



walking with purpose

Holy Week 2020

DEFINING MOMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Holy Week 2020.

You may be wondering what day it is since so many of us have hardly left our homes lately. In the words of Dowager Countess of Grantham from *Downton Abbey*, “What is a weekend?” (Which makes me daydream about being quarantined with Mrs. Patmore, cooking up a storm for my family and me. But I digress.)

I recognize that this has been one of the strangest and hardest Lents on record for most of us. I’ve heard it said that what we’ve given up because of the coronavirus should be considered sufficient sacrifice. No doubt, God has seen all the adjustments we have made. But let’s make sure we aren’t leaving any special graces on the table. There is something new that God wants to do in our hearts and homes this week. And could it be that what He wants to do is draw close and offer us comfort? It isn’t always boot camp with God. He longs for intimacy with us, and when He comes to sons and daughters who are feeling unsettled, insecure, tired and weary, He comes as a balm for the soul.

We'll encounter Him in this way if we resist the urge to coast through Holy Week, and instead, determine to listen to God's voice with greater care. There is something He wants to reveal to us about Himself through these specific circumstances at this particular time. There is something He is saying. He has our attention like never before. Let's lean in and listen.

You might want to start this week with some reflection time. Take a look back at the past five weeks. Open your calendar and be reminded of what was going on in your life on Ash Wednesday (February 26). What has changed since that date? Are you worried about the same stuff or have you let some things go? Have you practiced self-denial in new areas of your life? Can you see signs of some new ways of thinking and new patterns of behavior? Are there already some sprouts of growth popping up in the soil of your soul? Is this growth and progress that you want to keep cultivating in your life until it becomes your new normal?

Let's press in and make sure that the lessons God is teaching us right now are incorporated into our lives in a permanent way. Let's take a moment and ask ourselves two questions:

“What do I need from God right now?”

Ask Him for what you need.

“What do I want these final days of Lent to accomplish in my heart?”

Refocus each day with this goal in mind.

Press on, my friend, and don't give up. May you witness an explosion of God's grace in your life during this most holy of weeks.

Note: The goal for this week is to fully enter into Holy Week, preparing our hearts for Easter Sunday. In order to do this well, I've chosen specific readings for each day that correspond to “that day” rather than unpacking the Easter Sunday readings. Monday and Tuesday, we'll read the gospels from the daily Mass texts. Wednesday and Thursday, we'll off-road a bit and look at the Old Testament background to the Last Supper. This will greatly enhance our understanding of what Jesus accomplished on the cross, which will be the focus of Good Friday.

Things to Remember:

Each one of us comes to this material from our own unique vantage point. You are welcome as you are. No previous experience is necessary. Some of you will find that the questions in this study cause you to think about concepts that are new to you. Others might find much is a review. God meets each one of us where we are, and He is always faithful, taking us to a deeper, better place spiritually, regardless of where we begin.

Bible Sourcing: There are many translations of the Bible; the Holy Spirit will speak to you in whichever translation you choose. The recommended Bible translations for Walking with Purpose are: *The New American Bible* (NAB), which is the translation used in the United States for the readings at Mass; *The Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition* (RSV); *The Jerusalem Bible* (TJB) and *The English Standard Version* (ESV).

Catechism of the Catholic Church: Some short clips are referenced throughout the lesson to complement the Scripture study. Referenced in each lesson as CCC# and noted at the end of each corresponding lesson. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is a catechism promulgated for the Catholic Church by Pope John Paul II in 1992. It sums up, in book form, the beliefs of the Catholic faithful.

Answer Key: The answer key is located at the end of this lesson. You will benefit so much more from the Bible study if you work through the questions on your own, searching your heart, as this is your very personal journey of faith. The answer key is meant to enhance and provide personal guidance through Biblical context and author's insight where needed.

Day One

MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Read John 12:1-11

1. Describe the scene where we find Jesus in John 12:1-2. Where is He? Who is with Him? What are they all doing?

2. A. What happens in John 12:3? What do these actions reveal about Mary's relationship with Jesus?

When Mary anointed Jesus' feet with costly oil, she was displaying extravagant love. The oil she poured out would have been her most valuable possession. "Jewish women were very fond of perfume; and often they carried a little alabaster phial of it round their necks. Such perfume was very valuable...this phial of perfume represented very nearly a whole year's wages for a working man."¹

- B. True love is costly. It involves self-sacrifice. When we find ourselves calculating the minimum that we can get away with giving to another, we are lacking love. Which opportunity to love sacrificially is being presented to you today?

3. What did Judas think of Mary's anointing of Jesus? See John 12:4-6.

"Judas thought Mary's anointing was wasteful, preventing the costly nard from benefiting the poor. In point of fact, it served precisely that purpose when 'the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.' The worst sort of poverty is to be unaware of or unmoved by the Savior's presence, and Mary's action directed the attention of everyone to Jesus."²

¹ William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. 2* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1975), 329-330.

² *The Magnificat*, Holy Week 2020, Vol. 22, No. 1, p. 51.

4. Mary's perfume permeated everyone's senses and the atmosphere of the room was changed as a result. We are daily presented with a similar opportunity to create a setting in our homes that either welcomes or ignores Jesus. How is the perfume of our love pervading our homes? What kind of a tone are we setting in our homes—is it one of optimism, self-sacrifice, joy, and trust in God's provision?

When we think about the state of our homes, we often focus on the physical setting. Our thoughts turn to whether or not it's clean and organized, and maybe how well-decorated. But what really sets the atmosphere in our homes is the attitude in our hearts.

“But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.” 2 Corinthians 2:14 (RSVCE)

5. Mary let down her hair and dried Jesus' feet with it. This was unheard of for a Jewish woman, who was meant to keep her hair covered. But Mary's love for Jesus was so great that she didn't stop to worry about what people thought of her. Do you have this same level of abandonment in your love for Christ? Or are there certain people who judge you for your spiritual fervor, and as a result, you feel tempted to dampen the fire of your love rather than be honest about how important Jesus is to you?

During our Facebook/Instagram Live last week, many of you asked how to encourage your teenagers and young adults to do Bible study with you. I understand that this can be a tough sell. It doesn't matter how winsomely you invite someone if he or she has zero interest in spiritual growth. But I want to encourage you with this—don't underestimate the impact of people around you seeing you with your Bible open. Don't hide away when you do your Scripture study. Allow the picture of you spending

consistent time with your nose in the Bible to be a memory they carry with them. Who knows what impact that memory might have years from now?

Someday in the future we will be able to go to coffee shops again. And when that day comes, I encourage you to do your Bible study there. Let people see followers of Christ, out in public, unashamedly turning to God for direction. You never know who is watching.

6. What caused a large crowd of Jews to travel to Bethany in John 12:9? While some came because they were fascinated by the miracle, what effect did that same event have on the chief priests? See John 12:10-11.

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . inhale the sweet fragrance of Christ.

While the news of the resurrection of Lazarus fascinated the people, we would be wrong to equate curiosity with faith. At times you will hear a person say that if only God would answer a specific prayer or do a miracle, then they would believe. But true belief in God isn't typically born in sensational moments. To follow Christ requires much more than short-term enthusiasm. It's precisely when evidence of His presence and goodness is scarce that true faith can be found.

Jesus spoke of the short-term enthusiast in Mark 4:16-17, "And these are the ones sown on rocky ground who, when they hear the word, receive it at once with joy. But they have no root; they last only for a time. Then when tribulation or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away."

Whenever we are presented with a season of tribulation, we are being challenged to send our roots deeper in the soil. That is exactly what you are doing through this Bible study. When you choose to dig into Scripture instead of entertaining yourself with Netflix or reading yet more news updates, the roots of your spiritual life become grounded in truth that never will change. This, combined with trust in God's goodness, renders you unshakable.

Day Two

TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

“For it is not an enemy that reviled me—that I could bear—Not a foe who viewed me with contempt, from that I could hide. But it was you, my other self, my comrade and friend, You whose company I enjoyed, at whose side I walked in the house of God.” Psalm 55:13-15

Read John 13:21-38

1. John 13:21-26 reveals the two ends of the spectrum in the relationship of Jesus to His various disciples. Describe the contrasting relationships, citing the verses supporting your answer.
2. When Jesus said, “It is the one to whom I hand this morsel of bread after I have dipped it.” He was quoting Psalm 41:10 (NAB). Read the psalm verse, noting the parallels between David the psalmist’s experience and that of Jesus.

Biblical commentator Leon Morris describes the significance of the seating arrangement as follows:

The usual arrangement at a meal was to have a series of couches each for three persons arranged in a U round the table. The host, or most important person reclined in the center of the chief couch placed at the junction of the two arms of the U. The guests reclined with their heads towards the table and their feet stretched out obliquely away from it. They leaned on the left elbow, which meant that the right hand was free to secure food. The place of honor was to the left of, and thus slightly behind the principal person. The second place was to his right, and the guest there would have his head on the breast of the host. Plainly this was the position occupied by the beloved disciple...We have no means of knowing how seating would be arranged in the apostolic band. But Peter was somewhere where he could be observed by the beloved disciple and

he made signs indicating that he would like to know who it was [that would betray Jesus]. It seems not unlikely that Judas was in the chief place. From Matthew's account it seems clear that Jesus could speak to Judas without being overheard by the others (Matthew 26:25). His position as treasurer (John 12:6; 13:29) would give him a certain status in the little group, and thus make the seat of honor not inappropriate. It is also possible that the giving to Judas of this place was part of Jesus' last appeal to the traitor.³

3. What is the significance of the mention of the time of day in John 13:30? See CCC #1851⁴ and Luke 22:53.

According to the study notes on John 13:30 in the *Navarre Bible*,

The indication that "it was night" is not just a reference to the time of day but to darkness as an image of sin, an image of the power of darkness whose hour was beginning at that very moment (cf. Luke 22:53). The contrast between light and darkness, the opposition of good and evil, is frequently met with in the Bible, especially in the Fourth Gospel: even in the prologue we are told that Christ is the true Light which the darkness has not overcome. (cf. John 1:5).⁵

4. As Judas leaves to betray Jesus, setting in motion a chain of events that will end in His death, Jesus makes a startling claim. What is it? See John 13:31-32.

How can Jesus talk about being glorified just at the moment when His betrayal and passion are beginning? Didn't everything in that moment look as if He was sure to lose? That is certainly what the enemy thought.

³ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John, The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1971), 625-626.

⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* # 1851 can be found at the end of this lesson.

⁵ The Navarre Bible, *St. John's Gospel* (New York: Scepter Publishers, 2007), 147.

When Satan entered Judas (John 13:27), he believed that he was going to win the battle against Jesus. The countdown began, and Satan was rubbing his hands together in anticipation of the victory. But he had no idea what Jesus had up His sleeve. We know this from 1 Corinthians 2:8, which assures us that “none of the rulers of this age knew; for, if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” What Satan thought was a guarantee of the defeat of Jesus was actually him cooperating with the plan of God. Jesus was CONQUERING every step of the way. The battle may have been bloody, but at every turn was another glorious victory.

5. John 13:34-35 is considered the first of three parts of the discourse of the Last Supper. In it, Jesus proclaims the new commandment. What is it?

6. What does Peter claim in John 13:37? How does Jesus respond? See John 13:38.

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . Come in your weakness because Jesus welcomes you as you are.

Jesus looked at Peter and saw who he wanted to be. Even knowing that Peter would deny Him three times exactly when He most needed His loyalty, Jesus spoke with tenderness. “Will you lay down your life for me?” He asked. He already knew the answer. Peter wouldn’t be able to even stand up for Him in a few short hours. He recognized that Peter’s self-reliance was going to prove inadequate. But Jesus saw who Peter wanted to be for Him, and knew that one day, when he had learned to recognize his weakness, Peter would die for his Lord. His courage wouldn’t come because he managed to muster up bravery. It would grow out of his recognition of his weakness and inadequacy. One day, Peter would trade his sinful self-reliance for dependence on God.

We should receive tremendous peace when we reflect on this story, because just as Jesus saw Peter as who he wanted to be for Him, He sees our intentions as well. He knows we want to love Him well.

He knows we want to weather the storms in a way that brings glory to Him. He knows that we want our children and loved ones to follow Him. He knows we want to be brave and obedient and selfless.

And He knows how weak we are.

Our peace does not come from confidence in our own abilities. Our peace comes when we realize that Christ loves us, not because of our perfection but because of the perfection of HIS love. We can't ever earn the love of Christ. There is no way we can prove our worthiness or goodness. There is also no way in which we can lessen the amount of love God has for us. Our failures do not disqualify us. They are only an obstacle if we allow ourselves to be defined by them. As Saint John Paul II said, "We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures, we are the sum of the Father's love for us."

Day Three

WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Read Mark 14:12-16

1. Which Jewish feast was Jesus preparing to celebrate with His disciples? Which sacrifice occurred during this feast? See Mark 14:12.
2. The first celebration of the Passover is recorded in the book of Exodus. The Israelite people had been enslaved by the Egyptians for hundreds of years, and God had sent Moses to rescue them. God worked through Moses, performing miracles through ten plagues, which were meant to reveal God's power to Pharaoh, encouraging him to let God's people go. Pharaoh's heart was hard, however, and the first nine plagues had little effect.

The most impactful of the plagues was the final one (the tenth), in which the firstborn of every family in the land of Egypt would die. God gave the Israelites specific commands so that they would avoid the consequences of this plague. According to the following verses of Exodus 12, what were they told to do?

Exodus 12:3

Exodus 12:5

Exodus 12:6

Exodus 12:7, Exodus 12:22

Exodus 12:8

The Israelites did exactly what God told them to. That night, “the LORD struck down every firstborn in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 12:29) but all the Israelites survived. Pharaoh finally released them to Moses, saying, “Leave my people at once, you and the Israelites! Go and serve the Lord.” (Exodus 12:31) They fled, and three months later arrived at Mt. Sinai. This is the place where God took His relationship with His people to a whole new level. He made a covenant with them, promising that they would be His chosen people if they would listen to His voice and keep His commandments. The important thing to remember about the covenant is that it wasn’t so much a contract as it was a declaration about *relationship*. It was God making a commitment to His people that they would be family to one another—He would be their good, faithful and loving Father, and they would be His children. Every command God gave, every instruction about liturgy and sacrifice, was meant to help keep that family bond strong and healthy.

3. Fast forward to Mark 14. To help the people remember their deliverance, God had commanded the Jewish people to continue celebrating the Passover, year after year. Jesus was now preparing to celebrate the Passover in the same way that the Jewish people had done throughout the centuries. Keeping in mind what you just learned about the covenant God made in the Old Testament, read Mark 14:22-24. Describe what Jesus did and said.

Jesus only used the term covenant one time. He only spoke of it at the Last Supper, when He instituted the Eucharist.

4. A. The beginning of the Passover meal marked the moment when Jesus' Passion began. Let's look at which part or role Jesus was about to play in the Passover in the Passion. To explore this, think back to what you learned about the Passover from Exodus 11:4-7 and 12:3-8. That night, what sacrificial death was going to happen?

B. Which part did Jesus play in the Passover? (Note any parallels you find between the two deaths of the first Passover and Jesus.)

5. A. To fully appreciate what was going on at the Last Supper requires a little background into the way people at the time of Jesus celebrated the Passover. The leader of the Passover feast would sit at the head of the table. The youngest person would sit at his right side.

The Passover meal (called the Seder) was divided into four parts. During each part of the feast, a cup of wine was shared. For the first part, bitter herbs were eaten, and the first cup of wine was passed and drunk by all. Then a pitcher of water, bowl and towel was brought to the table and the family members would each wash his hands.⁶ It was likely at this point in the ceremony that Jesus taught His disciples an important lesson. What was it? See John 13:4-5.

⁶ Kevin Howard and Marvin Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc. 1997), 55.

- B. During the second part of the Seder, the youngest child would ask the four traditional Passover questions which can be summarized by the question, “What makes this night different from all nights?” Traditionally, the youngest would be leaning against the leader as the questions were posed. This is the context in which we can read John 13:23. What insight do you gain from this?

After the questions and answers about the Passover narrative, everyone would sing the “Little Hallel” (Psalm 113), and then the second cup of wine was poured and shared.⁷

6. A. The third part of the Seder included the main course when the roasted lamb and unleavened bread were eaten. A third cup of wine was poured, which was called the cup of blessing. After sharing the cup of blessing, everyone would sing the hymn called “The Great Hallel” (Psalms 114-118).⁸ This is the cup that Jesus blessed and shared in Mark 14:23-24. What did Jesus say after blessing and sharing the cup? See Mark 14:25.

- B. St. Paul identifies this particular cup with something in 1 Corinthians 10:16. What is it?

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . exhale and let the weight of the world roll off your shoulders.

It may seem at first glance that all this talk about the parts of Passover, cups of wine, and traditions have very little to do with the things we are struggling with right now. But a deeper look, especially as

⁷ Scott Hahn, *The Fourth Cup: Unveiling the Mystery of the Last Supper and the Cross* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2018), 107.

⁸ Ibid.

we get into the significance of the details of the Passover tomorrow, reminds us that God is undeniably in control. He has had a plan from the beginning of time, and He is executing that plan with incredible precision. Traditions and rituals set in place thousands of years before Christ pointed to Him in a remarkable way.

And God wasn't just matching things up because He likes to tie up loose ends. It's because from the very start, He has been all about relationship. We were created because He wanted to share the love He experiences in the Trinity. He desires total intimacy with us. From the moment man's perfect relationship with God was broken by our first parents, God began executing a plan to bring us back together.

He sees things that are broken in our relationship with Him today, and He is no less passionate about bridging that gap and bringing us back together. His methods may confuse us. We are unlikely to ever understand fully the things that He allows in our lives. But can we trust that His mind is greater than our own, and that He is executing a plan for our good, rather than reacting to a set of circumstances that are taking Him by surprise?

"Not a single word of the blessing that the LORD had promised to the house of Israel failed; it all came true." (Joshua 21:45)

"It is the Lord who goes before you; he will be with you and will never fail you or forsake you. So do not fear or be dismayed." (Deuteronomy 31:8)

Day Four

THURSDAY OF HOLY WEEK

As explained in Day 3, there were four parts to the Passover meal. We looked at the first three, which corresponded to three cups of wine that were passed and shared. In every seder meal, the "Great Hallel" was sung after the third cup of wine was shared, which would bring them to the final part. This was the sharing of the fourth cup of wine, which was called the *Cup of Acceptance, or Praise*.⁹

1. Read Mark 14:22-26. With the four parts of the Passover meal in mind, what do you notice is amiss in these events?

⁹ Howard and Rosenthal, 59.

We read this story without even thinking twice, but a Jew celebrating the seder would recognize that the meal wasn't finished. They had sung the "Great Hallel" after the third cup of wine, but then instead of finishing the fourth part and drinking the fourth cup of wine, they left and went to the Garden of Gethsemane. Theologian Scott Hahn describes it this way:

While it may be difficult for Gentile Christians unfamiliar with the Haggadah to perceive the serious disorder this sequence represents, it is not lost to Jewish readers and students of the seder. For them, Jesus skipping the fourth cup could be compared to a priest omitting the words of consecration at Mass. The fundamental purpose or goal of the liturgy seemingly was missed.¹⁰

2. Jesus chose not to drink the fourth cup when He was in the upper room with the disciples at the Last Supper. What other time does Jesus refuse to drink? See Mark 15:22-23.
3. What insight do you gain or which questions arise when you read the events that follow in the Garden of Gethsemane, found in Mark 14:33-39?

We will return to the mystery of which cup Jesus was referring to in Day 5. But let's now take a look at the events in the garden from the perspective of what was going on in the heart of Christ at this time.

4. The scene in the Garden of Gethsemane takes place on sacred ground. What an incredible thing it is that we are given a glimpse of Jesus' honest wrestling and human response to unthinkable dread. Biblical scholar William Barclay describes it as follows:

¹⁰ Scott Hahn, "Hunt for the Fourth Cup," *Catholic Answers*, Sept. 1, 1991, <https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/hunt-for-the-fourth-cup>, accessed March 31, 2020.

At this moment, all that Jesus knew was that he must go on, and ahead there lay a cross. In all reverence we may say that here we see Jesus learning the lesson that everyone must someday learn—how to accept what he could not understand. All he knew was that the will of God imperiously summoned him on. Things happen to every one of us in this world that we cannot understand; it is then that faith is tried to its utmost limits; and at such a time it is sweetness to the soul that in Gethsemane, Jesus went through that too.¹¹

In which area of your life do you feel alone in your suffering? Can you invite Jesus into that space, knowing that He truly understands?

5. How did Jesus address God the Father in His prayer? See Mark 14:36.

According to the Catholic Bible Dictionary, “The Aramaic term for ‘Father’...was a familiar form of address used especially by children, and thus denotes a level of intimacy between Christ and the Father.”¹² Our modern-day equivalent is *Daddy*.

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence... “God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’ So you are no longer a slave but a child.” (Galatians 4:6-7)

In his book Abba’s Heart, Neil Lozano writes, “What do we expect from a father? Is it not to protect us? Is it not to see in us our true selves—our identities—and to call them forth? Is it not to teach us to think rightly about ourselves in relation to the world outside?”¹³

As Jesus wrestled in prayer in the garden, could it be that He was appealing to the Father’s heart to again remind Him of His true identity as His beloved Son? We saw last week that Jesus was able to

¹¹Barclay, 349.

¹² Scott Hahn, *The Catholic Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 2009), 5.

¹³ Neil Lozano, *Abba’s Heart: Finding Our Way Back to the Father’s Delight* (Minneapolis, MN: Baker Publishing, 2015), 28.

endure the cross without losing His identity. The enemy spoke identity lies over Jesus (you are powerless, you are rejected, you are abandoned) but Jesus never lost hold of His true identity. Remembering who He was and why He was here helped Him stay steadfast on the road to Calvary.

As we walk the road of our own suffering, we will be wise to spend time wrestling in prayer as Jesus did. Ask God to speak your true identity into your heart. May His words mean more to you than the other thoughts in your head. Grab hold of the things He says about you—you are loved; you are cared for; you are chosen; you are no longer a slave, but His child.

Day Five

FRIDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

As we saw in Day 4, Jesus not only refused to drink the fourth cup of wine in the Passover meal, He also refused the wine mingled with myrrh that was offered to Him right before He was crucified. In the Garden of Gethsemane, we heard Jesus ask the Father three times if He would let this cup pass from Him. How are these events related? That's what we're going to discover.

Read John 19:28-37

1. A. What did Jesus say in John 19:28 when He hung on the cross?

B. Clearly, this was not the first time that Jesus experienced thirst. He must have been thirsty after enduring the scourging and the walk to Calvary. He refused a drink then. Why would He express His thirst at this point? Look for clues in John 19:28.
2. A. In John 19:29, how did the soldiers respond to Jesus' statement? Do you see any parallels between this and Exodus 12:22?

B. What happened after Jesus had taken the wine? See John 19:30.

Scott Hahn summarizes these events in his book, *The Fourth Cup: Unveiling the Mystery of the Last Supper and the Cross*:

Jesus had left unfinished the Passover liturgy when he chose to omit the fourth cup. He had stated his intention not to drink wine again until he came into the glory of his kingdom. Then he refused wine offered to him on one occasion, right before being nailed to the cross (Mark 15:23). Finally, at the very end, Jesus was offered “sour wine” or “vinegar”... All the [Gospels] testify to this. But only John tells us how he responded: “When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished”; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit,” (John 19:30). *It is finished!*... Nothing it seems, was missing from his seder. All was consummated, completed, brought to conclusion with the wine the Lord consumed with his final breath.¹⁴

Jesus had said that He would not drink the fruit of the vine until He drank it in the kingdom of God. When Jesus said, “It is finished,” the “it” was the Passover. Jesus had said that He would not drink the fruit of the vine until He drank it in the kingdom of God. The fourth cup of the Passover, the cup that Jesus asked three times to be removed from Him, was His sacrifice of Himself on the Cross.

And with His willingness to offer Himself as the sacrifice, everything changed. A New Covenant—a new relationship—was made possible. A new kingdom—one of mercy and love—was ushered in. When Jesus stepped in as both the priest and the sacrifice, His blood, the blood of the perfect Passover Lamb, was offered to the Father.

3. What difference does that make for us today? See Hebrews 10:19-22.

Unlike the Greek gods who demanded innocent people be sacrificed in order to appease them, God offered HIMSELF. Remember who Jesus is. He is our creator, the

¹⁴ Hahn, 115.

exact representation of God. He is divine. He didn't say, "sacrifice that person over there to appease me." He stepped out and paid the price HIMSELF. He absorbed all the evil and fury and sin and suffering on our behalf.

Jesus appeared before the Father as the ultimate atonement. Atonement is the process of making amends for sin. It's the way of compensating for wrong. Another word for atonement is satisfaction. When God the Father looked on the blood of His perfect Son, Jesus, **He was satisfied**. He was satisfied with that sacrifice, and offered forgiveness for anyone covered with Jesus' blood.

So I ask you...

Do you want access to the Father? Do you want to enter the Holy of Holies and come into His presence? Do you long to be ushered into His heart?

You need to enter His presence with blood, but it's not the blood of animals. You enter with the blood of Jesus.

4. Re-read John 19:31-33. Why was it important that none of Jesus' bones be broken? See also Exodus 12:43-46.

5. A. When the soldiers came to Jesus, they didn't break his legs because they saw He was already dead. What did a soldier do in John 19:34 when he discovered that Jesus was dead?

B. According to CCC #1225,¹⁵ how do the blood and water that poured from Christ's side represent the sacraments?

¹⁵ *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* # 1225 can be found at the end of this lesson.

6. A. When you think back to the Passover in the Old Testament, what did the Israelites have to do with the lamb? See Exodus 12:8.

B. When did Jesus give His followers a similar instruction? See John 6:53-56.

Quiet your heart and enjoy His presence. . . He offers you intimacy which cost Him everything.

“God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8

In his book about St. Thérèse of Lisieux, Father Jean D’Elbee writes, “As if that were not enough, He invented the Eucharist; a God who makes Himself into bread, a little host, in order to descend onto our lips and into our hearts, to bridge all distance between Himself and us.”¹⁶

This has always been His desire—to bridge all distance between us. And what could be more intimate than literally being inside of us?

It is a strange thing to come to this point in our study and realize that no matter how much we are longing for this level of intimacy with Jesus in the Eucharist, we have to wait. We aren’t used to waiting in this way. But could it be that in the waiting, we are renewing our desire for greater closeness with the Lord? Is it possible that when we can receive Him again in the Eucharist, our reunion will be all the sweeter because of this season? That an abundance of grace will enter our hearts and the overflow will be shared with those we encounter?

But for now, we wait at the Lord’s tomb.

¹⁶ Father Jean C. J. d’Elbee, *I Believe in Love* (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 2001), 9.

CONCLUSION

“As the deer longs for streams of water,
so my soul longs for you, O God.
My soul thirsts for God, the living God.
When can I enter and see the face of God?
My tears have been my bread day and night,
as they ask me every day, ‘Where is your God?’ ” Psalm 42:2-4

Our world is literally moaning with pain. Much of it is hidden. But God hears every cry. Our God who tore the curtain and gave His Son to be close to you...He goes to the depths. That place deep inside you that no one can reach? It's a place only He can go. And He plumbs the depths as a healing balm. He knows you intimately. He sees your hidden pain. You don't cry alone. He weeps with you. But He also looks into your eyes and whispers, “You are going to be ok.” He sees the depth of your loneliness, your unsettledness, your grief, your sorrow, your disappointment, your fear. He sees it all. But He is not unhinged by it.

Do you feel unrooted and unsettled? He is your anchor.

Do you feel lonely? He is with you always.

Are you disappointed or grieving? He is your hope.

Are you afraid? He is your shield.

The kingdom of heaven and closeness to the Father is given to His children. You are family. The veil is torn. Access is granted. You are invited in. No social distancing with Him. It doesn't matter where you've been. The Father's arms are opened wide. As it says in Ephesians 2:13, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have become near by the blood of Christ.”

Pope Benedict XVI describes it this way...

Before his [Jesus'] gaze all falsehood melts away. This encounter with him, as it burns us, transforms and frees us, allowing us to become truly ourselves...His gaze, the touch of his heart heals us through an undeniably painful transformation “as through fire.” But it is a blessed pain, in which

the holy power of his love sears through us like a flame, enabling us to become totally ourselves and thus totally of God.¹⁷

Run into the fire of His love. Open your heart to His grace. You are right where He wants you to be.

MY RESOLUTION

“My Resolution” is your opportunity to write down one specific personal application from this lesson. We can take in a lot of information from studying the Bible, but if we don’t translate it into action, we have totally missed the point. In James 1:22, we’re told that we shouldn’t just hear the Word of God; we are to “be doers of the word.” So what qualities should be found in a good resolution? It should be **personal** (use *I, me, my, mine*), it should be **possible** (don’t choose something so far-fetched that you’ll just become discouraged), it should be **measurable** (a specific goal to achieve within a specific time period), and it should be **action-oriented** (not just a spiritual thought).

In what specific way will I apply what I learned in this lesson?

Example:

I will tune in to an online Mass this Easter weekend, having done these lessons and prepared my heart to go deeper in intimacy with Christ, the Word of God.

I will make the following Act of Spiritual Communion:

My Jesus,
I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there
and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.

¹⁷Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi*, n. 45-46, November 30, 2007.

CATECHISM CLIPS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

CCC #1851 It is precisely in the Passion, when the mercy of Christ is about to vanquish it, that sin most clearly manifests its violence and its many forms: unbelief, murderous hatred, shunning and mockery by the leaders and the people, Pilate's cowardice and the cruelty of the soldiers, Judas' betrayal—so bitter to Jesus, Peter's denial and the disciples' flight. However, at the very hour of darkness, the hour of the prince of this world, the sacrifice of Christ secretly becomes the source from which the forgiveness of our sins will pour forth inexhaustibly.

CCC #1225 In his Passover Christ opened to all men the fountain of Baptism. He had already spoken of his Passion, which he was about to suffer in Jerusalem, as a "Baptism" with which he had to be baptized. The blood and water that flowed from the pierced side of the crucified Jesus are types of Baptism and the Eucharist, the sacraments of new life. From then on, it is possible "to be born of water and the Spirit" in order to enter the Kingdom of God.

See where you are baptized, see where Baptism comes from, if not from the cross of Christ, from his death. There is the whole mystery: he died for you. In him you are redeemed, in him you are saved.

LIVE WITH LISA BRENNINKMEYER FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Be sure to join us on Saturday, April 11, at 2PM ET/ 11AM PT on Facebook Live and Instagram Stories for teaching and practical application to unpack this week's lesson.

Easter Sunday, April 12th, Lisa Brenninkmeyer will be sending you a personal Easter message – check your email!

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Answer Key

Day 1

1. Jesus came to Bethany and attended a dinner in His honor. This is the same town where Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead. Martha was serving the dinner, and Lazarus was reclining at the table with Jesus.
2. Mary took very expensive oil and poured it over Jesus' feet, anointing Him. Then she dried his feet with her hair. There was an intimacy to her relationship with Jesus, and also a humble posture. Instead of anointing His head with oil, she knelt down and anointed His feet. She clearly loved Him, pouring out over Him what was likely her most precious possession.
3. Judas thought that Mary's sacrifice was a waste. He said that the oil should have been sold and the money given to the poor. This is what he *said*, but not his true reason for being frustrated with Mary's actions. In truth, Judas was a thief and was in control of the money bag. He would have rather she sold the oil and give the money to Jesus, affording Judas the opportunity to skim some of the profit off for himself.
4. Answers will vary.
5. Answers will vary.
6. People traveled to Bethany to see Lazarus because they knew he had risen from the dead. This angered the chief priests further, and they plotted to kill Lazarus as well as Jesus because the miracle of His resurrection was causing people to turn away from their leadership to follow Jesus.

Day 2

1. The two ends of the spectrum in the relationships between Jesus and His disciples are that of trust and betrayal. The trustful, intimate relationship between the disciple whom Jesus loved (John) is seen in verse 23 as he reclined at Jesus' side, and then in verse 25, leaned back against Jesus' chest and asked Him who was to betray Him. The betrayal was predicted in verse 21, although none of the disciples could imagine who Jesus meant. Jesus gave the dipped bread to Judas, indicating that He was the betrayer.
2. Judas had been one of the disciples; therefore, one of His trusted friends. For him to share meals and friendship and then betray Him was terribly painful. According to author Stephen K. Ray, "In the East, it was a special honor for the host to hand a choice morsel of food personally to a guest. It was a gesture of deep friendship. Judas was given, and accepted, this gesture from Jesus."¹⁸ The Psalmist described a trusted friend's betrayal. This was possibly written by David when his trusted advisor Ahithophel betrayed him and allied himself with David's son Absalom when Absalom set out to usurp the throne.
3. Darkness is not referring to the hour of day, rather to sin. In CCC #1851, the hour of darkness is referred to as "the hour of the prince of this world." In Luke 22:53, Jesus refers to "the time for the power of darkness" as the hour when he is arrested by the chief priests and temple guards.
4. "Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. [If God is glorified in him,] God will also glorify him in himself, and he will glorify him at once.'" (John 13:31-32) Christ's passion and death are the beginning of His glorious victory.
5. "I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35).
6. Peter claimed that he would lay down his life for Jesus. Jesus replied with a question, "Will you lay down your life for me?" and then tells him that before the cock crows, Peter will have denied Jesus three times.

¹⁸ Stephen K. Ray, *St. John's Gospel; A Bible Study Guide and Commentary* (San Francisco, Ignatius Press: 2002), 259.

Day 3

1. Jesus was preparing to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, also known as the Passover. The Passover lamb was sacrificed at this feast.
2. The soldiers put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to His mouth. Hyssop was the branch that the Israelites were told to use when they sprinkled the blood of the lamb on their doorposts. “Then take a bunch of hyssop, and dipping it in the blood that is in the basin, apply some of this blood to the lintel and the two doorposts.” (Exodus 12:22)
3. “While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, ‘Take it; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many ...’ ” (Mark 14:22-24)
4. **A.** The firstborn son will die as well as a lamb would die.
B. Jesus was both the firstborn son of God and the Lamb of God. As the Lamb of God, He was male and without blemish (sinless) just like the Passover lamb in Exodus 12:5; His blood was shed just as the Passover lamb’s blood was shed in Exodus 12:6-7; and His body is consumed in the Eucharist just as the lamb’s meat was consumed in Exodus 12:8.
5. **A.** This is likely the point in the Passover meal when Jesus poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet.
B. “This would indicate that John sat to the right of the Savior and was the youngest at the meal, a position consistent with early Church tradition that John was the youngest apostle.”¹⁹
6. **A.** “Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” (Mark 14:25)
B. With the words, “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?” (1 Cor. 10:16) identifies this “cup of blessing” with the Eucharistic cup.

Day 4

1. Jesus offers the third cup of wine, they all drink it, then they sing a hymn (the “Great Hallel”) and leave. They never drink the fourth cup. In fact, not only do they not drink it, Jesus says, “I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” (Mark 14:25)
2. When Jesus was brought to Calvary (Golgotha), the soldiers offered him wine drugged with myrrh, but he didn’t take it.
3. Jesus three times asked for his Father to take away “this cup.” This begs the question, what cup was Jesus referring to?
4. Answer will vary.
5. Jesus called Him “Abba, Father.”

Day 5

1. **A.** Jesus said, “I thirst.”
B. He said, “I thirst,” so that the scripture might be fulfilled, and only after He was aware that everything was now finished.
2. **A.** The soldiers put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to His mouth. When God had asked the Israelites to spread the blood of the lamb on their doorposts at the first Passover, He asked them

¹⁹ Howard and Rosenthal, 56.

to use a hyssop branch.

B. Jesus said, 'It is finished,' bowed his head, and handed over the spirit.

3. We can confidently enter into the sanctuary (the presence of God) because of the blood of Jesus. His blood opened up a new and living way for us to approach God. Because of Him, we can approach God with a sincere heart and in absolute trust, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water.
4. The Passover lamb's bones were not to be broken, so Jesus as our Passover lamb was not to have broken bones either.
5. **A.** The soldier thrust a spear in Jesus' side and water and blood flowed out.
B. "The blood and the water that flowed from the pierced side of the crucified Jesus are types of Baptism and the Eucharist, the sacraments of new life." CCC #1225
6. **A.** The Israelites were to eat the roasted lamb.
B. Jesus told His followers that we are to eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood.

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