

Lesson 4: Feasting at God's Table

Resources Needed: Panorama of the Upper Room with the background of our sanctuary to switch, pictures of signs that children will recognize

Vocabulary

communion – the act of sharing something

holy – set apart for specific or special use

Holy Communion – the act of sharing in Christ

feast – a rich or abundant meal

distinction – recognizing differences

delivered – set free

Introduction

Who can tell me why we are here? (to learn about Worship)

And who can tell me how we learn about worship? (we study God's Word or God teaches us how to worship.)

Who can tell me what the first 3 parts of worship are?

(1 – Entering God's Presence, 2 – Committing to God's Kingdom, 3 – Listening to God's Word)

We've talked about those first 3 parts in the past few weeks and today, we are going to talk the 4th part of Worship that is called "Feasting at God's Table." But before we talk about it, first we're going to practice the Liturgy (that just means the words we say) of HOLY COMMUNION. Then, after we talk about it what it all means, we'll practice it again at the end and see if the words make more sense to us when we understand them a little better.

I'm going to say the words the pastor says, and I want you and my helpers to say the words the congregation says. Let's see if you know them.

Pastor: The Lord be with you

People: And with your spirit

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord

Pastor: Let us give thanks to our God

People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Pastor: It is indeed good, right and our delight that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty Everlasting God. Therefore, with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we praise and magnify your glorious name evermore praising you and singing...

All: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty. God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

That was very good! You see, just by being in worship with your parents, you've already begun to learn some of the words of worship! That is one of the important ways we learn – just by listening and repeating. So you see how important it is to be in worship, even before you understand it all!

Old Testament Passover

The words we just said, the “COMMUNION liturgy” are words we say every week when we begin the part of the worship service called “Feasting at God’s Table.” Did you know that there is a whole big story behind this part of our worship? And because we are here to learn about God and how we worship him, I’m going to tell you the story. Of course, it is a story from God’s Word. It’s a true story that happened a loooooong time ago.

Do you know the story about God’s people enslaved in Egypt? How they were mistreated by the Pharaoh and Moses kept bringing the Pharaoh messages from God saying, “God says, ‘Let my people go,’” but the Pharaoh kept ignoring God? Do you remember what happened every time the Pharaoh ignored God? (let them answer) Plagues happened right! Plagues are bad things that cause destruction because, not listening to God always ends up destroying things. After all, He’s the one who made the world and everything in it. It makes sense then that He would know how it works right! Well, 10 times! Moses took God’s Word to the Pharaoh and 10 times, Pharaoh refused to listen! After the tenth time, this is what God said: *(Read Exodus 11:4-7).*

You see, God was making a **DISTINCTION** between the people who lived in AWE of God and those who ignored God. That means he was simply recognizing the differences in the 2 groups of people. The people of Egypt were about to see how bad things could be for a world broken by ignoring the way God taught humans to use it.

So, while this destruction was about to happen to the kingdom of the Pharaoh who ignored God, what do you think was going to happen to the families of Israel who were living in AWE of God in Egypt? (let children guess) Let’s read some more of the story and see what happened. *(Read Exodus 12:3, 5-8, 11-13).*

God gave instructions to the Israelite families too – just like he had given instructions to the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh chose to ignore God’s instructions simply because he didn’t like them and following them would be hard. Were God’s instructions for Israel going to be easy for the Israelites to follow? No. They were going to have to kill one of their spotless lambs and use the blood to mark the door of their home. That would not be easy at all. But God promised life to every household who would trust him even if they didn’t understand why they had to give up their lamb. You see God was showing the world how he planned to fix all of the brokenness in it. After the Israelites obeyed God’s instructions and used the blood of their spotless lambs to mark their homes as places where people believed and obeyed God, they did actually escape safely from the death that reigned in Egypt!

The Pharaoh was angry the next morning when so many people in his kingdom, even his own son, had died because he didn’t listen to or obey God. He saw that the Israelites who did obey God had all been kept safe from death and he yelled at them to get out! They left quickly and even left with lots of treasure! The Egyptians threw their gold and silver and all kinds of precious things at them and said, “here take this with you and go! Just leave us alone!” Now the life of the Israelites wasn’t easy from then on. They still faced a lot of hard things but they had seen that they had a powerful God who could **DELIVER** them from anything – even death!

Institution of Communion

Now, what do you think this story from so long ago has to do with the part of our worship service that we call “Feasting at God’s Table?” (let a few take a guess and whether or not they get it right, use their answers to lead into the explanation.)

I want to skip ahead in God’s Story. Let the children see you turning pages in the Bible while you say: Many, many, many... years later, the great, great, great... grandchildren of the Israelites who escaped death in Egypt still remembered what God had done when he **DELIVERED** them. The Israelites obeyed God’s command to tell of God’s rescue to their children. So the story had been passed down and every year they celebrated God’s **DELIVERANCE** with a Feast called “Passover.” Why do you think they called it “Passover?” Because death had “passed over” those who listened to God and marked their house with the blood of a spotless lamb. So they celebrated this rescue and **DELIVERANCE** every year by **COMMUNING** (that just means sharing something together) over the Passover meal. And they were still holding the Feast of Passover once a year when Jesus was living on the earth. And one year during this Feast when Jesus was around 33 years old, he did something different with it! (Show the panorama of the Upper Room and tell the children this is similar to the room Jesus would have been in to eat The Passover meal with his disciples.)

Usually, as they were eating the Passover meal, parents would tell the story that had been told to them for generations – the story of God passing over them and **DELIVERING** them from death in Egypt. But this time, when Jesus and his friends sat around the table in a room like this (point to the panorama) to eat the Passover meal, he told the story differently. Listen to what Jesus said: (Read Luke 22:14-20).

Jesus said that the food of the Passover was all about Him!?!? What do you think he meant by that? (let children answer)

Jesus was saying that the spotless lambs that had to be killed way back in Egypt all those years ago were a sign pointing to God’s bigger rescue. Do you know what a sign is? (show them the pictures of signs and ask what each one means.) So the sign points us to the thing it shows. The sign of the airplane is not the airport right? It just points us to the airport! God knew that his whole world was broken and needed to be saved from a bigger enemy than Pharaoh. It needed to be saved from the sin and death that ruled the hearts of every human. When Jesus shared the Passover meal with his friends, he was saying that the Passover that happened all those years ago in Egypt was a sign! It was a sign that was pointing the whole world to the real lamb. The one who would save us from the bigger enemy of sin and death. You see because we broke the world, the evil king of death rules all of our hearts and we need to be **DELEVERED** from its control.

Does sin rule in your heart? Have you ever disobeyed your parents, or gotten angry and screamed at your sister... (you can give more examples of the kinds of sin common among children.) I have definitely done those kinds of things. Those are the actions of a heart ruled by sin! And do you know what else those actions are? They are the rumblings of a heart that is hungry for rescue! We all have hearts and bodies that need to be delivered from that evil ruler: sin. So when Jesus drank the wine and ate the bread of the Passover, he told his friends, this is no longer something we do just to remember God’s **DELIVERANCE** from Egypt. Now, because I’m here and I’m going to go down into the grave to beat up death, this **COMMUNION** meal is going to be about me **DELIVERING** all who believe me from the sin and death that rules their hearts! And in that way, Jesus made **COMMUNION, HOLY!**

Who Takes Communion?

(As you say this part, slide the painting of our sanctuary into the panorama so children get the image of us imitating Jesus' actions) **So, since HOLY COMMUNION is a reminder that God has delivered in the past during the Passover in Egypt and a sign pointing to Jesus as the true rescuer, we practice it every week in worship the way Jesus did it! As we practice this meal, who gets to eat and drink it?** (let them answer.)

Who ate and drank the Passover in Egypt? (let the children answer, they may say Israelites which is fine. That is true, but point out it was the people who trusted God.) **People who trusted God to save them from death took part in the Passover and in the same way, people who trust God to be their deliverer from the death that sin brings take HOLY COMMUNION!**

Do we have to understand everything God says? (*No, there are a lot of things in God's Word that we don't fully understand.*) **Do we have to know all the details of how God is going to do what He says?** (*No.*) **Just like the people in Egypt didn't understand everything God was doing but they had to trust that he was going to do what he said, we also have to trust God even when we don't fully understand Him. We trust that because Jesus is our spotless lamb, his blood is stronger than our sinful hearts and has the power to save us from death.**

At Trinity, when someone hears and believes this about their sinful heart and about Jesus' power to rescue from that sinful heart they talk to one of our pastors or elders about it. Anyone of any age, children your age even, can ask their parents to set up a time when they can talk with a pastor or elder so you can tell them what you believe. Do you remember what it's called when someone says out loud what is true? (*confession*) And once you **CONFESS** what you believe, one of the pastors will stand with you in front of the rest of our church family and help you tell them also so that all will know you are going to begin participating in **HOLY COMMUNION** with the rest of God's family.

Until you are ready to talk to one of our pastors about this, you can spend your time during **HOLY COMMUNION**, watching, listening and praying this prayer: (say it slowly, one line at a time so they can repeat):

*"Lord Jesus, thank you
for placing me
inside your family, The Church.
Help me more and more
to know you,
to love you,
to trust in you,
and to follow you
as your faithful disciple."*

The Liturgy

So, now that we've talked about what **HOLY COMMUNION** means, let's practice the liturgy again like we did at the beginning of class. But this time let's practice all of the words. The first part, which we practiced at the beginning, is called 'The Great Thanksgiving' and the second part is 'The Words of Institution.' Listen carefully and think about all that we have learned in this lesson as we practice. (As you say the words, emphasize words that might help them recall what you have just taught about Jesus being our Passover Lamb such as "The Lord be *with* you... Lift up your *hearts*...Let us give *thanks* to our God... etc.)

Pastor: **The Lord be with you**

People: And with your spirit

Pastor: **Lift up your hearts.**

People: We lift them up to the Lord

Pastor: **Let us give thanks to our God**

People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Pastor: **It is indeed good, right and our delight that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty Everlasting God. Therefore, with angels and archangles and with all the company of heaven we praise and magnify your glorious name evermore praising you and singing...**

All: **Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty. God in three persons, blessed Trinity.**

Then the pastor prays a prayer asking God to bless the simple bread and the simple wine that Jesus called his body and blood so that it might feed our hungry hearts and conquer all of the sin that tries to rule over our bodies. And then he speaks the “Words of Institution” as he holds up the bread and the wine and declares:

Pastor: **Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us!**

People: Hallelujah!

Pastor: **Let us proclaim the mystery of the faith:**

People: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Hallelujah! (Encourage the children to say this with growing excitement!)

Pastor: **And now our Holy Master, that with boldness and without condemnation, we dare to call upon You, the Heavenly God, as our Father and to say:**

All: **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but DELIVER us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

Pastor: **The gifts of God for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you and feed on Him in your hearts by faith and with thanksgiving. Let us partake of the feast!**

And that is what we are getting ready to do right now as we go back into the corporate worship service. So now that we have practiced it, be sure to say the words with us as we observe HOLY COMMUNION during the time of Feasting at God’s Table. And then watch, listen and pray.