

“Table Talk”

Mark 14:17-28

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Communion Devotion

It was around six o'clock in the evening when Jesus and the disciples assembled in the Upper Room. All over Jerusalem, Passover pilgrims were gathering with family and friends to commemorate the Exodus, the night the Jewish people quickly left Egypt in search of freedom and a homeland.

“What makes this night different from all other nights?” the youngest child around the table usually asked, and the ancient story was told, using words and symbols. Each year during Passover this re-enactment still occurs, much like we remember the birth and resurrection of Jesus.

I suspect the mood in the Upper Room that evening was rather somber; there was a lot of tension in the air. Jesus' enemies were closing in on him, and every disciple was aware of it.

Judas abruptly left the table that night, and only Jesus knew why. He was on his way to tell the authorities where Jesus could be found in order to arrest him.

Jesus did not immediately leave the Upper Room, as you might expect. Instead, he continued as the host of the Passover meal. He took a loaf of bread off of the table and gave God thanks for it. He broke it and passed it to his disciples. “Take, eat, this is my body,” he said.

He repeated this with the cup, which symbolized the blood he would shed the next day on their behalf. “This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many,” he told them as he passed the cup to each of them. Like all other pilgrims gathered that evening, he concluded this portion of their time together by having them sing a hymn.

Evidently, the table talk continued before they left the room.

“You will all fall away from me,” Jesus told them, “for it is written: ‘I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.’ But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee” Mark 14:27-28.

You recall, Peter adamantly denied he would desert Jesus in his darkest hour, only to have Jesus rebuke him and describe precisely what would occur. Before the cock would crow twice, Peter would deny Jesus three times!

What do you think Jesus wanted his disciples to know that evening before they left that room and went to Gethsemane? Consider these two ideas.

I think Jesus wanted the disciples to know that life as they knew it was about to change quickly and radically. He would be arrested, crucified and buried within twenty four hours. In addition, each one of them would abandon him to protect their own lives.

Beyond this, he wanted them to know his crucifixion would not be the end of him and their desertion would not be the end of their relationship.

“After I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee,” Jesus told them.

By God’s grace, death would not have the final word in his life, and their worst mistake would not sever their ties. There would be more for all of them.

I believe it was Old Testament scholar, Dr. Walter Brueggemann, who coined the phrase, “The always more of God.” Just when we think the end has come, God surprises us with more.

Is this a message you need to hear today? Have you lost someone dear and precious to you and think your life is over, too?

Have you made a horrible mistake and wonder if you can ever recover and move forward?

“The always more of God” means just that. **There is always more when we throw ourselves upon the mercy of God and ask for help.** Forgiveness and hope are real as the hymn, *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*, reminds us.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth;

Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;

Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,

Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside!

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see;

All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;

Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

Is this a message you need to share this week? Sure, we all do, and I hope we’ll take advantage of every opportunity to do it. Ask for God’s help as you receive the bread and cup this morning.

