

# Come With Me

## **It is the Lord's Passover**

*Narrator:* It is the Passover of the Lord. Jewish men are required to go to Jerusalem three times a year to celebrate the great feasts of our Lord. The Torah dictates that “Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord God.” (Exodus 23:17) Passover is the first of those feasts. Jesus and His disciples have come to Jerusalem, as commanded by the Torah. And now, the Lord turns toward you, and He says, “Come with Me.” You are invited to join Him for the Passover.

So, come to the upper room. It is a familiar feast. But Jesus is doing something new. He is taking the old and making it new, as He declares in the 21st chapter of Revelation: “Behold, I make all things new.” Jesus can do that for each one of us as well. So, come with me and let us see how the Lord can take that which is old and make it new.

## **Wash One Another's Feet**

*Old:* The Torah requires that the Passover is to be celebrated in every home. “Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month they shall take every man a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household; and if the household is too small for a lamb, then a man and his neighbor next to his house shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb.” (Exodus 12:3-4)

Neither Jesus nor His disciples live in Jerusalem. They have no home in which to celebrate the feast. They are required by the Torah to celebrate, and they are more in number than the 10 required for one lamb. They have met all of the legal requirements. They only need a place to have their meal. So, Jesus commissions John and Peter to find a place.

*New:* But Jesus makes all things new. He did not use call ahead seating, or a standing reservation. He moved in faith, and asked His disciples to come with Him in that faith walk. Peter asks a question that reveals his doubt about this “new” way, saying, “Where will you have us prepare the Passover?” Jesus said to them, “Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house which he enters, and tell the householder, ‘The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I am to eat the passover with my disciples?’ And he will show you a large upper room furnished; there make ready.” (Luke 22:9-12) This was surely not what either was expecting, but Peter and John went as they were told, and found it as Jesus had told them; and they prepared the passover. So let us go with them and join our Lord at table.

*Old:* The householder has prepared a guest room for us. He is pleased to play the role of host. As we each settle in for the dinner, and recline at table, he brings a basin of water and a towel. The law requires that hospitality be shown to all visitors, and that the host wash the feet of the invited guests. For example, when the three angelic men appeared to Abram, the patriarch said to them, “Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.” (Gen. 18:4) And when the two angels appeared to Lot in Sodom, he said to them, “My lords, turn aside, I pray you, to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet.” (Gen. 19:2)

*New:* But Jesus makes all things new. Though He was the guest of honor, He “rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. Then 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.” (John 13:4-5) Jesus has taken the age-old practice of the Old Covenant and given it a new perspective. He says to us, “Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.” (John 13:12-14)

Jesus has given us the example and has modeled New Covenant hospitality. We are to receive any and all as guest and to treat them with respect. The Rule of St. Benedict takes this one step further saying, “Let all guests who arrive be received as Christ.” And “Let the Abbot pour the water on the guest’s hands, and let both the Abbot and the whole brotherhood wash the feet of all the guests.” Jesus has taken what is old and He has made it new.

## **New Covenant**

*Old:* And now the meal begins. The wife of our host lights the candles at the head of the table. The first cup of wine is poured for each guest. The host hides the middle matzah, the *Afikomen*. It will be retrieved later. The story of the First Passover and Exodus is told, and a second cup of wine is poured. The host, then, pronounces the blessing, and dinner begins. After supper, the *Afikomen* is retrieved and is broken. The broken bread is distributed to all, and a third cup of wine is poured. Everything is done in accordance with tradition, a tradition dating back to Moses and the Exodus.

*New:* But Jesus makes all things new. When the *Afikomen* is broken, Jesus looks around at all of His disciples and declares, “This is My Body, broken for you.” The matzah is an unleavened bread made with stripes and having holes in it. It was prophesied by Isaiah that “With His stripes we are healed.” (Is. 53:5) and that “He was pierced for our transgressions.” (Is. 53:5) As Jesus holds it in His hands, the stripes and the holes are plain for all of us to see, just as His stripes and the holes in His Body will be visible tomorrow.

Moses sealed the Old Covenant with animals’ blood. He sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the altar, the stone tablets, and on all of the people. As he anointed the people with the blood, he said, “Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.” (Exodus 24:8) But Jesus made the promise new, saying, “This cup is the New Covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” (Luke 22:19) It is no accident that this cup in the Seder meal is called, “The Cup of Redemption.” Jesus has fulfilled the promise. He has sealed that covenant, not with the blood of animals, but by the stripes of His scourging, and with the holes in His hands and feet, and by His own blood poured out on the Cross. Jesus has made the Old Covenant New.

## **New Commandment**

*Old:* But the meal is not over. There is a fourth cup of wine to be poured. It is the cup of praise. The host prays, “Pure and Holy One, dwelling on high, raise up Your people with love and lead us to Zion in joyful song.” The hope is that God will instill the desire in each of us to love as we are commanded in the Torah: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might;” (Deut. 6:5) and “you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Lev. 19:18) And we pray that God will inspire us to honor the call to praise Him with voices lifted in the praise songs of the Holy Psalter: “O sing to the Lord a new song...” (Psalms 33, 96, 98, 144, 149) There is an expectation that Elijah will come, and that Messiah will not be far behind. Much rejoicing follows and the singing of celebratory songs. The blessing over the final cup is said, “We praise you Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine,” and the wine is consumed. The Seder is ended.

*New:* But Jesus makes all things new. This is not the end, but a new beginning. As the host prays that God will raise up His people with love, the Incarnation of love Himself gives us a new perspective: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” (John 13:34) Jesus says that His new commandment is not that we love our neighbor as we love ourselves, but to love one another “as I have loved you.” St. John tells us in His Gospel that “...when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.” (John 13:1) Jesus loves us to the end. He loves us with His life; He gives us His Body and His Blood; though sinless, He takes our sins upon Himself; and He serves us, even washing our feet, in His own humble servanthood. Jesus makes all things new.

*Narrator:* The Seder concludes with singing, and St. Mark tells us that “when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.” Jesus beckons to us now, “Come with Me.” But where is He going? Yes, to the Mount of Olives, to Gethsemane. And there, too, He will do something new.

New things can be exciting. But they can also be discomfiting, and sometimes even frightening. Look at any child on Christmas day as he or she opens the new gifts under the tree. Children love to receive new toys. But that same child may be just a bit fearful of a new school. Even adults may find joy in a new car, but may have difficulty adjusting to a new job.

Jesus makes all things new. And we may have trouble, just as His disciples did adjusting to these new changes. It was not until the Holy Spirit came that they could boldly embrace His new way. But His way, the New Way, is the way of truth, the way of life. Walk in His Way — it leads to Gethsemane. Watch with Him there tonight. But His Way also leads to Calvary. Do not be afraid to die with Him, for “if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.” (Romans 6:8)

Jesus said, “Behold, I make all things new.” “Come with Me,” Jesus beckons us. “My new Way leads to Resurrection and New Life.” “Come with Me,” says the Lord.