

This is Love, Week 1

Small Group Discussion Guide, week of March 15th

MAR 15TH SERMON SUMMARY

Passover

The first Passover (Exodus 12:1-13) was a demonstration of God's power. It was a highlight of Hebrew history, and God wanted his people to remember what He had done, and celebrate it every year. Israel failed to do so, worshipping idols and rarely celebrating Passover.

By the time of Jesus, it had been re-instated, but Jesus took the Passover meal (Luke 22:14-21) and gave it a different twist, which we celebrate in the Lord's Supper (communion).

- The meaning of the elements: the bread is His body broken for you, the cup is His blood poured out *for you*.
- The New Covenant replaces the Old Covenant: not conditional, not based on our obedience, but based on the blood of Jesus. God passes over our sin and does not hold them against us because Jesus died for us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

I. INTRODUCTION: Briefly share a high and a low from the last week or two.

II. THINK AND REFLECT.

1. The events of the first Passover (Exodus 7-12) demonstrate God's power, greater than Pharaoh and all the gods that the Egyptians worshipped. List some ways you see that power.

2. How do you see other attributes of God revealed in Israel's deliverance from slavery? (Some examples: God's love, mercy, justice, holiness, sovereignty, wisdom, etc.)

Read these verses from Exodus 12, spoken by Moses to people of Israel at the first Passover:

14 “This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord—a lasting ordinance ... **17** Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come ...

24 “Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. **25** When you enter the land that the Lord will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. **26** And when your children ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ **27** then tell them, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.’” Then the people bowed down and worshiped. **28** The Israelites did just what the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron.

3a. What were the people of Israel commanded to do? What did it involve? Be specific. (For help, see Ex. 12:1-11)

b. What attributes of God were they supposed to recognize and remember?

c. What attitudes or feelings do you think God wanted Israel to have as they followed his instructions?

d. If they had faithfully kept this commandment for generations, how might it have helped them or changed their history?

Read the following passage from Luke 22:14-20

14 When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table ...

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.

4a. How did Jesus change the meaning, the focus, and/or the tone of Passover?

- b. What is the purpose of our communion celebration? What are we remembering? Be specific!

- c. What attitude or feelings are appropriate for us when we take communion? Why?

III. PERSONAL APPLICATION (Choose 1 of the following if time is limited)

5a. Talk about some things you think about or pray about when you take communion.

- b. What gets in the way of your focus in remembering Jesus?

- c. How can you insure that communion retains its meaning, and remains more than a ritual?

6. How is communion an expression of love between you and God?

7. It can be meaningful to have a simple time of communion together with your small group. You'll need some bread or crackers, and small cups of juice. You can play some soft background music, or have a time of worship, or just have a quiet time of reflection. Here's a suggestion for how to do it:

- Read aloud Luke 22:14-20 (above) or 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Ask group members to reflect on the passage quietly for 1-2 minutes.
- Pass the bread or crackers.
- Say: "*Jesus said, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me'*" and eat the bread together. (Someone can pray briefly, or the group can sing a song, if you like)
- Pass the juice.
- Say: "*Jesus said, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you'*" and drink the juice together
- Conclude in Worship or Prayer