

# GraceNotes

A Monthly Newsletter of Grace Christian Church

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April 2023  
Vol. 5, No. 4

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## GROWING IN GRACE “The New Covenant in His Blood”

The Passion Week of our Lord and Savior begins on Palm Sunday and flows victoriously to Resurrection Sunday. In between there is a moment in which Jesus delivered one of the most powerfully defining concepts in our faith. It was revealed on Thursday evening, or, for the Jews, Friday since it was technically after sunset. The Church celebrates it as Maundy Thursday.

Everything proceeded according to the historical protocol for Passover until Jesus picked up the ‘Cup of Redemption,’ which was the third of four cups. He lifted the cup before the Apostles and said, “This is the ‘New Covenant’ in My blood” (Luke 22:20/I Cor. 11:25). It was a new and different interpretation that must have been met with wide-eyed whisperings and wonderings. “New Covenant in His blood” – what did that mean? They were familiar with the blood of lambs, bulls, goats, and pigeons for centuries of sacrificial offerings. But Jesus reaches into the sacred meal and imparts a higher, deeper, richer, fuller meaning than they had ever heard. It was a ‘reinterpretation’ that functioned to fulfill centuries of prophecy going back to the Mosaic institution of the Old Covenant ‘Passover.’ Jesus was saying that His blood was exclusively efficacious for salvation. Unlike all the blood offerings of animal sacrifices made by generations of priests, His blood was pure and perfect. Jesus was, therefore, the “Lamb of God” who could and would pay for sins once, forever, and always.

This “New Covenant/New Testament” truth is enshrined in our weekly participation in Communion via “remembrance.” Jesus said of the reinterpreted Passover, “Do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19). The Church often refers to it as “The Lord’s Supper.” Participants in Communion are, in effect, confessing their mutually shared faith in the atoning death of Jesus to forgive our sins and reconcile us to God. The power of participation is not in the emblems of bread and grape juice but in the mindful regard of their true meaning as fulfilled in Jesus Christ crucified for our sins.

One very stirring and intriguing aspect of Communion is found in Jesus’ words, “I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in My Father’s Kingdom” (Matthew 26:29). It is always a spiritually compelling reminder that as we participate – “proclaiming the Lord’s death until He comes” (I Cor. 11:26) – Jesus refrains until He comes. Thus our participation equates to His abstinence. Realization of the same draws into the moment not only ‘remembrance’ but ‘anticipation.’ In other words the Lord’s Supper gives us a reason to look back at Calvary and to look ahead to the Second Coming.

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