

Unit 31, Session 1: Preparation for Passover

Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-23

Christ Connection:

Preschool: God made a covenant with His people many years before. The people promised to love and obey God, and He promised to be their God. Sadly, God's people did not love and obey Him. They broke the covenant. God sent Jesus to make a new, even better covenant. God would forgive His people for their sins, and God would help them obey Him.

Kids: Passover is a special meal to celebrate how God delivered His people from Egypt. Only God's covenant people could observe Passover (Ex. 12:43-49). But God's people did not keep the covenant. God sent Jesus to earth to make a new covenant. As Jesus' disciples prepared for Passover, Jesus prepared to die. On the cross, Jesus brought forgiveness and made the way for people to know and love God again.

Adult Connection Point: Sacrifice is a major theme of the Bible. The offerings in their many forms point ultimately to Christ's final sacrifice on the cross as an atonement for our sins (see Heb. 10:1-18). Among the sacrifices in the Old Testament that point to Jesus' death is the the Passover meal (Ex. 12:43-50). Even though the blood of Passover lambs protected the Israelites' firstborns from death and led to their deliverance from the land Egypt, neither these lambs nor any of the slain animals of this period provided full and final redemption for the Israelites (Heb. 10:4). Yes, they were delivered from the oppression of Egyptian rule, but the greater bondage that is sin remained. The people not only needed transfer from a hostile land but also transformation from the hostility within—hence the need for a new covenant that ensures inner transformation (see Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:26-28).

At the Last Supper, Jesus stated, "This cup is the new covenant established by My blood; it is shed for you" (Luke 22:20). With this statement, Jesus not only announced a new tradition for His people—namely, the Lord's Supper—but He also interpreted for His disciples what His impending death meant. A new way for humanity to relate to God was coming about, the new and better covenant promised in the Prophets. Jesus' died to bring about the reality of these new covenant promises, and among these promises is that God's people would be able to obey His commandments in a way that they could not do previously.

Therefore, Christ not only lived, died, and rose so that we could be forgiven but also so that we by the power of the Spirit could obey. And the pattern for obedience often presented in the New Testament is that of dying or being crucified with Christ (see Rom. 6:5-8; 2 Cor. 4:10; 1 Pet. 2:21-24; 4:1-2). The path to life for the Christian ironically is through death. Because of our membership in the new covenant, we have the ability to pursue such a counter-intuitive lifestyle.

As we follow Christ, we follow Him toward suffering. Some suffering is the result of external forces, such as persecution, sickness, etc. We will consider that aspect shortly. For now, we will focus on the internal conflict with residual sin.

Believers are called to follow Christ in radical commitment to cease following sin and instead to be ruled by the will of God. Because sin has been defeated and we have been released from its tyrannical rule, we are no longer to chase after it but instead to run hard after Christ. So, in the sacrifices throughout the Bible, we see

both the provision for our salvation in Christ and the pattern for our sanctification in Christ.

Materials: blanket or tablecloth, food, grape juice

Direct your kids to find a tablecloth, prepare the food and pour drinks for your Passover celebration. Hold your Passover meal on the floor in one of your rooms.

After you have enjoyed your feast, review the Bible story.

Ask: "Why did God give special instructions about the Passover and what was its meaning?"

Remind your kids that the Passover celebration helped God's people remember when He rescued them from slavery in Egypt. God told them to take the blood of a lamb and cover their entrance with it. Those who did were saved. Jesus told his disciples to get ready for the Passover.

Ask: "What were some things Jesus said during the Passover meal?"

Recall how Jesus told his disciples this was his last Passover, and He would soon suffer. He told them the bread was like His body soon to be broken. The drink was like his blood soon to be shed. He would soon rescue all people from their sin. He would begin a new covenant because God's people did not keep the old covenant. Those who believed He died on the cross for all sin and was resurrected would have eternal life with Jesus.

Hold hands and pray, thanking God for starting a new covenant. Thank him that Jesus brought forgiveness and a way for people to know and love God again.