

From the Pulpit of the Japanese Baptist Church of North Texas

March 4, 2018

## Preparation for the Supper

Mark 14:12-16

14:12 And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, “Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?”

14:13 And he sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him,

14:14 and wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, The Teacher says, ‘Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’

14:15 And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us.”

14:16 And the disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

Here we read that Jesus made his disciples prepare for the Passover Meal. The supper Jesus took are well known and called, “The Last Supper.” But many of us don’t pay attention to the preparation for the Supper though it has important meanings. Jesus prepared for the Supper very carefully. Why did he so? Let’s study the meanings of the preparation for the Supper, considering why Jesus had carefully prepared the Supper with his disciples.

### **1. Coming Danger**

First of all, it is because there was impending danger to Jesus. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the crowd welcomed him fanatically. But the

Jewish leaders had already planned to arrest and kill him.

The Gospel of John told that Jesus healed a man born blind. At that time, the Jewish leaders “had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.” (John 9:22). They also had their meeting and “made plans to put Jesus to death” (John 11:53) when Jesus raised Lazarus from death. When the Passover began, a notice has been issued. It ordered, “If anyone knew where Jesus was, he should let them know” (John 11:57). They placed Jesus on the wanted list.

Even so, Jesus went up to Jerusalem to observe the feast of Passover. Jesus taught people publicly in the temple during daytime, but Jewish leaders couldn't arrest him because the crowd always surrounded him. They also couldn't find the place where Jesus spent overnight since Jesus and the disciples left Jerusalem and slept in the open. The leaders became impatient when the Passover came. Mark 14:1-2 says, “It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him, for they said, ‘Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people.’” They tried to complete their stealth before the Passover. And their “stealth” was the most ignoble one. They gave money to one of the disciples and made him betray his master. And the time approached. Jesus wanted to have the Passover meal with his disciples in such urgent situation.

The Passover Meal should be taken in the city of Jerusalem. Therefore Jesus had to stay in Jerusalem at the night. Since it was very dangerous for Jesus and disciples, the place where they observed the supper also should be kept in secret. So, Jesus gave a mysterious

instruction to the disciples, saying, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him.” (v. 13) The work of drawing water was of women in Judea. Therefore women carried jars of water. It was very rare to meet “a man carrying a jar of water.” It was the secret arrangement of Jesus. He did because the place was not known.

It was not the coward thing which Jesus did it very cautiously. He had predict his death on the cross in the very early stage of his public life, and he told his disciples, “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified” (Matthew 26:2) immediately before the Passover. He was never afraid of the cross and tried to escape from it. However, the disciples would face danger if Jesus run a risk at that moment. The reason why Jesus carefully prepared for the supper is for the security of the disciples and observing the supper without interruption.

Some people say, “We can run a risk because God supports us” or “We don’t need to prepare well for the task because God helps us.” Such idea is not of the faithful believers. No one trusts in God more than Jesus trusted in his Father, but Jesus was the person who did prepare most for his mission given by his Father than anyone did. He was bold to do Father’s will, but he was very careful to protect and nature his disciples. Let’s follow him in every way in our life.

## **2. Importance of the Supper**

Jesus prepared for the Supper very carefully because the Supper was very important for them. You do not treat important things badly or rudely. You do treat them with special care. You might want to deposit

them in the bank or place them in the locked storage. When you ship them, you wrap them carefully and purchase the insurance. You do not want to put them in the regular parcel and drop them into the roadside mailbox of your home. The same as this, Jesus prepared for the Supper very carefully and it tells how important the Supper is.

The Supper is called “The Last Supper,” but actually it was “The First Supper” at the same time. The Supper was “The Passover Meal.” “Passover” is the feast remembering that God released Israelites from the slavery of Egypt and saved them. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, did not release Israelites; therefore, Egypt had plagues sent by God. The last and biggest one was that all first-borns — from of Pharaoh to of livestock in the country died in an overnight. If this happened, the first-borns of Israelites would also die. Then, God commanded Israelites to slaughter lamb and put the blood at the entrance of their house. The plague “passed over” the houses which followed the instruction from God. The name of “Passover” came from this event. Jewish people have been observing “Passover” every year to remember the God’s work of salvation.

Jesus didn’t have the Passover Meal not only because it was a Jewish custom. Jesus did it because he intended to give it new meanings and entrust the newly instituted Supper to his disciples. The Israelites were the slave of Egypt, and it was a symbolical fact showed that all human beings are the slaves of sins. The lamb was needed to be slaughtered and blooded in order for the Israelites to be released from Egypt. The same as this, Jesus Christ — “the sinless Lamb of God” — was needed to be blooded in order for all human beings to be saved from sins.

In the Old Testament era, many animals were sacrificed for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus sacrificed himself as “the Lamb of God” on the cross. He completed the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. No more animal sacrifice was needed. Consequently, the “Passover” to remember the salvation of the Israelites from Egypt, became the Supper to remember the salvation of all human beings which Jesus did on the cross. The Supper observed by Jesus and his disciples was the last “Passover Meal” and the first “Lord’s Supper.”

The disciples kept the “Lord’s Supper” as Jesus instituted. The early church kept the “Lord’s Supper” every week. The Lord’s Supper was the Worship Service, and the Worship Service was the Lord’s Supper. Sunday, the “Lord’s Day,” was the “breaking bread” day. The Israelites’ “Passover Meal” was not just a meal. It involved God’s words, prayers, and praises. It was a worship service including the meal. The “Lord’s Supper” was the worship which should be celebrated with love and adoration, thanksgiving and praise, repentance and obedience, and faith and dedication to Jesus.

Jesus was longing for the Supper and prepared for it very carefully because Jesus needed to teach his disciples about the salvation Jesus was going to fulfill right after the Supper. Jesus established “Lord’s Supper” with special care; therefore, we shall not take it lightly or keep it as a form of custom. We shall understand the meanings and keep it with special care.

### **3. Our Preparation**

Finally, Jesus had an intention to teach us, the participants of the Lord’s Supper, to be well-prepared through His own behavior toward

the Supper. In verse 15, Jesus said to His disciples, “And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare for us.” Likewise his disciples followed his order, we should prepare for the Supper. But, what should we do for the Lord’s Supper?

First, we should remind ourselves that the Lord’s Supper is what the Lord planned, ordered, and conducted. Verse 12 is the words of the disciples. It says, “Where will you have us go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?” Please pay attention that “you” is the subject, not “we.” They asked Jesus’ will. It describes that Jesus took the initiative rather than his disciples in the Supper. We should keep the Lord’s Supper according his will. We are warned not to add nor takes away from his will in the Lord’s Supper.

Next, we have to prepare the place for the Supper. Jesus had the upper room furnished and ready. “Upper room” was isolated and people go up the stairs on the side of the wall, and it was well-prepared. We should clean up and organize the worshipping place, but we care about the place more when we celebrate the Lord’s Supper.

Additionally, we take a good care when we prepare for the bread and the wine. Many churches have the dedicated preparation room for the Lord’s Supper, and people prepare silently and with prayers. Breads, wine and cups should be sanctified and not the things on the table. They are to remind us his Cross. We should take a moment to think about it and prepare for the Lord’s Supper.

But, the most essential thing is to pray and have our hearts to be prepared. Sometimes we found it was the Sunday celebrating the Lord’s Supper, after we open the weekly bulletin. It was not good attitude for the Lord’s Supper. At least from one week before the

Lord's Supper, we should pray for ourselves, the people in charge of preparing, passing out and presiding, and for other fellows who participate the Lord's Supper.

Some people maintain the upper room where Jesus and his disciples had the Supper was the place where the disciples met the resurrected Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. It has no evidence, but it is true that we meet Jesus at the place we have the Lord's Supper, and be nourished, and built as the body of Christ, and receive the Holy Spirit to witness gospel. Today, may this Lord's Supper nourish our faith, build the church, and spread the gospel. Also, for the next Lord's Supper, we should follow Jesus and truthfully prepare for it.

**(Prayer)**

Dear Father, we know You had planned and prepared the salvation at the very beginning of the human history, and You had been revealing it through the long history. Lord Jesus came to fulfill the salvation, and on the Cross He shed his blood. Without the Cross, there is no salvation. Show the Cross of Jesus and engrave it on our souls through the Lord's Supper. In the name of Jesus, who prepared the Supper for us with deeply thoughtful mind, Amen.