Are there specific areas of suffering or pain you long to be released from? Share those prayer requests with your group.

Next week we enter the season of Advent, when we remember Jesus birth but we also anticipate His glorious return and the fulfillment of our hope,

3. Approaching This Table

> *26 For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again. 27 So anyone who eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup. – 1 Corinthians 11:26-28 NLT*

In 1Cor 11:26 Paul gives us a proper perspective on approaching the communion table. This is a sacred right which brings us directly into relationship with Jesus. We should never take it without reverence, which would be an "unworthy" manner.

Join with your group in prayer, and if possible, share communion. Begin by acknowledging our need for God's grace and mercy. Give thanks for all Jesus has done, is doing and will do. Present your requests for release from suffering or pain as you await His return. Rejoice in the promise of Christ's return.

WRAP-UP

The Last Supper was more than Jesus' final meal with His disciples; it revealed the true meaning of Passover and God's plan to rescue humanity from sin and death. Through the bread and cup, Jesus established a new covenant through His sacrifice, inviting us to remember what He has done, recognize how He continues to work in our lives, and look forward to His promised return. Communion is not simply a tradition to observe but a sacred opportunity to participate in Christ's story of redemption, experience fellowship with other believers, and approach Him with gratitude, humility, and reverence.

MEMORY VERSE

19 And 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."

– Luke 22:19 NIV

Challenge *– Read the four Gospel accounts of the Last Supper. Luke 22, Matthew 26, Mark 14 and John 13.*

The Final Table
Jesus-y Tables– Week 4

INTRODUCTION

The final table for Jesus on earth has been called the Last Supper. This was a Passover meal. For generations the Jews observed Passover as a remembrance of who God is and what He had done in rescuing them from slavery in Egypt. But Jesus revealed that Passover had always pointed to His sacrifice and the rescue of mankind from slavery to sin and death. As N.T. Wright put it, "When Jesus wanted to explain to his disciples what his death was all about, he didn't give them a theory or a set of ideas, he gave them a meal."

Ice Breaker

What has been the most memorable or important meal in your life?

Key Passage

14 When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. 15 And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." 17 After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. 18 For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 And 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." 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. 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!" – Luke 22:14-22 NIV

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Passover /Communion

> *17 "Celebrate this Festival of Unleavened Bread, for it will remind you that I brought your forces out of the land of Egypt on this very day. This festival will be a permanent law for you; celebrate this day from generation to generation. – Exodus 12:17 NLT*

It began as a Passover meal, then Jesus flipped the script. Passover was celebrated on one day as a memorial or remembrance (*zikārôn)* during the Festival of Unleavened Bread; a festival which lasted for seven days.

What does Exodus 12:17 tell us was to be remembered by observing this festival? What does the requirement that this is to be permanent, from generation to generation, reveal about its significance?

> *7 Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch--as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.* – 1 Corinthians 5:7 NIV

At Mount Sinai God gave Israel the Law through Moses that set the terms by which they would be blessed or cursed. This became the basis of the Mosaic Covenant. But Jesus fulfilled all the requirements of the Law and took the curse earned by our breaking of the commandments. Then in Luke 22:20 He declared that a new Covenant was promised through His blood. What did God promise we will receive through the blood of Jesus? In what way does the blood of Jesus relate to the blood of the Passover Lamb (1 Cor 5:7)?

The story that had been told from generation to generation at Passover was now being redefined. A new Passover Lamb was being sacrificed, and God's people were set free from the curse they bore under the Law. At the last table, Jesus told a new story and invited us all to participate.

2. As We Partake

> *16 When we bless the cup at the Lord's Table, aren't we sharing in the blood of Christ? And when we break the bread, aren't we sharing in the body of Christ? – 1 Corinthians 10:16 NLT*

We are not called to be observers of communion but participants. As we take the bread and cup our actions bring us into the story of redemption. It is no longer the story of Israel; it is our story.

In communion we remember what Jesus has done, what He is doing and what He will do for us.

- *What Jesus has done*

> *27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.*
> *– Hebrews 7:27 NIV*

Jesus' sacrifice paid for our sins. Reflect on what your life was like apart from Jesus. How has His gift of salvation changed you? What does Jesus' sacrifice reveal to you about the character of God?

- *What Jesus is doing*

Jesus is at work in the lives of believers every day. Where did you see Jesus at work in your life in the past week?

> *17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf. – 1 Corinthians 10:17 NIV*

Participation in communion brings us uniquely into an intimate fellowship with other believers (*koinōnia)*. We are sharing (1 Cor 10:16-17) in Christ's body when we break the bread and divide it amongst us.

In what ways have you experienced unique fellowship in a body of believers? How has it been different from other social relationships?

- *What Jesus will do*

We don't see the end of the story yet, but each time we take communion it moves us one step closer.

> *16 For I tell you now that I won't eat this meal again until its meaning is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God." – Luke 22:16 NLT*
>
> *9 And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb." And he added, "These are true words that come from God." – Revelation 19:9 NLT*

Jesus was telling his disciples that this was His final Passover meal on earth. But He also indicated that there would be a future when He would again dine with them. What is that future meal called in Rev. 19:9?

> *23 And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. – Romans 8:23 NLT*
>
> *13 while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed.*
> *– Titus 2:13 NLT*

We long for the time we will participate with Jesus in His future glory, but for now we are living on this earth where we experience pain and suffering. Paul says we groan as we long to join in the resurrection in new bodies free from the effects of sin and decay.