

Passover Service in time of Coronavirus 2020

Setting the scene.

Before the service: on Maundy Thursday we remember the time Jesus instituted the Last Supper during the Passover Meal. On Thursday night we want everyone to join in a service to celebrate this. You will need some bread and some juice and a candle. It won't be a communion but a fellowship meal, perhaps before or after your evening meal. Remember although we are separated as church we are together in God's Spirit.

The service.

Narrator: Jesus gathers with His disciples in the Upper Room to celebrate Passover.

Voice 1:(child if possible) Why did people celebrate Passover? What's so special about it?

Narrator More than 1,400 years before the time of Christ, the Israelites, God's chosen people were suffering in slavery in Egypt. God appointed Moses as their leader and Moses tried to free them from captivity. God sent nine terrible plagues to the Egyptians, but they still refused to listen to Moses. Then, in the end, an angel of the Lord was sent to strike down the first born son of every family; but at God's command, each Jewish family had sacrificed a lamb and sprinkled its blood on the doorposts. And the angel, seeing the blood, passed over their homes and their children were spared.

Then, finally, Pharaoh permitted the Jews to leave. They fled in haste, to wander in the desert for forty years before coming to the promised land. And God commanded Moses that the Jews should remember every year the day they were freed. So the Passover became the great feast of sacrifice, of deliverance and of thanksgiving. Every year, even now every Jewish family takes part in this Passover meal when the family retells this act of God's love to His people.

We who are the followers of Christ see how God loves His people. We were like slaves to sin, just as the Israelites were slaves to the Egyptians and, as God sent Moses to rescue the Israelites from captivity in Egypt, so He lovingly sent His Son to free us from sin. By the sacrifice of Himself, Christ let us come into God's presence where we can live in Him.

Voice 2: We will start our remembrance with a prayer for our homes. Imagine all of us in the church gathered around our tables. We pray:

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sent Your Son, Jesus the Messiah, to be the light of the world and our Paschal Lamb, that through Him we might have eternal life. May our homes be made holy, O God, by the light of your face shining upon us in the blessing and bringing us peace. (light a candle)

Pour some juice into everyone's cup.

Voice 3: *Raise the first cup.* Throughout His life, Jesus would have begun every Sabbath and festival day with an act of sanctification, remembering His Father as Creator, Giver of rest,

and Redeemer, praising God for wine that makes glad the hearts of people and for bread that strengthens our hearts.

At the beginning of this evening, we rededicate ourselves to God so that during this time, we may try to realize fully all we owe to God for His goodness and redeeming power and for many ways God has blessed His people.

We also want to say sorry for the many things we have thought said or done which makes God sad. We remember them now, and ask God's forgiveness.

In the Gospels the writers tell us what happened when Jesus celebrated the Passover with his disciples in Jerusalem: (Mark 14)

²² While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take it; this is my body.'

Luke says,

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.'

So let us take our bread, the ordinary bread we use every day in our homes, and break it, and eat a piece of it, remembering what Jesus did for us.

Afterwards

²³ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

²⁴ 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,' he said to them. ²⁵ 'Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.'

Let us drink also, remembering what Jesus did for us.

Paul says: ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give thanks for such a great salvation.

All:

Blessed be the Lord our God, Who has given us gifts of grace, not through our good deeds, but only because of his great love and mercy, and has called us to tell everyone the good news of salvation for all who turn to Him. We thank Him for giving us this Passover festival to remind us of our deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and for showing love to all people by sending Jesus into the world to save us from the slavery of sin."

In Mark's gospel it says:

²⁶ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Narrator: All Jewish people would sing one of the “Hallel” psalm as Jesus and His disciples did after the Last Supper, as they went to Gethsemane and Jesus’ arrest. So let us praise God for his salvation.

Another voice: (with pictures?)

Praise the Lord, Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord.

Let the name of the Lord be praised, both now and forever more.

From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised.

The Lord is exalted over all the nations, his glory above the heavens.

Who is like the Lord our God, the One who sits enthroned on high,

Who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth?

He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap;

He seats them with princes, with the princes of their people.

He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children

***When Israel came out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of a foreign tongue,
Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel his dominion.***

The sea looked and fled, the Jordan turned back;

The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.

Why was it, O sea, that you fled, O Jordan, that you turned back,

you mountains that you skipped like rams, you hills like lambs?

Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob,

Who turned the rock into a pool, the hard rock into springs of water.

(Psalm 114 NIV)

Jesus said ‘Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.’

We remember that we are in the Kingdom of God, waiting for Jesus’ return to make us complete in Him.

So we say together:

This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

With the last cup, the cup of Completion, we remember the prayer in

***Gethsemane, the betrayal, the submission of Jesus, the trial before Pilate, the judgment,
the road to the cross, and the death of our Redeemer.***

As we end our act of remembering, we remember when we first gave our lives to Jesus, and we praise Him because He has guided us up to the present. We also know that He will continue to guide us into the future, until He comes again. We thank our God because He makes us grow closer to Him through His Spirit. We want to give our lives to God once more, and we promise to follow in the steps of Jesus to love God and to love our neighbour as Jesus did.

We say the grace together, again remembering all of our church community, and our town.

