**THE NEW COVENANT**

Luke 22:1-38

**Key verse 22:20** - *“In 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.’”*

We have come this far in the study of Luke gospel. Since the last quarter in 2022, we studied this book. The key message from Luke gospel is that Jesus, our Savior, came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). At this point we have 3 chapters left, and they contain the biggest love sacrifice ever made. Jesus’s death, burial, resurrection and ascension. His death and burial paid the price for our sins, and His resurrection and ascension insured the hope that believers will be raised to life everlasting. We are encouraged to have deep meditation on these next few lessons, so that we can learn the love of God that saved us and gave us a living hope and purpose.

For today’s message, Jesus, before His crucifixion, shared the Passover with His disciples at a location described as the upper room. We call this event "The Last Supper" or “The Lord’s Supper.” In that meeting, Jesus taught His disciples about the new covenant in His blood. He also warned Judas, Peter and the other disciples about the temptations which satan will bring, and He showed them the way of greatness in the Kingdom of God – serving.

May God help us learn this new covenant which Jesus made with the believers.

**Part 1: Judas, the Opportunist (1-6)**

Vs.1-3 –

1 Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching,

2 and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people.

3 Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.

As the Feast of Unleavened Bread approached, the chief priests and teachers of the law plotted to kill Jesus. Was this supposed to be their focus? No! They neglected their spiritual duty of teaching the Bible, and were bent on the evil quest to kill. Passover and the feast of unleavened bread are two out of seven feasts which the Israelites celebrate every year. The Priests and teachers of the law were supposed to be busy with preparing these events in holiness, and teaching their children about God’s Grace and their deliverance from slavery in Egypt.

Exodus 13:3,8 -

*3 Then Moses said to the people, “Commemorate this day, the day you came out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery, because the Lord brought you out of it with a mighty hand. Eat nothing containing yeast.*

*8 On that day* ***tell your son****, ‘I do this because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.’*

Passover is celebrated on the 14th day of the first month at dusk, and Feast of Unleavened Bread begins the next day (on the 15th day of the first month), and lasts for seven days. These two events are connected, and was supposed to be a holy week in which they remember God’s Grace and be grateful to Him, but they ignored all matters of holiness.

Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to them and discussed how he might betray Jesus. The Bible notes that "Satan entered into Judas" (Luke 22:3; John 13:27), and he became as evil as the devil. He made a deal to betray Jesus when no crowd was present (Luke 22:4-6).

Judas was one of the 12 disciples chosen by Jesus, but instead of committing to serving with Jesus and the other disciples, he sought opportunities for personal gain. In John 12:3-6, we find that Judas was the disciples’ treasurer, and he was stealing their money. Judas was an opportunist. He thought he was smart, but his life ended tragically. He regretted his selfish life, but did not repent and ask for God’s deliverance, instead he hung himself. Uncommitted people often become opportunists like Judas. They seek only personal benefits, and it leads to their ruin. *Proverbs 14:12 says, There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.*

Someone may ask, why was this Judas’ destiny? It was prophesied that someone would betray Jesus (Zech. 11:12-13, Psalm 41:9). Although Christ had to suffer according to the plan of God, the people who brought about Jesus’ death were guilty and needed to “repent.” God does not set anyone up for failure and destruction. By the Sovereign power of God, He knows all things and all people, but because of His justice and love, He allows us to choose Him. That is, we have the freewill to love God or not love Him. What happened to Judas could happen to anyone. It is satan’s work to deceive people and make them reject God. *See vs.3 - Then satan entered Judas...* In Judas, we have a clear example of how a person can be religious, hear the Word of God, witness genuine miracles, and for all appearances seem to be saved, and yet not be born again. Judas’ story is a lesson to both believers and unbelievers, that satan is seeking to destroy souls, but we must resist him. Come to Jesus, He is ready to show us mercy.

Let us avoid the way of Judas, and be sincerely committed to Jesus.

**Part 2: The New Covenant (7-23)**

Vs.7-8 –

7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.

8 Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.”

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Jesus sent Peter and John to prepare the Passover. They asked, "Where do you want us to prepare it?" Jesus instructed them to follow a man carrying a jar of water into a house and request the guest room.

We can see the awesome power and authority in Jesus. His bold request tells me that Jesus is truly the owner of all things. Knowing this, we can build our confidence in Him that He can give us anything, according to His will. John 14:14 says; *You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.* Disciples Peter and John trusted Jesus’s words, they obeyed, and they experienced the ease that comes from having faith in God. vs.13 – *They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.*

During the passover meal, Jesus reclined with His apostles and said, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15). Jesus desired this eating fellowship with His disciples because He knew it would be His last Passover meal with them before He is crucified. He also wanted to have a private session with His disciples, where He would set an example by serving them (wash feet example in John 13:3-5) and warn them about the troubles that satan would bring to them.

The Passover commemorates God's deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt. The Israelites had to sacrifice a lamb, smear its blood on their doorposts, and eat its meat, symbolizing God’s salvation (Exodus 12). This act foreshadowed the complete sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). When Jesus hung on the cross, He offered His body as The Bread and Blood that we may freely accept and have forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

With the Last Supper, Jesus instituted the new covenant by His blood and His Body.

Vs.17,19 –

17 After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, ‘Take this and divide it among you.’

19 This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

Just as the old testament Passover lamb is killed to remember Israel’s deliverance from slavery in Egypt, Jesus is the new covenant Passover Lamb that delivers us from the bondage of sin. We are no longer slaves to sin and satan.

Just as the blood of the old passover lamb was on the doorposts and protected Israel’s firstborns from death, Jesus's blood of the new covenant is upon the believers. His blood forgives our sins and covers us from spiritual death. When Jesus died on the cross and resurrected, He welcomed us into the new covenant of holy and eternal life with God. We can partake in the Lord’s Supper by believing that Jesus is our Savior. It is that simple. When we sincerely believe Jesus Christ as our Savior, He gives us His blood that washes away all sins, and He gives us his body, which is the bread of eternal life.

Jesus wants us to focus on this new covenant; He said; ‘do this in remembrance of Me.’ Believers continue to remember the great salvation sacrifice of Jesus Christ to this day. We may remember through our regular Bible studies where we learn the grace of salvation. Many Churches also practice to share some bread and drink during holy communion service, as a way to remember the new covenant of Jesus our Passover Lamb. Here (NJUBF), we can classify our after service meals as holy communion, because we eat together in the name of Jesus (1Cor.11:17-34). The most significant way to remember Jesus’s sacrifice is by faith. Believe Jesus is your Savior.

Vs.21-23 –

21 But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table.

22 The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him!”

23 They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

At the eating table, Jesus revealed sad news that one of them would betray Him. Jesus knew Judas’s heart, and He tried to warn Him. But Judas was blinded by selfishness. He was unable to recognize God's love. Jesus said, "The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him." Woe signifies calamity / bad omen. It means that person is under a terrible curse. But for the love of 30 pieces of money (silver), Judas was already prepared to betray Jesus, and he was unrepentant. We can learn that selfishness blinds someone to God’s love and leads to woe/destruction.

**Part 3: Greatness in the Kingdom of God (24-38)**

Even during the Last Supper, the disciples argued about who among them was the greatest (Luke 22:24). Jesus corrected their misunderstanding of greatness: "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them... But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves" (Luke 22:25-26).

In the world today, people measure greatness maybe by one’s political office or by wealth, fame, etc. But Jesus teaches that in the Kingdom of God, the greatest is the one who serves. It takes humility for us to submit to this truth. We can learn from Jesus’s example. Though He is The Almighty God, He humbly came to this world as a little baby in a manger, and He lived as a common man loving His people and serving them. In vs.27, Jesus modeled servant leadership. He said; "I am among you as one who serves." In John’s account, he tells us that Jesus put a towel around his waist and began to wash his disciples’ feet, taking the position of the lowest servant (John 13:3-5).

He promised that those who serve others in humility will share in His kingdom: "I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:29-30). True greatness in God’s kingdom comes through humble service.

When leaders have the attitude of servants, they do not argue about who is the greatest, rather, they keep their eyes on Jesus our Lord and constantly humble themselves before Him. This prevents satan’s work among such people and the body of Christ flourishes.

Vs.31-32 –

31 “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat.

32 But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”

Jesus warned Peter and the disciples about satan’s plan to sift them like wheat. Sifting wheat is the action of shaking a sieve to separate chaff from wheat. It is a good farmers’ action during wheat harvest. But in the context of satan, it means that the disciples would be shaken with a lot of temptation and persecution when Jesus leaves them.

So Jesus assured them that He had prayed for them in advance. We can also trust this prayer of Jesus for us today as we face many temptations. We believe that Jesus is in God’s Kingdom making intercession prayers for all the believers. It is by the Grace of the new covenant in Jesus Christ that we can overcome satan.

Peter did not understand Jesus’s warning, so he replied, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.”

Despite Peter’s bold declaration of loyalty, Jesus foretold that Peter would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed. And truly, Peter failed when he denied Jesus 3 times. But we see the difference between Peter and Judas in that though he failed, Peter still kept his faith in Jesus, and he repented.

This new covenant in Jesus has been my source of hope and restoration many times when I fail in my faith. When I did not understand the new covenant in Jesus, I lived with so much condemnation and fear, like a slave of sin. I was always afraid and without confidence to do the work of God. But Jesus prayed for me through the Word of God in *Romans 8:1-2 – Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.* Then like Peter, I found the grace of forgiveness by the blood of Jesus, and my heart was free from all condemnation. I was then able to give my best in serving God’s mission without fear. Thank God Who restored me for His Glory.

Vs.35-38 –

35 Then Jesus asked them, “When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?” “Nothing,” they answered.

36 He said to them, “But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one.

37 It is written: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors’; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment.”

38 The disciples said, “See, Lord, here are two swords.” “That’s enough!” he replied.

Finally, Jesus prepared His disciples for the challenges ahead. He reminded them that while He was with them, they lacked nothing (Luke 22:35). But now, they would face hardships and needed to be spiritually prepared: "If you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one" (Luke 22:36). This was not a call to physical violence but for spiritual readiness. This was to fulfil the prophecy in Isaiah 53:12, saying, "And He was numbered with the transgressors.” ….

In this passage, we learn the profound meaning of the Last Supper. Jesus is the Passover Lamb whose body and blood established the new covenant for all who believe. His blood has the power to cleanse us from sin, heal our souls, and reconcile us to God. Let us remember His sacrifice and live by His example of humility and service. Amen.

Read Key Verse: 22:20 - “In 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.’”