

THREE DAYS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Preparation for Change

Thursday Night – The Last Supper

John 13-14

THREE DAYS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD!

Friday, Saturday, Sunday – Three Days, Five Sermons. Not enough time! From this preacher's perspective, there never is. There is always more to tell, to explain, and to proclaim than there is time.

Today we begin with Thursday night, when Jesus ate the Last Supper with His disciples and focused His preparation of their lives for the changes He was about to make for the whole world.

Next week, we talk about Friday and the Cross.

April 10, we look at Saturday and ask the question, "Where was Jesus?"

Easter Sunday the title will be "Out of the Tomb!" but we will ask, "What difference does the resurrection really make?"

Then the final Sunday in April, we will look at why Jesus hung around 40 days after He arose before ascending back into Heaven.

So today we look at Thursday night, when Jesus ate the Last Supper with His disciples and set down the pattern for our celebrating the Lord's Supper as a church. I have labeled this time, "Preparation for Change."

Why change? What needed to change?

Well remember where we left off last week in talking about God's creation?

The sermon title and topic last week was SIN DARKENS GOD'S WORLD.

Well folks, it stayed dark. Even though the flood gave mankind a new start so to speak – I mean the only people who survived the flood were faithful Noah, his wife, and his three sons, and their wives. So, not only are all of us descended from Adam and Eve, we are all descendants of Noah and his wife as well.

And Noah is one of the heroes of the faith. And it was faith-filled and faithful Noah who found grace in the eyes of the Lord and was chosen by God personally to be the second father so to speak of all of those who were to fill the earth anew.

But the seed of sin was in Noah too. The last thing the Bible tells us about good ole Noah was that after the flood he became a farmer and planted a grape vineyard and then made wine, got drunk, and laid down naked in his tent. His oldest son saw this and started telling people, "Hey, you know what ole so called righteous Noah did? He got himself drunk out of his mind, and I found him sprawled out naked on the floor of his tent. You think he's so godly. Just go look for yourselves!"

The point is, Noah,

- as filled with faith as he was, and he was!
- As faithful as he was, and he was!
- He was still a sinner.

ALL HAVE SINNED.

That included Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives, and all of their children and grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, and on and on and on.

So while the world started over, it remained dark, dark because of sin.

Every man and every woman was just like every man and every woman today.

They were and we are sinners in need of a Savior.

- **God promised Adam and Eve He would send a Savior to defeat Satan.**
- In course of time, **God would promise Abraham** that a Savior would come from his seed and be a blessing to every family of the earth.
- **God promised Moses** that He would send a Savior who would be called The Prophet.
- **And God made many promises through the prophets about the coming of this Savior.**

But all across the nearly 4,000 years of history after the creation of Adam and Eve, there were only promises, but there was no Savior who had come.

Most did not believe the promises, and when they died they went to hell, a very real place of torment and fire, just like the rich man Jesus told us about in Luke chapter 16.

You know, I understand people who do not believe in God, or those who do not believe the Bible is the Word of God and altogether true – I understand why they would not believe in a literal hell.

But frankly I am flabbergasted by people who say they are Christians and who say they believe the Bible, yet they also say, “I do not believe in a hell of flame and fire.” Honestly, I lose my patience with those professing to be believers in Jesus and in the Bible yet denying the reality of hell when Jesus said in Luke 16 that the rich man died, and was in hell and he cried out, “Have mercy on me, for I am tormented in these flames.”

And maybe you are wondering, what does that have to do with Thursday night, which by the way, was really Friday the way God reckons time. Remember in Genesis, there was evening and morning, the first day. Each new day began at sundown. And God’s people continued to count time as God did the first six days of the universe.

And I say all of that to get to this one main point about what it was that needed to change.

Folks at supper time on Friday, what we would call Thursday night, **as Jesus was sitting down to eat His final Passover with His disciples, there were billions of people in hell.**

Good strong mathematical calculations of population growth demonstrate that the population of the earth at the time of the flood was easily equal to the population today, over 7 billion people, and all but 8 of them unbelievers, and all the unbelievers in hell.

And since the flood, there had been billions and billions more who had been born and died in the darkness of sin, and they were also in hell. In a real hell! And we don’t think about this very much, and the disciples probably weren’t think about this at all, but I believe Jesus was thinking about it. He’s the one who made a point to remind us of the reality of hell, a place of fire and torment.

And what about believers? **What about the Old Testament saints who believed the promises of the coming Savior?**

- Well, **they were not in hell.**
- But **they were not in heaven either.**
- **They were in a place the Bible calls Paradise**, a special part of Sheol, where believers who died waited in protection and comfort for the Savior they believed was coming.
- **This is the place Jesus was talking about when He said** to the thief on the cross who was converted and believed. Jesus said, **“Today you will be with me in Paradise.”**

So in addition to the billions in hell, there were those, I don't know how many, who though they were sinners in need of a Savior, they believed the Word of God, that He was sending that Savior. And the Bible says God credited their account because of their faith, saved them from hell, and let them wait for the Savior in Paradise.

Folks, this was the state of mankind when Jesus went with His disciples to the upper room where He was going to talk to them about what was going to change in the world.

Jesus did not explain everything He was going to do to change the world. Jesus mainly talked about their lives, how they would change, and how the lives of all of those who followed Him would change. The apostle John recorded the most about what Jesus said that evening, so we will go to his gospel.

1. John 13:3-5, 12-17 NKJV 3 Jesus ... rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. 5 After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded. ... 12 So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. 14 If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. 16 Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. 17 If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

Jesus told them, "**Your new changed life will be one of service, as Mine has been a life of service.**"

You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

2. John 13:34–35 NKJV 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Your new changed life will be characterized by love for others, just like Mine.

as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

3. John 14:1–6 NKJV 1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again

and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know.” 5 Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Your new changed life will be a life of following Jesus, all the way to heaven.

I am the way

4. John 14:16–17 NKJV 16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

Your new changed life will be a life indwelt, led, and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

He dwells with you and will be in you.

5. John 17:17 NKJV Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

Your new changed life will be a life of increasing holiness as you obey God’s Word.

Sanctify

Sanctify means to make holy.

These are all such familiar verses and familiar teachings of our Lord, are they not?

But did you realize they all came around the Last Supper, just hours before Jesus went to the cross?

Maybe His disciples were wondering, how can I be changed in such a dramatic way?

How can my life be one of loving and serving others? How can I faithfully walk in the way of Jesus? How could the Holy Spirit of God live inside of me and be in control of me? How in the dark and sinful world can I be made holy?

To answer that unspoken question, Jesus took the bread and the cup.

He said, “This is My body, which is broken for you.”

“This is the new covenant in My blood which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

Paul told the Corinthians, before you participate in the Lord's Supper, each person should examine himself.

I am going to ask each of you to bow your head in prayer. Believers, I am going to ask you five questions. In prayer, I want you to give your answer to God.

- Christian brother or sister, is your life a life of service to others?
- Do you love others as Christ loved and does love others?
- Do you walk in the way of the Lord Jesus?
- Are you continually filled, empowered and controlled by the Holy Spirit?
- Do you read and obey the Word of God?

If any answer was "No," or if any answer was "Sometimes" or "Maybe," then repent now with your head bowed humbly before God.

Tell Him

- you recognize this sin in your life and you turn away from it.
- You will walk in obedience to God's Word and in the way of Christ,
- empowered by the Spirit
- to live the life of love and service Jesus saved you to live.

In Jesus' Name, Amen!