

18 April 2019 Thursday

On Thursday Jesus sent Peter and John ahead to the *Upper Room* in Jerusalem so He could celebrate the Passover with His disciples. The evening was filled with many symbolic acts as Jesus continued to teach and share His love. Just after sunset, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples as they prepared to share in the Passover. By performing this humble act of service, Jesus demonstrated by example how they were to love one another. Jesus also instituted the Lord's Supper this night. As the Lamb of God, Jesus fulfilled the meaning of the Passover by giving his body to be broken and his blood to be shed in sacrifice, freeing us from sin and death. Using bread and wine to symbolize His body and blood, He asked us to remember His sacrifice by participating in communion in the future. The supper concluded with the singing of a hymn and a trip to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Gethsemane was a place familiar to Jesus as He and His disciples previously visited, and it was used by Jesus as a place of prayer. That night it also became His place of obedience as He surrendered His will to the Father. Later that night, because His betrayer knew Jesus' preference for the garden, Gethsemane became Jesus' place of capture.

Read Matthew 26:17-75 and identify and reflect on the examples of proper behaviour that Jesus displays through the evening. Can you humble yourself before others? Will you work with those who are weak and may betray you or God? Can you respect and serve even on your worst days? Will you give your will over to God knowing that unpleasantness may result? Will you pray when life is good as well as when it is going poorly? Will you surrender your desires to God's purpose?

Consider this prayer: "Lord, forgive me when I put my needs ahead of others, when I seek my way instead of yours, when I fear the path, I know you want me to take because it may require sacrifice and suffering. Give me grace and strength to trust that if necessary, I may have to enter the valley of the shadow of death but can trust that I will come out stronger and in better shape to reflect your glory. Amen."