

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Mark 14: 12-26

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time for us to read the Bible again. Today, we will continue to read Mark, Chapter 14, verses 12 through 26.

Yesterday we read about Simon the leper preparing a feast for Jesus two days before the Passover. Mary of Bethany seized the opportunity to break an alabaster flask containing costly spikenard ointment and anointed Jesus with it. This act of love by Mary was considered wasteful by Judas Iscariot.

Jesus, knowing that Mary understood His prediction of His impending death and resurrection, told His disciples, and also tells every saint today, that wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what Mary has done will also be told as a memorial to her. The fragrance of love for the Lord emitted by Mary inspires every true saint who recognizes the value of Jesus, and this fragrance brings life. However, for those who follow the Lord with different motives and purposes, like Judas Iscariot, this fragrance will bring death. Therefore, after the feast, Judas went to the chief priests and agreed to betray Jesus to them.

Verse 12: "Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover lamb, His disciples said to Him, 'Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?'"

The Passover falls after the 14th day of the first month in the Jewish calendar, followed by seven days of Unleavened Bread. The Passover established by the high priest and the council was on the Friday of the week of the Passion. On that day, the Jews slaughtered the Passover lamb to prepare for the Passover feast. The day

the Jews slaughtered the Passover lamb was also the day ordained by God for Jesus to be crucified. Indeed, Jesus was crucified on the Friday of the Passion week.

Yesterday we also mentioned that Jesus and His disciples should be celebrating the Passover of the Essenes, which falls on Tuesday of the Passion week. In fact, Jesus was very busy on this day. In the morning, He went to the temple and debated with the chief priests, scribes, elders, Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees one by one. Afterward, Jesus left the temple with His disciples and went to the Mount of Olives. There, Jesus spoke to His disciples about the prophecies of the Mount of Olives. On this very evening, Jesus and His disciples were to eat the Passover feast. So, it should have been when they were coming down from the Mount of Olives that the disciples came to ask Jesus where to prepare for the Passover feast.

Verse 13: "And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, 'Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him.'"

Jesus sent out two of His disciples, as mentioned in Luke 22:8, revealing them to be Peter and John. Jesus instructed them to go into the city, where they would encounter a man carrying a pitcher of water, and they were to follow him. This was a remarkable sign, as it was uncommon for men to carry water in those times. In Israel, drawing water was typically a task for women. Thus, the sight of a man carrying a pitcher of water was significant and served as a distinct marker.

Among the Essenes, many adhered to celibacy and led highly disciplined lives, dedicated to God's word and various commandments, earnestly awaiting the Messiah. They abstained from marriage and worldly distractions. The sight of a man carrying water indicated that they were likely in the vicinity of where the Essenes resided. This further confirms that Jesus and His disciples were observing the Passover of the Essenes. Seeing a man carrying water was not an unusual occurrence in that area. When Jesus said, "Follow him," Mark's emphasis on this detail highlights that God had already prepared the way, and Jesus simply obeyed the will of the Father.

Verse 14: "Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, 'Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?'"

According to biblical scholars, this master of the house is believed to be the parents of Mark. Mark's mother, Mary, had hosted Jesus and His disciples on several occasions. Therefore, it would not be surprising for the Passover meal to take place at Mark's house, but Jesus does not explicitly state this. Mark, in his account, also refrains from adding any explanation, as if recording these events from a purely objective perspective. This strongly emphasizes Jesus coming to earth to fulfill redemption according to the will of the Father.

Jesus, the second person of the Holy Trinity, is divine and thus has the authority to act independently. However, the Son willingly chooses to submit completely to the will and plan of the Father. Reflecting on ourselves, lacking wisdom and power, yet often inclined to assert our own will and not submit to God's guidance, we frequently find ourselves in trouble. Let us pray for God's mercy and help, that we may all be willing to set aside our own desires.

Verse 15: "Then He will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us."

The large upper room mentioned here, furnished and prepared, is the renowned Cenacle/Room of the Last Supper. Today, if you join an educational tour to Israel and visit Jerusalem, the Cenacle is a must-visit site. It is where Jesus and His disciples had their last supper. Competent guides often provide some bread for sharing here and narrate the story of the Last Supper. Jesus instructed Peter and John to make preparations for the Passover meal there.

Verse 16: "So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover."

We witness God's meticulous preparation. His disciples went out, entered Jerusalem, and found everything exactly as Jesus had foretold; thus, they made preparations for the Passover. Here, we observe that when we are willing to obey God, our lives are light and easy. Conversely, if we insist on taking charge of everything, we often encounter various difficulties. Peter and John then made preparations for the Passover meal there, though it does not mention them sacrificing the lamb. Therefore, during the last supper, there was bread and a cup, but no lamb's meat because Jesus Himself is the true Passover Lamb. Jesus and His disciples reclined at the table together.

Verse 17: "In the evening, He came with the twelve."

As evening approached, it was time for the Passover meal, and Jesus came with the twelve disciples. They each took their places and began to eat the Passover meal. Regarding this last supper, the accounts in the synoptic Gospels are quite brief. Thankfully, thirty years later, when John wrote the Gospel of John, He added many details, not only about the Passover meal but also about the interactions among the disciples. Especially after Judas left, Jesus had many teachings for the disciples, recorded in John 14, 15, and 16, and He also prayed for the disciples, recorded in John 17. This shows us that the last supper was actually a spiritual feast. However, Mark portrays Jesus as a servant serving others, so Mark does not record the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Verse 18: "Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me.'"

As they were eating, what should have been a joyful feast, Jesus knew what was about to happen. Jesus Christ came to earth to accomplish redemption; His crucifixion was God's will and plan, something that had to happen. But Jesus couldn't let go of the fact that Judas, who was about to betray Him, was among them. Jesus truly did not want to see his downfall and was willing to give him a

chance, hoping he might change his ways. Therefore, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me." In the Gospel of John, John specifically quotes from Psalm 41:9, saying, "Who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me." Jesus was reminding Judas of this.

Verse 19, 20: "And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, 'Is it I?' and another said, 'Is it I?' He answered and said to them, 'It is one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish.'"

Upon hearing Jesus' words, "they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, 'Is it I?'" Jesus' response was very direct. He said, "It is one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish." At a feast, there would typically be a dish of sauce made from fruit and vinegar, and each person would tear off a piece of bread and dip it into the sauce to eat. Perhaps when Jesus spoke, Judas's hand and Jesus's hand were both dipping bread into the sauce. While others may not have noticed, Judas himself must have been aware of it.

Verse 21: "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born."

Jesus continued, "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him." There are numerous prophecies in the scriptures regarding Jesus' suffering. Psalm 22 speaks of Christ's suffering, and Isaiah 53 is a prophecy of Christ's passion. All these prophecies pointing to Jesus will surely be fulfilled; it is Jesus' destiny, and He is willing to obey. However, Jesus warns of woe to the one who betrays Him; it would have been better for that person not to have been born. Here, Jesus is not concerned about His own safety but about the soul of the one who betrays Him. The one who betrays Jesus will face a terribly tragic end; it would have been better for him not to be born. This is a strong warning from Jesus to Judas. Unfortunately, Judas remained hardened and unwilling to repent.

It is likely that shortly after these events, as recorded in John 13:26-30, "Jesus answered, 'It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.' And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, 'What you do, do quickly.' But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, 'Buy those things we need for the feast,' or that he should give something to the poor. Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night."

In this dialogue, both Jesus and Judas were aware, but the disciples seemed oblivious, unable to understand the conversation between Jesus and Judas. It wasn't until after Judas left that the Passover meal of Jesus and the disciples came to an end. Jesus then took this opportunity to institute the Lord's Supper, which replaced the Passover meal of the Old Covenant, becoming a regular gathering for New Covenant saints to come together weekly to remember the Lord and partake in His supper.

Verse 22: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.'"

As they were eating, Jesus took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the disciples. The disciples took it and ate. This bread symbolized Jesus' body, broken for us. We understand that Jesus was born of Mary through the Holy Spirit. Outwardly, Jesus appeared as a man, but within, He was fully divine. As His body was broken for us, the divine life within was released. The broken body, the broken bread, signifies that we should take and eat. As we partake of the bread outwardly, we receive the supply of life inwardly. This life supply transforms us into members of Christ's body, and when every member is joined together, it constitutes the body of Jesus Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 11:24, we are told that partaking of the bread is to remember the Lord. What is the best way to remember the Lord? It is by partaking of the bread, allowing our lives to grow, and enabling the church to become the body of Christ. The Lord has told His disciples more than once, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger." (John 6:35) Often, we have a mistaken notion that serving the Lord in various capacities is what matters most, but what the Lord cares about is that we partake of Him. How do we partake of the Lord's body? Because the words spoken by Jesus are the bread of life for us. When we diligently read His words, taking them as our spiritual food, our lives can grow. This is the best way to remember the Lord.

Verse 23: "Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it."

The cup symbolizes what people deserve. After humanity fell into sin, the portion of sinners was originally the cup of God's wrath. Jesus Christ drank this cup of wrath for us on the cross. He was judged by God on the cross, and because Jesus drank that bitter cup, we can now drink the cup of salvation from God. As we eat the bread of the Lord and drink from His cup, the bread brings life's supply, and the cup brings the blessing of salvation.

Verse 24: "And He said to them, 'This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.'"

Indeed, this cup is the blood of the covenant established by God, shed for many. Jesus shed precious blood on the cross, which speaks of Jesus Christ having already borne the punishment for our sins. This blood is the guarantee of God's forgiveness for us. And this blood also becomes a covenant, the new covenant established

between God and humanity. As long as people are covered by the blood, God will no longer remember the sins they have committed.

In setting up the Lord's Supper here, every Sunday when we come before the bread and cup, seeing the bread and cup separately, the bread symbolizes Jesus' body, and the cup is the precious blood shed by Jesus. The separation of body and blood signifies Jesus Christ's death for us. In 1 Corinthians 11:26, it says, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." Eating the bread and drinking the cup proclaims the Lord's death, which is the best memorial to Him. As we partake of the Lord's body and blood, we allow Christ's death to operate within us, to put to death the evil desires within our flesh. As we proclaim the Lord's death, we also eagerly await His return.

Verse 25: "Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Jesus knew that Judas had gone out to find someone to apprehend Him. This was the last supper, and simultaneously, He established a new feast. He instructed the disciples to do this in remembrance of Him, and He Himself would no longer drink from the fruit of the vine until the day when He drinks it new in the kingdom of God. Here, it is revealed that Jesus has completed His earthly ministry, and He is about to ascend to heaven to sit at the right hand of God, awaiting the growth and maturity of the church. One day, Christ will come again to establish the kingdom of God on earth. At that time, everything will be made new, and He will come to receive His bride. Then, He will enjoy the new blessings that God has prepared together with the church.

Verse 26: "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

After eating the Passover meal with the disciples, and following Judas's departure, Jesus established the Lord's Supper. After finishing the meal, they sang hymns together. According to Jewish custom, they likely sang Psalms 113 to 118 as they walked towards the Mount of Olives.

Dear brothers and sisters, at the last supper, the disciples seemed unaware of what was about to happen, but Jesus was very clear. Not only did He partake in the Passover meal with the disciples, but after Judas left, He established the Lord's Supper anew. He instructed us to eat His bread and drink His cup, until His return. So, each one of us can value what the Lord values. This divine appointment, to come before the bread and cup every week with the saints, to remember the Lord together.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You for Your body broken for us, for Your precious blood shed for us, for establishing a new covenant so we can enjoy salvation and receive the supply of life. Bless the church I am in, may it be a church after Your own heart, gathering together often to remember You, and obeying Your commandments so the church may be built up, ready to welcome Your return. Bless the church I am in, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ.