

The Last Supper

Jesus knew it was time for Him to die. He sat down with His disciples for the Passover meal and did something very unusual. Jesus washed His disciples' feet. This humble act was usually reserved for a servant. The foot washing symbolized a spiritual cleansing. The disciples were already positionally "clean" before God (see John 13:10) but even redeemed people still sin and need daily cleansing. (See 1 John 1:9.) In this, Jesus also set forth an example of love and humility for His disciples to mirror in their own actions toward one another. (John 13:15) As they ate the Passover meal, Jesus broke bread and gave it to His disciples. He shared the cup with them too, explaining that the bread and cup represented His body and blood. Jesus established a new covenant.

In the Old Testament, God made a covenant, or promise, with His people. He gave them commandments to follow so they could live in right relationship with Him. But God's people broke the covenant. They didn't obey God, and they didn't love Him. By dying on the cross, Jesus brought forgiveness and made the way for people to know and love God again.

Jesus and the disciples ate the first Lord's Supper at Passover, a time when God's people remembered how God had rescued His people from the Egyptians—passing over the houses marked with the blood of a lamb. Jesus instituted a new memorial, to Himself—the Lamb of God whose blood would bring salvation to the world.

Believers take the Lord's Supper to remember what Jesus did for us in His death and resurrection. We remember God's faithfulness, and we look forward to the day He will return.

At the Passover, Jesus shared His last meal with the disciples before His death and resurrection. Jesus said that His death would establish a new covenant. God's people had broken the old covenant, and God promised to make a new covenant to forgive sins. God forgives the sins of those who trust in His Son, Jesus.

Your kids may not be ready to take the Lord's Supper at church. Gently explain that the Lord's Supper, like baptism, is an ordinance of the church and is a celebration for those who have repented of their sin and trusted in Jesus for salvation.

April 9, 2023 (Unit 20, Session 2)

Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

God's law for the people was plain. Read Deuteronomy 6:5. But God's people, and all people, have broken the law. We have loved other things more than we love God. That is sin.

Jesus' purpose for coming to earth was to save us from our sin. (Matt. 1:21) Why did Jesus have to die? Why couldn't He just say, "You are forgiven"? God is just and requires due payment for sin. To simply forgive sin without requiring a payment would be unjust. According to God's Word, the payment of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23) But not only is God just, He is also loving. That is why Jesus was willing to die in our place.

Jesus came to live and die to show God's love to us (Rom. 5:7-8) so that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16) Jesus came to die so that we would be forgiven. (Eph. 1:7) Jesus came to die to bring us to God. (1 Pet. 3:18)

Jesus died on the cross to satisfy the wrath of God toward sin. Jesus' resurrection proved that God was satisfied with Jesus' sacrifice, and forgiveness and life are found in Him. (See 1 Cor. 15:17.) If Jesus had died but not been raised up, He would have been like military leaders who died without a throne. (Acts 5:33-37) But Jesus conquered death, just as He said He would. (John 2:19-21)

Jesus' resurrection gives us hope for our resurrection. (Rom. 6:5) And Romans 8:11 says that the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead will raise our bodies to life.

Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection are not the end of the story, but the center of it.

The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus is the center of the gospel. We deserve to die because of our sin, but Jesus died in our place. He was the blood sacrifice made once and for all for the forgiveness of sin. God was pleased with Jesus' sacrifice and raised Jesus from the dead to reign as King over all creation. We are forgiven only through Jesus. (Acts 4:12)

The Emmaus Disciples

Jesus' two disciples were walking on the road to Emmaus. They were very sad about Jesus' death, and they didn't know what to think about the women's report that Jesus was alive. They were arguing about whether Jesus was really alive when He appeared and began walking down the road with them. Only they didn't know it was Jesus. The Bible says they were prevented from recognizing Him. Jesus asked them what they were arguing about, and the question actually made them stop in their tracks.

One of the disciples basically asked Jesus if He had been paying attention at all. All of Jerusalem had witnessed Jesus' triumphal entry and then His death on the cross. Jesus' disciples had scattered when He was arrested, but the two disciples traveling to Emmaus had heard rumors that Mary and the other women had seen Jesus. They weren't sure what to believe!

What did Jesus say to the disciples? Jesus said they were unwise and slow to believe. Hadn't Jesus told them that He would die on the cross and rise from the dead on the third day? Besides that, didn't the prophets explain that the Messiah would have to suffer and die to take away our sins?

Jesus began at the very beginning. When the Bible says He started with Moses and all the prophets, that means Jesus began with Moses' writings—the first five books of the Bible—and continued through the Old Testament. Jesus taught that all the Scriptures point to Him.

Guide kids to discuss these questions:

- Where can we learn about Jesus?
- How do we know that the Bible is about Jesus?
- What can you do if you read something in the Bible that you don't understand?

LEADER • Jesus taught that all the Scriptures point to Him. God gave us His Word to help us know Him. The Bible is all we need to know and love God.

Jesus Appeared to the Disciples

Do you ever feel worried about things? What are some things that make you feel fearful? (*Take a few answers.*) It can be hard feeling scared sometimes. I want to show you what it's like...first, pick one of your kids to get their school backpack. Great! Now, this bag might not seem too bad to carry around. But I'm going to add some items to it... *Begin placing heavy objects into the backpack or bag.* How does it feel now? *Add a couple heavier things to the bag.* And now? Is it getting a little heavy? Sometimes when we have anxiety and fear, it can feel like a heavy burden. Now, would you like to let that backpack go? In fact, I have an option for you: what if I trade you? I'll take the heavy bag, and in its place, I'll give you something light and easy to carry. Does that sound like a good option? *Offer a pillow or stuffed animal in place of the heavy bag.* That's a little better, isn't it? You'd probably much rather have something light to carry than the heavy backpack. And I'm happy to swap it out for you. Did you know that God does the same thing for us? There are a lot of things that might worry or scare us, but God wants to take those fears away and give us peace instead. We see this throughout the Bible. One event shows up right after Jesus rose from the dead.

Open Scriptures to John 20:19-31 (Read the text and discuss passage)

His disciples were hiding away in a room, because they were afraid. They knew that Jesus had been arrested and killed, and they didn't want to be arrested, too. While they were huddled away in fear, guess who showed up? Jesus! He just appeared in their midst and said, "peace be with you." He knew that they were worried and offered His peace instead. Jesus showed the disciples His scars and told them He wanted to send them out to proclaim His message into the world. He breathed on them with the Holy Spirit, reminding them that His presence would go with them always and that they should pass on His forgiveness to others. Jesus wants us to know that His peace and presence is for us, too. Later in this passage (while speaking with Thomas, who refused to believe until He felt the scars of Christ), Jesus said that those who believe without seeing are especially blessed. That's us! We can trust that Jesus is near, even though we do not see or feel Him all the time. There are scary and burdensome to us, but Jesus wants to take those burdens and replace them with His peace. He wants us to rely on Him. He can take away those fears that are so heavy and swap them for His peace. We don't have to bear grudges and worries alone. We can have the comfort of His love surround us always. We'd be silly to keep a heavy backpack when we had the opportunity to trade it for something easy to carry. We'd be foolish to refuse God's comfort, too! He wants to give it to us. And we can share the love, forgiveness, and peace of Christ with others around us. Let's say a prayer to thank God for Jesus and His promise of peace in place of fear. Pray with family that God would help us trust Him and remember He is alive and we can trust He will always be there to help us.

God Healed the People

If there was one thing the Israelites were good at, it was grumbling. They weren't just good; they were experts: "We have no food. We have no water. Why are we in the wilderness left to die? The land has big people in it." And on and on and on. We have to wonder how Moses put up with it all.

In Numbers 21, we encounter another time when the people grumbled—once again about food and water. Each time they doubted God's goodness and truthfulness, God had shown them mercy and grace. But on this day, He sent serpents into the Israelites' camp to strike them for their unfaithfulness. Many people died.

We might not like to think of it, but this is what the Israelites deserved all along. Their sin earned them judgment and death. God was perfectly just and righteous to give His people what they deserved.

Yet, as we have seen so often in the Old Testament and will continue to see throughout the rest of Scripture, God extends grace and mercy along with judgment. When the people pleaded for Moses to intercede on their behalf, God instructed Moses to make a bronze serpent and lift it on a pole. Whoever looked upon it would be healed.

Notice two things. First, God's response was not to remove judgment but to provide salvation through judgment. This is another theme we have seen throughout the Scriptures (e.g. Noah, the plagues).

Second, God's instructions made little to no sense. Imagine you are an Israelite and were just bitten by a serpent. Although other serpents are all around still, you are to take your eyes off of that threat and turn them upward to look at a bronze serpent on a pole—an image of the very thing that has brought death to your door?

This detail in the story is a foreshadowing of what God has called us to do in Christ. While our faith is far from blind, it always has an aspect of not making sense, at least to the world around us. But this is how we are saved too: by taking our eyes off of the sin in and around us, and looking upon Christ lifted up on the cross—He who became sin (2 Cor. 5:21). We too are saved through judgment, for our judgment has been placed on Christ.