**No 7 Jesus’ supper Luke 22 v 7 to 23**

This event is often called the Last Supper and it occurs as the Jewish authorities appear to take control of events. They have had enough of the populist preacher who is attracting a huge following. He is saying and doing things which the Jewish leaders have failed to do for hundreds of years. On the face of it they are taking control but we must always remember that Jesus has been telling his disciples for months that the end will come in Jerusalem at the hands of the leaders.

Jesus certainly takes control of his group of disciples. He wants to celebrate the Passover and delegates Peter and John to find a room. Bear in mind, that many other people would be on a similar search. Celebrating the Passover remains a key event in the Jewish calendar.

1. Why does Jesus feel the need to celebrate the Passover?

It certainly shows that Jesus wants to observe the Jewish worship festivals right to the end of his earthly life but does this have a deeper meaning for Jesus and the twelve?

Peter and John go off as instructed and find a room and prepare for the meal. But the manner of finding it is unusual. They are to look for a man carrying a water jar and he will take you to a room. This is highly unusual – water carrying was women’s work in Jesus’ day. Matthew 26:18 suggests that this man knew Jesus and a previous arrangement had been made. It is to be a guest room and it is on the ‘upper’ floor. The disciples go and find the room proving, yet again, that Jesus’ word can be trusted.

The picture gives a better idea of how it would have looked rather than the classical trestle table shown in many paintings. After the meal, guests would often lean towards the middle of the triclinium to create a good atmosphere for conversation. Hence the ‘reclined at table’ phrase in v14.

1. Facing betrayal and death, Jesus leads his disciples into a celebration of God’s goodness in salvation. The first Passover saved God’s people from Egyptian persecution.

When we take communion at the Lord’s table, is it a routine or are we acutely aware of what it means?

Do we look back to the cross and realise his sacrifice of body and blood that has bought us eternal life?

The disciples honour the traditional commitment to hold the feast in the city (2 Chron 35:18). The meal serves as Jesus’ last testament. Greeks of the day would have recognised it as a ‘symposium’ where a teacher of wisdom shares his thoughts with his followers. But this was also a practice in Jewish culture.

1. We are told he ‘eagerly desired’ to celebrate with his band of followers (the phrase is a highly emotional one in the Semitic language).

Why was it so important to Jesus?

Is it just that it will be his last time with his friends?

Jesus tells them that he will not drink of ‘the fruit of the vine’ until his Kingdom is finally established. He has spoken about this earlier in the week and he clearly wants to give his disciples some clarity about their future.

One day there will be a fully consummated Kingdom where Jesus will reign – until then it is partial and subject to the frustrations of a fallen world.

1. Are we sufficiently aware of the ‘now and not yet’? We are part of God’s Kingdom NOW but we must wait for its fulness.

How much does this knowledge affect the way we deal with the world we live in?

Jesus makes a fresh symbol out of the bread which is part of the third course of the meal. He takes it, gives thanks, breaks it and passes it round the table. In that moment the Jewish meal becomes a Christian feast – an act in memory of him and the proclamation of his death. The bread symbolises the broken body of Jesus offered on behalf of his community.

1. Today we are asked to do this in ‘remembrance’ of him. The Jews use Passover to remind them of how God delivered them from Egypt.

Are we so much present and future people that we are not good at looking back?

Remembrance solidifies your roots – do we spend too little time looking back at the life and death of Jesus to remind us what he’s done for us.

Jesus then talks about the ‘new covenant in my blood’. Obviously that anticipates what will happen on the cross. But we must not minimise the word ‘covenant’. Jesus is saying my shed blood is the agreement I make with the people I created. It is a promise of the forgiveness of sin, a future prospect of being with Christ in glory and the promise of his Holy Spirit.

1. It is easy to lose the sense of awe and wonder at what Jesus sacrificed for us. Why not spend some time reflecting on the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and give him thanks and praise for everything.

Think about what he was going through at that last meal knowing what was coming.