness on our part—we don’t deserve in any way what Jesus did for us. We are no better than the two thieves.

He did it because He loves us. Because of His righteousness we can be made righteous and receive eternal life. We cry inside as we remember our Lord’s agony. Even God wept.

We must also remember that without the resurrection it all was just an empty promise, just the death of another martyr. But He wasn’t just another martyr. We have a story to tell.

## Reflection: Our Lord’s empty tomb.

Just as we remember His agony and death, we also remember the empty tomb. Can you imagine the despair and grief of the disciples? Their beloved Lord died the most terrible and cruel death imaginable.

In almost uncontrollable grief, two of them gently removed Christ’s body from the cross. They carefully placed Jesus in a tomb carved out of rock. They watched as the great stone was rolled across the opening—the finality of death!

Jesus was crucified—dead—buried! Could anything be more final or more hopeless? But on the third day the tomb was empty. His resurrection body was gone. First the two Mary’s, then Peter and John found the tomb empty.

The stone was rolled away—not so Jesus could come out, but so the disciples could see that the tomb was empty. The burial cloths were still there—Jesus was not! Jesus was alive!

Jesus is alive! Do you believe this? Jesus is alive! Many refused to believe, just as do many today. They leave the Savior outside. They refuse to open up to Him. They do not believe.

But believe it or not, Jesus is alive! The tomb was empty that first Easter, and it still is. God raised Jesus from the dead as proof positive that we, too, may live forever.

Throughout the centuries, believers all over the world give truth to the historical fact that Jesus is alive. Jesus is here today, with us at the Lord’s Supper.

The same Christ who walked in the cool of the morning in the garden on that first Easter and spoke Mary’s name, speaks your name today. (11:00, Serve the Supper). As the choir sings, “Sing to the King,” I invite those who will serve the Lord’s Supper to the front.