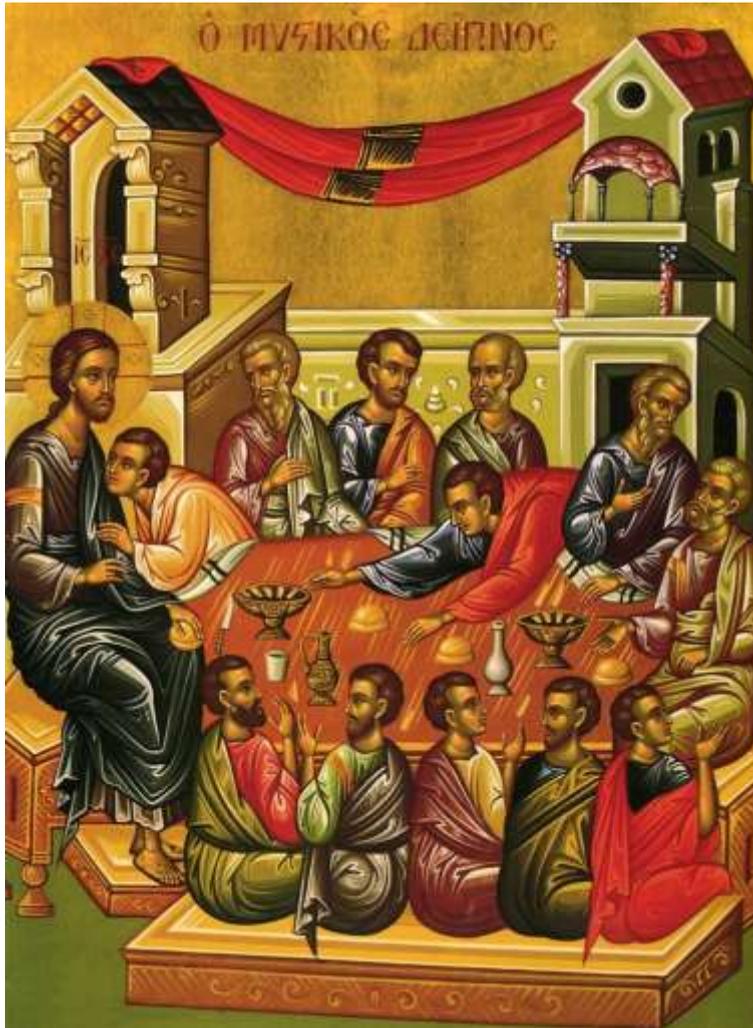


THE LAST SUPPER



Commentary by the Reverend Matthew Mead

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INTRODUCTION

This commentary examines the Scriptural accounts of the Last Supper, related material (Passover texts, John 6, Feeding of the 5000, etc.), and how the liturgical texts from the BCP 1979 (Maundy Thursday, Holy Eucharist) are built upon the Last Supper narratives.

Relevant passages of Scripture (with context when appropriate) from different sources are placed together into thematic units. Commentary follows each unit. The commentary examines important themes, words, or phrases within the units.

In general, I examine Mark, then Matthew, then Luke, then John, and where applicable Paul, Acts, and other sources. The reason for this should become obvious when reading the commentary, but to summarize: Mark is the simplest narrative; Matthew builds upon Mark; Luke builds upon Mark as well, but in a way that often mirrors John; John... well, John is John.

One obvious challenge with writing a commentary on the Last Supper is the large amount of speech material (Chapters 14-17) that John has placed between the Last Supper and the Arrest in the Garden. Is this part of the Last Supper, a separate discourse, or part of the Passion Narrative? I have decided to treat that material as a discourse on discipleship that uses the Last Supper as its launching point but is not really part of the Last Supper narrative, and I have not dealt with that material in depth.

ABOUT THE PASSOVER & THE FESTIVAL OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Exodus 12: 1-28 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: ²This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. ³Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. ⁴If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. ⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. ⁷They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸They shall eat the lamb that

same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ⁹ Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. ¹⁰ You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. ¹¹ This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the Lord. ¹² For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. ¹³ The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. ¹⁴ This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance. ¹⁵ Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day shall be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶ On the first day you shall hold a solemn assembly, and on the seventh day a solemn assembly; no work shall be done on those days; only what everyone must eat, that alone may be prepared by you. ¹⁷ You shall observe the festival of unleavened bread, for on this very day I brought your companies out of the land of Egypt: you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a perpetual ordinance. ¹⁸ In the first month, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day, you shall eat unleavened bread. ¹⁹ For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether an alien or a native of the land. ²⁰ You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your settlements you shall eat unleavened bread." ²¹ Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go, select lambs for your families, and slaughter the passover lamb. ²² Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood in the basin. None of you shall go outside the door of your house until morning. ²³ For the Lord will pass through to strike down the Egyptians; when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over that door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you down. ²⁴ You shall observe this rite as a perpetual ordinance for you and your children. ²⁵ When you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this observance. ²⁶ And when your children ask you, 'What do you mean by this observance?' ²⁷ you shall say, 'It is the passover sacrifice to the Lord, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses.'" And the people bowed down and worshiped. ²⁸ The Israelites went and did just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron.

Leviticus 23: 5-8 (NRSV)

- ◆ ⁵ In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, there shall be a passover offering to the Lord, ⁶ and on the fifteenth day of the same month is the festival of unleavened bread to the Lord; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. ⁷ On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not work at your occupations. ⁸ For seven days you shall present the Lord's offerings by fire; on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation: you shall not work at your occupations.

Numbers 28:16-25 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁶ On the fourteenth day of the first month there shall be a passover offering to the Lord. ¹⁷ And on the fifteenth day of this month is a festival; seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. ¹⁸ On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall not work at your occupations. ¹⁹ You shall offer an offering by fire, a burnt offering to the Lord: two young bulls, one ram, and seven male lambs a year old; see that they are without blemish. ²⁰ Their grain offering shall be of choice flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah shall you offer for a bull, and two-tenths for a ram; ²¹ one-tenth shall you offer for each of the seven lambs; ²² also one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you. ²³ You shall offer these in addition to the burnt offering of the morning, which belongs to the regular burnt offering. ²⁴ In the same way you shall offer daily, for seven days, the food of an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the Lord; it shall be offered in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering. ²⁵ And on the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not work at your occupations.

Commentary

The Festival of Unleavened Bread was (and is) a seven-day Jewish festival that begins and ends with two major Holy Days. The Day of Preparation is the 14th of Nissan (Nissan is a Jewish month), and that is when the Passover Lamb is prepared. The 15th of Nissan begins at sundown and that is when the lamb is to be eaten and the Day of Passover and the entire Festival of Unleavened Bread begins. All seven days require eating unleavened bread. The Festival ends with a holy convocation. The basic rubrics for celebrating the feast is found in Exodus 12, Leviticus 23, and Number 28. Relevant passages are provided above. In general, what the Bible says it what is done (as far as possible, considering there was no Temple yet built).

GENERAL NOTES ABOUT TIMELINES & CHRONOLOGIES

All of the events of the Passion (Last Supper, Betrayal, Trial, Crucifixion, Burial, Empty Tomb, and Resurrection) take place across a three-day period that begins on Thursday after sunset and continues to Sunday late afternoon/early evening. These days do not match up easily with our idea of normal weekdays because Jewish days begin at sundown. (As an aside, Christian liturgical time is still, generally, calculated the same way; consider for example that Christmas and Easter both begin on the Eve or night before.)

Thus, in terms of Jewish timing, Jesus' last week in Jerusalem is as follows:

- 1) **Day 1**, the first day of the week, begins on Saturday evening and continues until Sunday sunset. Palm Sunday happens on Day 1.
- 2) **Day 2** begins on Sunday evening and continues until Monday sunset.
- 3) **Day 3** begins on Monday evening and continues until Tuesday sunset.
- 4) **Day 4** begins on Tuesday evening and continues until Wednesday sunset.
- 5) **Day 5** begins on Wednesday evening and continues until Thursday sunset. Preparation for Last Supper (Thursday during the day) happens on Day 5.
- 6) **Day 6** begins on Thursday evening and continues until Friday sunset. The Last Supper, Trial of Jesus by the Sanhedrin (Thursday night), the trial before Pilate (and Herod in Luke) (Friday morning), and the Crucifixion (Friday afternoon), and Jesus' burial all take place on Day 6.
- 7) **Day 7** begins on Friday evening and continues until Saturday sunset. Day 7 is the Sabbath. Nothing happens in any Gospel narrative on Day 7.
- 8) **Day 8** begins on Saturday evening and continues until Sunday sunset. Day 8 of our cycle is Easter Day and also the First Day of the Jewish week. On Day 8 ("While it was still dark" in John; "at early dawn" in Luke; "at dawn" in Matthew; "when the sun had risen" in Mark) the women arrive at the empty tomb. Various resurrection appearances happen on Easter Day / Day 8 (Women at the tomb, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, Upper Room, Road to Emmaus) and in the days and weeks that follow.

Complicating matters even more is that fact that Matthew, Mark, Luke (the three Synoptic Gospels) place the Day of Passover on Day 6 while John places Passover on Day 7. In the Synoptic Gospel accounts Jesus directs his disciples on Thursday afternoon to prepare the Passover meal for that evening. In John, the Sabbath is the Passover. Bluntly, this means that in the Synoptics the Last Supper is a Passover meal, while in John the Last Supper is not a Passover meal.

Scholars have tried to calculate the dates and years to see why John might be a day off, and many theologians and preachers have willfully ignored the fact or tried to force a reconciliation, but there is really no way to reconcile the fact that John's Passover is a day later than the Synoptics. That said, there are several very good narrative and theological reasons that might explain why John shifts Passover one day later.

John's Last Supper contains no "This is my Body", "This is my Blood" Eucharistic material. All of the Eucharistic material in John is found during Passover a year earlier in chapter 6 at the Feeding of the 5000. In essence John has already made his Eucharistic points and attached them to Passover, and he is able to devote the Last Supper to what it means to be a disciple.

This allows John to use Passover in Holy Week in a different way. John makes a point of referring to Jesus as the "Lamb of God" from the start early in the Gospel narrative. He also makes a point in Chapter 19 of naming Friday (Thursday sunset to Saturday sundown) as the "Day of Preparation". Passover preparation involved, among other things, killing and butchering of the Passover lambs. Jesus, the Lamb of God, is killed at the exact same time the Passover Lambs are being killed. Throughout the Gospel narrative John has portrayed Jesus as the true/heavenly version of all sorts of Jewish feasts and customs. Jesus is the house of God (Bethel / Temple), bread from heaven (Passover / Manna), the living water (Jacob's Well / Purification), the light of the world (Hanukkah / Dedication) true shepherd (questions of the Messiah), etc. The Lamb identification is in line with all of this.

EVENTS LEADING TO THE LAST SUPPER

Mark

- ◆ **Sunday:** Mark 11:1ff: *Palm Sunday*
- ◆ **Monday:** Mark 11:15ff: *Cleansing of the Temple*
- ◆ **Tuesday:** Mark 11:20-13:37: *The Fig Tree; Jesus' authority; Parable of the vineyard; Taxes to Caesar; Question about the Resurrection; The great commandment; David's Son; Beware of showing pride; Widow's offering; Destruction of Jerusalem; Sayings about the end of the age*
- ◆ **Wednesday:** Mark 14:1-11: *Beginning of plot to kill Jesus; Jesus head anointed with oil by a woman at Simon's house; Judas agrees to plot to kill Jesus*
- ◆ **Thursday during the day:** Mark 14:12-16: *Jesus sends two disciples out to prepare the room for the Last Supper*

Matthew

- ◆ **Sunday:** Matthew 21:1ff: *Palm Sunday*
- ◆ **Monday:** Matthew 21:12ff: *Cleansing of the Temple*
- ◆ **Tuesday:** Matthew 21:18-25:46: *The Fig Tree; Jesus' authority; Parable of the vineyard; Parable of the marriage feast; Taxes to Caesar; Question about the Resurrection; The great commandment; David's Son; Woes to scribes and Pharisees; Destruction of Jerusalem; Sayings about the end of the age; Parable of the wise and foolish maidens; Parable of the talents; The Great Judgment*
- ◆ **Wednesday:** Matthew 26:1-16: *Beginning of plot to kill Jesus; Jesus head anointed with oil by a woman at Simon's house; Judas agrees to plot to kill Jesus*
- ◆ **Thursday during the day:** Matthew 26:17-19: *Jesus sends disciples out to prepare the room for the Last Supper*

Luke

- ◆ **Sunday:** Luke 19:28ff: *Palm Sunday*
- ◆ **Monday:** Luke 19:45ff: *Cleansing of the Temple*
- ◆ **Tuesday:** Luke 20:9-21:38: *Parable of the vineyard; Taxes to Caesar; Question about the Resurrection; David's Son; Beware of showing pride; Widow's offering; Destruction of the Temple; Sayings about the end of the age*
- ◆ **Wednesday:** Luke 22:1-6: *Beginning of plot to kill Jesus & Judas agrees to plot to kill Jesus*
- ◆ **Thursday during the day:** Luke 22:7-13: *Jesus sends Peter and John out to prepare the room for the Last Supper*

John

- ◆ **Saturday:** John 12:1ff: *Anointing of Jesus' feet at Bethany at Lazarus' house by Mary; Plot to kill Lazarus*
- ◆ **Sunday:** John 12:12-50: *Palm Sunday; Greeks come to Jesus; A voice from heaven; Conclusion of first part of John*

Mark, Matthew, Luke...

As noted above, the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) all follow the same timeline. Most Scholars think Mark was written first (which is why Mark is presented first in this commentary) and that Matthew and Luke knew Mark's Gospel (or some form of it) and followed the timeline Mark gives. Matthew and Luke also seem to share a common source (referred to as "Q" because the German word for source starts with the letter "Q").

Jesus arrives in Jerusalem the Sunday before Passover and the events of Palm Sunday occur. On Monday he cleanses the temple. On Tuesday he has a series of discussions with various groups over a variety of issues (taxes, the resurrection, David's son, etc.), he pronounces a series of woes on the religious leaders, and teaches his disciples in parables about the end of the age and the need to "watch".

The transition to the Last Supper starts two days before the Passover, on Wednesday when the plot to arrest Jesus is planned (Mark, Matthew, Luke) and Jesus stays in Bethany and has his head anointed with oil (Mark & Matthew – this scene happens much earlier in Luke's Gospel and serves a different purpose).

During the day on Thursday Jesus sends his disciples out to prepare the upper room.

... and John

John does not follow the same timeline, as noted above. In John Mary (she is not named in the other Gospels) anoints Jesus' feet (not head) with oil the Saturday evening/night before Palm Sunday, "six days before the Passover". On Palm Sunday Jesus enters Jerusalem. That day he meets Greeks and a voice from heaven speaks to him (this is as close as John gets to the Transfiguration).

There is no mention of preparing a room for the Passover in John.

WHEN & WHERE WAS THE LAST SUPPER

Mark 14 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁻² (*Plot to kill Jesus by priests*)
- ◆ ³⁻⁹ (*A woman anointed Jesus' head with oil at Simon's house*)
- ◆ ¹⁰⁻¹¹ (*Judas meets with priests*)
- ◆ ¹² On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" ¹³ So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, ¹⁴ and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹⁵ He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." ¹⁶ So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.
- ◆ ¹⁷⁻²¹ (*Jesus predicts betrayal*)
- ◆ ²²⁻²⁵ (*Bread & Wine / Body & Blood*)
- ◆ ²⁶ (*Exit to Mount of Olives after singing hymn*)
- ◆ ²⁵⁻³¹ (*Peter's Denial Foretold*)
- ◆ ^{32ff} (*Arrival in Gethsemane to pray*)

Matthew 26 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁻⁵ (*Plot to kill Jesus by priests*)
- ◆ ⁶⁻¹³ (*A woman anointed Jesus' head with oil at Simon's house*)
- ◆ ¹⁴⁻¹⁶ (*Judas meets with priests*)
- ◆ ¹⁷ On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" ¹⁸ He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'" ¹⁹ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.
- ◆ ²⁰⁻²⁵ (*Jesus predicts Judas' betrayal*)
- ◆ ²⁶⁻²⁹ (*Bread & Wine / Body & Blood*)
- ◆ ³⁰ (*Exit to Mount of Olives after singing hymn*)
- ◆ ³¹⁻³⁵ (*Peter's Denial Foretold*)
- ◆ ^{36ff} (*Arrival in Gethsemane to pray*)

Luke 22 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁻⁶ (*Plot to kill Jesus by priests & Judas meets with priests*)
- ◆ ⁷ Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸ So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it.” ⁹ They asked him, “Where do you want us to make preparations for it?” ¹⁰ “Listen,” he said to them, “when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house he enters ¹¹ and say to the owner of the house, ‘The teacher asks you, “Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’” ¹² He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there.” ¹³ So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.
- ◆ ¹⁴⁻²⁰ (*Bread & Wine / Body & Blood*)
- ◆ ²¹⁻²³ (*Jesus predicts betrayal*)
- ◆ ²⁴⁻³⁰ (*Dispute among disciples about which is the greatest*)
- ◆ ³¹⁻³⁴ (*Peter’s Denial Foretold*)
- ◆ ³⁵⁻³⁸ (*Purse, Bag, Sword*)

John 13 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹ Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ² The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper...
- ◆ ³⁻²⁰ (*Jesus Washes the disciple’s feet*)
- ◆ ²¹⁻³⁰ (*Jesus predicts Judas’ betrayal*)
- ◆ ³¹⁻³⁵ (*Jesus gives a new commandment*)
- ◆ ³⁶⁻³⁸ (*Peter’s Denial Foretold*)
- ◆ Chapters 14-17 (*Discourse about the Father and the Holy Spirit*)
- ◆ Chapter 14:31 (*Exit for the Kidron Valley*)
- ◆ Chapters 15-17 (*Discourse about discipleship, and about our relationship to one another, the world, and God*)
- ◆ Chapter 18 (*Jesus arrives in a Garden across the Kidron Valley*)

Commentary: “The (First) Day of Unleavened Bread”

Mark and Luke offer a somewhat confusing chronology. Mark and Luke both state that the Festival begins on the when the lambs were sacrificed and other preparations were made. Scholars think that it is likely in Mark’s case and certain in Luke’s case that the evangelist was

of a Gentile (non-Jewish) background. In other places their understanding of Jewish ritual is somewhat inexact. Luke admits from the start that he was not an eyewitness, and Mark never makes any claim to be one. Neither are part of the Twelve or named in the Gospel, though both names appear in Acts and in the Letters of Paul. Tradition has long held that Mark was a disciple of Peter and Luke was a disciple of Paul, so this mistake is understandable, considering they were probably Gentiles who were not part of Jesus' original group of disciples.

As he does from time to time, Matthew follows Mark's narrative and timeline, but he eliminates the mention of the lambs being sacrificed which serves, in some way, to correct the chronology. Matthew is listed among the Twelve, though the evangelist doesn't make a claim to be an eyewitness.

In any event, it is clear that all three Synoptics understand that the Last Supper was a Passover Meal.

John provides a cleared chronology and one that doesn't align with the Synoptics. He simply notes that the Last Supper occurred before the Passover.

Commentary: Minute Details and Differences

Mark and Matthew both open this scene with a question from the disciples: Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover? Luke omits the question, and narrates this as a command and instruction from Jesus.

Mark states that there are two disciples sent by Jesus to prepare the room. Luke names them at Peter and John. Matthew doesn't provide names or a number.

Mark and Luke note that the disciples will meet a man with a jar of water and should follow him. Matthew omits that detail.

Mark and Luke state that the disciples should speak to "the owner of the house". Matthew simply says "a certain man".

Mark and Luke both narrate a question/request from Jesus: "Where is my/the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" Matthew narrates this as a command from Jesus: "My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples." Mark's

use of “my guest room” implies that Jesus may have used this guest room on other occasions and that the owner was known to Jesus.

Mark and Luke explain that the owner will show them a large room upstairs where they should prepare. Matthew omits any information about a room.

John does not provide any of these details.

Commentary: On Harmonizations

Its interesting what is said and not said by each evangelist. It is easy to combine elements provided by all four evangelists and smooth over any chronological difficulties to come up with one “complete” narrative. See below, which is simply pulling phrases and verses from each Gospel to come up with a straightforward harmonization.

Harmonization from all four Gospels: John 13:1a; Mark 14:12b; Luke 22:8a; Luke 22:10-11a; Matthew 26:18b; Mark 14:14b-16

Now before the festival of the Passover, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, “Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?” So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Listen, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house he enters and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples. Where is my guest room?’ He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.” So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

That’s not actually what any one Gospel says, but it’s the story we all know because we have four Gospels, and it shows that the differences and even some of the inaccuracies that creep in when Gentiles try to explain Jewish customs are really not very important. The Last Supper was a Passover Meal (and in John’s case, it’s the night before for related narrative purposes), and it happened in an Upper Room. Interestingly, John never mentions an Upper Room, but plenty of preachers have explained how the Washing of Feet took place in an upper room, and also that on Easter Sunday the disciples had locked themselves in that same upper room.

SITTING DOWN TO SUPPER

Mark 14 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁻² (*Plot to kill Jesus by priests*)
- ◆ ³⁻⁹ (*A woman anoints Jesus' head with oil at Simon's house*)
- ◆ ¹⁰⁻¹¹ (*Judas meets with priests*)
- ◆ ¹²⁻¹⁶ (*Preparations for the Last Supper*)
- ◆ ¹⁷ When it was evening, he came with the twelve. ¹⁸ And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me."
- ◆ ^{18b-21} (*Jesus predicts betrayal*)
- ◆ ²²⁻²⁵ (*Bread & Wine / Body & Blood*)
- ◆ ²⁶ (*Exit to Mount of Olives after singing hymn*)
- ◆ ²⁵⁻³¹ (*Peter's Denial Foretold*)
- ◆ ^{32ff} (*Arrival in Gethsemane to pray*)

Matthew 26 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁻⁵ (*Plot to kill Jesus by priests*)
- ◆ ⁶⁻¹³ (*A woman anoints Jesus' head with oil at Simon's house*)
- ◆ ¹⁴⁻¹⁶ (*Judas meets with priests*)
- ◆ ¹⁷⁻¹⁹ (*Preparations for the Last Supper*)
- ◆ ²⁰ When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; ²¹ and while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me."
- ◆ ²¹⁻²⁵ (*Jesus predicts Judas' betrayal*)
- ◆ ²⁶⁻²⁹ (*Bread & Wine / Body & Blood*)
- ◆ ³⁰ (*Exit to Mount of Olives after singing hymn*)
- ◆ ³¹⁻³⁵ (*Peter's Denial Foretold*)
- ◆ ^{36ff} (*Arrival in Gethsemane to pray*)

Luke 22 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁻⁶ (*Plot to kill Jesus by priests & Judas meets with priests*)
- ◆ ⁷⁻¹³ (*Preparations for the Last Supper*)
- ◆ ¹⁴ When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵ He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; ¹⁶ for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”
- ◆ ¹⁷⁻²⁰ (*Bread & Wine / Body & Blood*)
- ◆ ²¹⁻²³ (*Jesus predicts betrayal*)
- ◆ ²⁴⁻³⁰ (*Dispute among disciples about which is the greatest*)
- ◆ ³¹⁻³⁴ (*Peter’s Denial Foretold*)
- ◆ ³⁵⁻³⁸ (*Purse, Bag, Sword*)
- ◆ ^{39ff} (*Exit to Mount of Olives to pray*)

John 13 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹ Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ² The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper...
- ◆ ³⁻²⁰ (*Jesus Washes the disciple’s feet*)
- ◆ ²¹⁻³⁰ (*Jesus predicts Judas’ betrayal*)
- ◆ ³¹⁻³⁵ (*Jesus gives a new commandment*)
- ◆ ³⁶⁻³⁸ (*Peter’s Denial Foretold*)
- ◆ Chapters 14-17 (*Discourse about the Father and the Holy Spirit*)
- ◆ Chapter 14:31 (*Exit for the Kidron Valley*)
- ◆ Chapters 15-17 (*Discourse about discipleship, and about our relationship to one another, the world, and God*)
- ◆ Chapter 18 (*Jesus arrives in a Garden across the Kidron Valley*)

Commentary: Minor Details

Mark, Matthew, and John start off the Last Supper with the betrayal of Judas. Luke places most of this material in an earlier part of the narrative. We will examine the betrayal of Judas in detail below.

Luke and John both note that the Last Supper takes place when “the hour” or “his hour” had come.

BETRAYAL PREDICTED AT THE LAST SUPPER

Mark 14 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁻² (*Plot to kill Jesus by priests*)
- ◆ ³⁻⁴ (*A woman anoints Jesus' head with oil at Simon's house*)
- ◆ ⁴ But some were there who said to one another in anger, "Why was the ointment wasted in this way?" ⁵ For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor." And they scolded her.
- ◆ ⁶⁻⁹ (*Jesus rebukes the disciples and explains what the anointing means*)
- ◆ ¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. ¹¹ When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.
- ◆ ¹²⁻¹⁶ (*Preparations for the Last Supper*)
- ◆ ¹⁷ When it was evening, he came with the twelve. ¹⁸ And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." ¹⁹ They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, "Surely, not I?" ²⁰ He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. ²¹ For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born."
- ◆ ²²⁻²⁵ (*Bread & Wine / Body & Blood*)
- ◆ ²⁶ (*Exit to Mount of Olives after singing hymn*)
- ◆ ²⁵⁻³¹ (*Peter's Denial Foretold*)
- ◆ ^{32ff} (*Arrival in Gethsemane to pray*)

Matthew 26 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁻⁵ (*Plot to kill Jesus by priests*)
- ◆ ⁶⁻⁷ (*A woman anoints Jesus' head with oil at Simon's house*)
- ◆ ⁸ But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said, "Why this waste?" ⁹ For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor."
- ◆ ¹⁰⁻¹³ (*Jesus rebukes the disciples and explains what the anointing means*)
- ◆ ¹⁴ Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and said, "What will you give me if I betray him to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶ And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.
- ◆ ¹⁷⁻¹⁹ (*Preparations for the Last Supper*)

- ◆ ²⁰ When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; ²¹ and while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.” ²² And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, “Surely not I, Lord?” ²³ He answered, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴ The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.” ²⁵ Judas, who betrayed him, said, “Surely not I, Rabbi?” He replied, “You have said so.”
- ◆ ²⁶⁻²⁹ (*Bread & Wine / Body & Blood*)
- ◆ ³⁰ (*Exit to Mount of Olives after singing hymn*)
- ◆ ³¹⁻³⁵ (*Peter's Denial Foretold*)
- ◆ ^{36ff} (*Arrival in Gethsemane to pray*)

Luke 22 (NRSV)

- ◆ Chapter 7:36-50 (*A woman anoints Jesus' feet with oil at Simon's house*)
- ◆ Chapter 22:1-2 (*Plot to kill Jesus by priests*)
- ◆ ³ Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve; ⁴ he went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers of the temple police about how he might betray him to them. ⁵ They were greatly pleased and agreed to give him money. ⁶ So he consented and began to look for an opportunity to betray him to them when no crowd was present.
- ◆ ⁷⁻¹³ (*Preparations for the Last Supper*)
- ◆ ¹⁴⁻²⁰ (*Bread & Wine / Body & Blood*)
- ◆ ²¹ But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. ²² For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!” ²³ Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.
- ◆ ²⁴⁻³⁰ (*Dispute among disciples about which is the greatest*)
- ◆ ³¹⁻³⁴ (*Peter's Denial Foretold*)
- ◆ ³⁵⁻³⁸ (*Purse, Bag, Sword*)
- ◆ ^{39ff} (*Exit to Mount of Olives to pray*)

John 6, 12 & 13 (NRSV)

- ◆ Chapter 6:1-69 (*Feeding of the 5000, Walking on Water, Bread of Life Discourse*)
- ◆ Chapter 6:70 Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve? Yet one of you is a devil.”⁷¹ He was speaking of Judas son of Simon Iscariot, for he, though one of the twelve, was going to betray him.
- ◆ Chapter 12:1-3 (*Mary anoints Jesus’ feet with oil at Lazarus’ house*)
- ◆ Chapter 12:4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said,⁵ “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii[b] and the money given to the poor?”⁶ (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.)
- ◆ Chapter 12:10 – 13 (*Jesus rebukes Judas and explains what the anointing means*)
- ◆ Chapter 12:9-11 (*Plot to kill Lazarus*)
- ◆ Chapter 12:12-50 (*Palm Sunday*)
- ◆ Chapter 13:1-2 Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.² The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper...
- ◆ Chapter 13:1 – 20 (*Jesus Washes the disciple’s feet*)
- ◆ Chapter 13:22 The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking.²³ One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining next to him;²⁴ Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking.²⁵ So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?”²⁶ Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot.²⁷ After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “Do quickly what you are going to do.”²⁸ Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him.²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the festival”; or, that he should give something to the poor.³⁰ So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.
- ◆ Chapter 13:31 – 35 (*Jesus gives a new commandment*)
- ◆ Chapter 13:36 – 38 (*Peter’s Denial Foretold*)
- ◆ Chapters 14:17 (*Discourse about the Father and the Holy Spirit*)
- ◆ Chapter 14:31 (*Exit for the Kidron Valley*)
- ◆ Chapters 15:17 (*Discourse about discipleship, and about our relationship to one another, the world, and God*)
- ◆ Chapter 18 (*Jesus arrives in a Garden across the Kidron Valley*)

Commentary: Jesus is anointed with oil

The prediction of betrayal by one of the disciples is narrated in all four Gospels. There are similarities and differences between each account.

The scene is immediately preceded in three of the four Gospels by a woman anointing Jesus with oil. This anointing scene happens in Mark and Matthew at the house of Simon the leper on the evening before the Last Supper. In Mark and Matthew, the woman anoints Jesus head with oil. The disciples rebuke her in anger for wasting money on the oil. Jesus in turn rebukes the disciples and explains that what she does is in preparation for his burial. Simon identified as “the leper” in Matthew and Mark. It is unlikely that this Simon is Peter, but it might be Simon the Canaanite aka Simon the Zealot, though there is no support in the text for that interpretation.

This anointing scene in John happens several days earlier, the night before Palm Sunday. In John, the anointing takes place at the home of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, and the woman is identified as Mary. In John, as in Luke, the woman anoints Jesus’ feet, rather than his head. John identifies the angry disciples as Judas, and explains that Judas kept their common purse and was a thief.

This scene takes place much earlier in Jesus’ ministry in Luke at the home of a Pharisee named Simon. As in John, the woman anoints Jesus’ feet with oil. There is no mention of angry disciples in Luke and no one rebukes the woman. Her actions are contrasted by Jesus with the lack of hospitality shown by Simon.

Only John uses this scene to show that Judas was a thief. It is worth noting that Mark and Matthew both use this scene to show all of the disciples in an unfavorable light. Luke will do a similar thing during the actual Last Supper narrative when he tells us the disciples were arguing about who is the greatest among them.

Commentary: Judas goes to the priests

Mark, Matthew and Luke narrate when and how Judas joins the plot against Jesus. John does not narrate this, but his chronology is somewhat different – Judas’ plot was first noted in Chapter 6 in John.

Mark and Matthew bookend the scene where Jesus is anointed with oil with the beginning of the plot to kill Jesus and Judas joining that plot. Luke narrated the anointing scene much earlier, and so there is no interlude breaking up the plot: Judas arrives as they are planning.

Commentary: Satan/Judas

Luke and John both note that Satan enters into Judas. Luke notes that this happens when Judas meets with the priests. In Chapter 6 of John, Jesus identified Judas as “a devil”. Chapter 13 of John opens with a note that “the devil” had already put betrayal into Judas heart. Also in Chapter 13 during the supper Satan enters Judas immediately after Jesus identifies him as the betrayer.

Commentary: Identifying the Betrayer

Mark, Matthew, and John share “dipping bread” as the means of identifying Judas. Luke does not include this detail.

In Mark, Jesus never identifies Judas as his betrayer. He says, “the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table.” And when asked who, he says, “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me.” Mark provides the second least overt identification (behind only Luke) – it could be any one of the twelve who happens to be dipping in the bowl.

In Matthew, Jesus does not initially identify Judas as his betrayer. He says, “one of you will betray me.” And when asked who, he says, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me.” When Judas says, “Surely not I, Rabbi?” Jesus replies, “You have said so.” Matthew offers an overt identification of Judas by Jesus, but it is not clear if anyone else overheard what he said.

In Luke, Jesus does not identify Judas as his betrayer until later in the Gethsemane. At the Last Supper he says: “the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table.” The question of who would betray him turns into a dispute about who is the greatest. Luke offers the least overt identification – it could be anyone whose hand is on the table.

In John, after being questioned about the betrayer, Jesus tells the Beloved Disciple that he will identify the betrayer by giving him a piece of bread dipped in the dish. He dipped the piece of bread and gave it to Judas. After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into Judas. Jesus said to him, “Do quickly what you are going to do.” John offers an overt identification of Judas by Jesus, and that information is shared with the Beloved Disciple and probably Peter. The other disciples misunderstand what has happened. The scene turns to night when Judas leaves.

BREAD & WINE / BODY & BLOOD

Mark 14 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁻² (*Plot to kill Jesus by priests*)
- ◆ ³⁻⁹ (*A woman anoints Jesus' head with oil at Simon's house*)
- ◆ ¹⁰⁻¹¹ (*Judas meets with priests*)
- ◆ ¹²⁻¹⁶ (*Preparations for the Last Supper*)
- ◆ ¹⁷⁻²¹ (*Jesus predicts betrayal*)
- ◆ ²² And as they were eating, he took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." ²³ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. ²⁴ And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. ²⁵ Truly, I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."
- ◆ ²⁶ (*Exit to Mount of Olives after singing hymn*)
- ◆ ²⁵⁻³¹ (*Peter's Denial Foretold*)
- ◆ ^{32ff} (*Arrival in Gethsemane to pray*)

Matthew 26 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁻⁵ (*Plot to kill Jesus by priests*)
- ◆ ⁶⁻¹³ (*A woman anoints Jesus' head with oil at Simon's house*)
- ◆ ¹⁴⁻¹⁶ (*Judas meets with priests*)
- ◆ ¹⁷⁻¹⁹ (*Preparations for the Last Supper*)
- ◆ ²⁰⁻²⁵ (*Jesus predicts Judas' betrayal*)
- ◆ ²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." ²⁷ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; ²⁸ for this is my blood of the[d] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."
- ◆ ³⁰ (*Exit to Mount of Olives after singing hymn*)
- ◆ ³¹⁻³⁵ (*Peter's Denial Foretold*)
- ◆ ^{36ff} (*Arrival in Gethsemane to pray*)

Luke 22 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁻⁶ (*Plot to kill Jesus by priests & Judas meets with priests*)
- ◆ ⁷⁻¹³ (*Preparations for the Last Supper*)
- ◆ ¹⁴ When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵ He said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; ¹⁶ for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” ¹⁷ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; ¹⁸ for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” ¹⁹ Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁰ And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.
- ◆ ²¹⁻²³ (*Jesus predicts betrayal*)
- ◆ ²⁴⁻³⁰ (*Dispute among disciples about which is the greatest*)
- ◆ ³¹⁻³⁴ (*Peter’s Denial Foretold*)
- ◆ ³⁵⁻³⁸ (*Purse, Bag, Sword*)
- ◆ ^{39ff} (*Exit to Mount of Olives to pray*)

Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 11 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁷ Now in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. ¹⁸ For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it. ¹⁹ Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine. ²⁰ When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord’s supper. ²¹ For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. ²² What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you!
- ◆ ²³ **For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁵ In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.**

- ◆ ²⁷ Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. ³⁰ For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. ³¹ But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged. ³² But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. ³³ So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. ³⁴ If you are hungry, eat at home, so that when you come together, it will not be for your condemnation. About the other things I will give instructions when I come.

John 13 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁻²⁰ *(Jesus Washes the disciple's feet at the Last Supper)*
- ◆ ²¹⁻³⁰ *(Jesus predicts Judas' betrayal)*
- ◆ ³¹⁻³⁵ *(Jesus gives a new commandment)*
- ◆ ³⁶⁻³⁸ *(Peter's Denial Foretold)*
- ◆ Chapters 14-17 *(Discourse about the Father and the Holy Spirit)*
- ◆ Chapter 14:31 *(Exit for the Kidron Valley)*
- ◆ Chapters 15-17 *(Discourse about discipleship, and about our relationship to one another, the world, and God)*
- ◆ Chapter 18 *(Jesus arrives in a Garden across the Kidron Valley)*

John 6 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹ After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ² A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³ Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵ When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶ He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷ Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." ⁸ One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹ "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" ¹⁰ Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹ **Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated;** so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹² When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." ¹³ So they

gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets.¹⁴ When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, “This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.”¹⁵ When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

- ◆ ¹⁶⁻²¹ (*Jesus walks on water*)
- ◆ ²² The next day the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there. They also saw that Jesus had not got into the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone.²³ Then some boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks.²⁴ So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.
- ◆ ²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?”²⁶ Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.²⁷ Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the **food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.** For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.”²⁸ Then they said to him, “What must we do to perform the works of God?”²⁹ Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”³⁰ So they said to him, “What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing?”³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”³² Then Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, **but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.**³³ For **the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.**”³⁴ They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”
- ◆ ³⁵ Jesus said to them, “**I am the bread of life.** Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.³⁷ Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away;³⁸ for **I have come down from heaven,** not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.⁴⁰ This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.”
- ◆ ⁴¹ Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, “**I am the bread that came down from heaven.**”⁴² They were saying, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I have come down from

heaven?”⁴³ Jesus answered them, “Do not complain among yourselves. ⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. ⁴⁶ Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸ **I am the bread of life.** ⁴⁹ Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰ **This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.** ⁵¹ **I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.**”

- ◆ ⁵² The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “**How can this man give us his flesh to eat?**” ⁵³ So Jesus said to them, “**Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.** ⁵⁴ **Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day;** ⁵⁵ **for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink.** ⁵⁶ **Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.** ⁵⁷ **Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me.** ⁵⁸ **This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.**”
- ◆ ⁵⁹ He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.
- ◆ ⁶⁰ When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?” ⁶¹ But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, “Does this offend you? ⁶² Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³ It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ But among you there are some who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. ⁶⁵ And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.”
- ◆ ⁶⁶ Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.” ⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve? Yet one of you is a devil.” ⁷¹ He was speaking of Judas son of Simon Iscariot, for he, though one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

Commentary: Dominical Sacrament

The ecumenical church (across basically every denomination) recognizes two “Dominical” Sacraments: Baptism and the Eucharist. They are “Dominical” because they come to us directly from Jesus.

Baptism is “Dominical” in that it comes to us from the fact that Jesus himself submitted to John’s Baptism, that he himself (or at least his disciples) baptized during his ministry, and he commanded his disciples (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:5) to baptize.

The Eucharist is “Dominical” in that it comes to us from Jesus who partook of the Last Supper, eating bread which he identified as his Body, and drinking wine which he identified as his Blood, and he commanded his disciples to “do this in remembrance” of him.

Commentary: Institution of the Eucharist

The Synoptics and Paul share a common Bread & Body / Wine & Blood tradition – these passages are known variously as the “Words of Institution” or the Institution of the Eucharist and they are the basis for the Dominical Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. John’s account of the Last Supper does not have an Institution Narrative, but the Feeding of the 5000 contains very similar themes and language.

Commentary: During or after supper

Mark and Matthew both note that “as they were eating” Jesus took bread, etc., and he took a cup.

In Luke there are two cups (more on that below). During supper Jesus takes, etc., the first cup (“divide this among yourselves”) and the bread (“this is my Body”). The second cup (“this is the new covenant in my Blood”) is after supper.

In Paul Jesus takes, etc. bread during supper, and then after supper he takes, etc., the cup.

Commentary: Giving Thanks vs. Blessing

The word “give thanks” in Greek is “eucharist”. The word “bless” is “eulogo”. The words are both used on numerous occasions.

At the Last Supper Mark and Matthew both use “bless” for the bread. At the Last Supper Luke and Paul use “gave thanks” for the bread.

At the Last Supper Mark and Matthew use “gave thanks” for the cup.
At the Last Supper Luke and Paul say Jesus did “the same” with the cup.

Mark uses “bless” when Jesus breaks bread in the Feeding of the 5000, Chapter 6:41.
Matthew uses “bless” when Jesus breaks bread in the Feeding of the 5000, Chapter 14:19.
Luke uses “bless” when Jesus breaks bread in the Feeding of the 5000, Chapter 9:16.
John uses “give thanks” when Jesus breaks bread in the Feeding of the 5000, Chapter 6:11 and again in 6:23.

Mark uses “give thanks” when Jesus breaks bread in the Feeding of the 4000, Chapter 8:6.
Matthew uses “give thanks” when Jesus breaks bread in the Feeding of the 4000, Chapter 18:36.

Luke uses, “bless” when Jesus breaks bread with the two disciples after the resurrection on the road to Emmaus, Chapter 24:30.

John doesn’t mention blessing, giving thanks, or breaking, but he does mention bread in the fireside meal on the sea shore after the Resurrection, Chapter 21: 13.

In Acts, Luke uses “give thanks” when Paul celebrates the Eucharist in Chapter 27:35. Up to that point the Eucharist was referred to simply as “breaking bread” but in this case, Paul overtly mirrors the actions of Jesus at the Last Supper.

Commentary: John and the Eucharist

As noted above, both the Feeding of the 5000 and Feeding of the 4000 feature breaking bread and “blessing” or “giving thanks” over the bread. In Synoptics, these references to the Eucharist are clear, but not glaringly obvious. In Chapter 6 of John, after the Feeding of the 5000, which takes place on Passover a year (or more) earlier, Jesus uses overt Eucharistic language that stands out to the point that the reference to the Eucharist is unmistakable. In John, Jesus “gives thanks” (eucharist) over the bread in verse 11, and in the discourse afterwards he refers to himself again and again as the bread from heaven. Finally, in verses 52-58, Jesus explains that believers must eat his flesh and drink his blood because he is the bread from heaven.

Commentary: The Second Cup & Drinking in the Kingdom of God

Luke has a two cup events. The words about “drinking in the kingdom” that Luke uses over the first cup are similar to the second set of words that Mark and Matthew use over the cup.

The words that Luke uses over the second cup are similar to what Paul says at the cup “after supper”. It is possible that Luke (who admits he wasn’t an eyewitness) defers to Paul’s “after supper” cup, but didn’t feel he could eliminate Mark’s and Matthew’s during supper cup, and so he ended up with two separate statements about the cup.

Commentary: Comparing the BCP 1979 Eucharistic Prayers

In the Episcopal Church, BCP 1979, Eucharistic Prayer 1 and 2, and Eucharistic Prayer A, B, and D take the bread formulary from Paul and Luke (minus the word “loaf” in Luke). Mark and Matthew both write that Jesus “blessed” the bread, whereas Luke and Paul note that Jesus “gave thanks” over the bread.

In the Episcopal Church, BCP 1979, Eucharistic Prayer C takes the bread formulary from Mark and Matthew. Mark and Matthew both write that Jesus “blessed” the bread, whereas Luke and Paul note that Jesus “gave thanks” over the bread.

In the Episcopal Church, BCP 1979, Eucharistic Prayer 1 and 2, and Eucharistic Prayer A, B, and D take the timing of the cup “after supper” from Paul and Luke.

In the Episcopal Church, BCP 1979, Eucharistic Prayer 1 and 2, and Eucharistic Prayer A, B, C, and D take the first part of the cup formulary from Matthew. Mark does not mention “forgiveness of sins”. Luke and Paul do not mention “forgiveness of sins” or that “the cup is poured out for many”.

In the Episcopal Church, BCP 1979, Eucharistic Prayer 1 and 2, and Eucharistic Prayer A, B, C, and D take the second part of the cup formulary from Paul: “Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

PETER'S DENIAL FORETOLD

Mark 14 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁻² (*Plot to kill Jesus by priests*)
- ◆ ³⁻⁹ (*A woman anoints Jesus' head with oil at Simon's house*)
- ◆ ¹⁰⁻¹¹ (*Judas meets with priests*)
- ◆ ¹²⁻¹⁶ (*Preparations for the Last Supper*)
- ◆ ¹⁷⁻²¹ (*Jesus predicts betrayal*)
- ◆ ²²⁻²⁵ (*Bread & Wine / Body & Blood*)
- ◆ ²⁶ (*Exit to Mount of Olives after singing hymn*)
- ◆ ²⁷ And Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'²⁸ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee."²⁹ Peter said to him, "Even though all become deserters, I will not."³⁰ Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times."³¹ But he said vehemently, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And all of them said the same.
- ◆ ^{32ff} (*Arrival in Gethsemane to pray*)

Matthew 26 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁻⁵ (*Plot to kill Jesus by priests*)
- ◆ ⁶⁻¹³ (*A woman anoints Jesus' head with oil at Simon's house*)
- ◆ ¹⁴⁻¹⁶ (*Judas meets with priests*)
- ◆ ¹⁷⁻¹⁹ (*Preparations for the Last Supper*)
- ◆ ²⁰⁻²⁵ (*Jesus predicts Judas' betrayal*)
- ◆ ²⁶⁻²⁹ (*Bread & Wine / Body & Blood*)
- ◆ ³⁰ (*Exit to Mount of Olives after singing hymn*)
- ◆ ³¹ Then Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'³² But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee."³³ Peter said to him, "Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you."³⁴ Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times."³⁵ Peter said to him, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And so said all the disciples.
- ◆ ^{36ff} (*Arrival in Gethsemane to pray*)

Luke 22 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁻⁶ (*Plot to kill Jesus by priests & Judas meets with priests*)
- ◆ ⁷⁻¹³ (*Preparations for the Last Supper*)
- ◆ ¹⁴⁻²⁰ (*Bread & Wine / Body & Blood*)
- ◆ ²¹⁻²³ (*Jesus predicts betrayal*)
- ◆ ²⁴⁻³⁰ (*Dispute among disciples about which is the greatest*)
- ◆ ³¹ “Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, ³² but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” ³³ And he said to him, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!” ³⁴ Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you have denied three times that you know me.”
- ◆ ³⁵⁻³⁸ (*Purse, Bag, Sword*)
- ◆ ^{39ff} (*Exit to Mount of Olives to pray*)

John 13 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁻²⁰ (*Jesus Washes the disciple’s feet*)
- ◆ ²¹⁻³⁰ (*Jesus predicts Judas’ betrayal*)
- ◆ ³¹⁻³⁵ (*Jesus gives a new commandment*)
- ◆ ³⁶ Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered, “Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward.” ³⁷ Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” ³⁸ Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times.
- ◆ Chapters 14-17 (*Discourse about the Father and the Holy Spirit*)
- ◆ Chapter 14:31 (*Exit for the Kidron Valley*)
- ◆ Chapters 15-17 (*Discourse about discipleship, and about our relationship to one another, the world, and God*)
- ◆ Chapter 18 (*Jesus arrives in a Garden across the Kidron Valley*)

Commentary: Scattered Flock

In Mark and Matthew, Jesus prefaces the prediction of Peter’s denial with a quote from Zechariah 13:7 about the sheep scattering.

John uses the scattered sheep image in Chapter 10 (Good Shepherd) and again in Chapter 16:32: “The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone.” John does not quote this Zechariah verse.

Luke uses the words scattered several times in Acts (5:37; 8:1; 8:7; 11:19). Luke does not quote this Zechariah verse.

Commentary: Satan

Luke, alone, uses Satan in reference to Peter at the Last Supper. In Luke, up to this point, Jesus has not mentioned Satan in a context that involves Peter.

Satan is mentioned in Mark 8:33 and Matthew 16:23, when Jesus said to Peter, “Get behind me Satan,” in reference to Peter’s refusal to accept that Jesus must suffer and die.

Commentary: Cock Crows

In Mark the cock will crow twice. The other evangelists do not have a second crowing.

Commentary: Deny that you know me

In Luke, Jesus specifies that Peter will deny “that you know me”. The other evangelists do not specify what Peter will deny.

Commentary: Peter repeats himself and the disciples join him

In Mark and Matthew Peter replies to Jesus prediction, “Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.” The other disciples say the same thing.

Luke and John do not mention this reply or the others.

Commentary: Peter will follow afterwards

In John Jesus predicts that Peter will follow “afterwards”. Peter asks why he cannot follow “now”, and insists that he will lay down his life. Jesus questions that, and predicts he will deny him instead. After the resurrection Jesus will predict Peter’s martyrdom, John 21:18-19.

In the scene in Luke, Peter offers his own prediction that he will “go to prison and to death”. He will go to prison in Acts, and die in Rome.

SERVICE & DISCIPLESHIP

Mark (NRSV)

- ◆ Chapter 9:1 – 32 (*Second Passion Prediction*)
- ◆ Chapter 9:33 Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the way?”³⁴ But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest.³⁵ He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.”³⁶ Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them,³⁷ “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.”
- ◆ Chapter 10ff (*Third Passion Prediction*)
- ◆ Chapter 10:35 James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.”³⁶ And he said to them, “What is it you want me to do for you?”³⁷ And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.”³⁸ But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”³⁹ They replied, “We are able.” Then Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized;⁴⁰ but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”⁴¹ When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John.⁴² So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them.⁴³ But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant,⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.⁴⁵ For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Matthew (NRSV)

- ◆ Chapter 17ff (*Second Passion Prediction*)
- ◆ Chapter 18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”² He called a child, whom he put among them,³ and said, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.⁴ Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.⁵ Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.
- ◆ Chapter 20ff (*Various teachings, Third Passion Prediction*)

- ◆ Chapter 20:20 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favor of him. ²¹ And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.” ²² But Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.” ²³ He said to them, “You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.”²⁴ When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. ²⁵ But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ²⁶ It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; ²⁸ just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Luke 22 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹⁻⁶ (*Plot to kill Jesus by priests & Judas meets with priests*)
- ◆ ⁷⁻¹³ (*Preparations for the Last Supper*)
- ◆ ¹⁴⁻²⁰ (*Bread & Wine / Body & Blood*)
- ◆ ²¹⁻²³ (*Jesus predicts betrayal*)
- ◆ ²⁴ A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. ²⁵ But he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. ²⁶ But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. ²⁷ For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.
- ◆ ²⁸ “You are those who have stood by me in my trials; ²⁹ and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, ³⁰ so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
- ◆ ³¹⁻³⁴ (*Peter’s Denial Foretold*)
- ◆ ³⁵ He said to them, “When I sent you out without a purse, bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?” They said, “No, not a thing.” ³⁶ He said to them, “But now, the one who has a purse must take it, and likewise a bag. And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one. ³⁷ For I tell you, this scripture must be fulfilled in me, ‘And he was counted among the lawless’; and indeed what is written about me is being fulfilled.” ³⁸ They said, “Lord, look, here are two swords.” He replied, “It is enough.”
- ◆ ^{39ff} (*Exit to Mount of Olives to pray*)

John 13 (NRSV)

- ◆ ¹ Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ² The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper
- ◆ ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴ got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. ⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸ Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."
- ◆ ¹² After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷ If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. ¹⁸ I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the scripture, 'The one who ate my bread[e] has lifted his heel against me.' ¹⁹ I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he. ²⁰ Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me."
- ◆ ^{21–30} (*Jesus predicts Judas' betrayal*)
- ◆ ³¹ When [Judas] had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³² If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³ Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' ³⁴ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
- ◆ ^{36–38} (*Peter's Denial Foretold*)

- ◆ Chapters 14-17 (*Discourse about the Father and the Holy Spirit*)
- ◆ Chapter 14:31 (*Exit for the Kidron Valley*)
- ◆ Chapters 15-17 (*Discourse about discipleship, and about our relationship to one another, the world, and God*)
- ◆ Chapter 18 (*Jesus arrives in a Garden across the Kidron Valley*)

Commentary: Foot-washing

Only John mentions a washing of feet. In John's Gospel, Jesus often uses an example (healing or sign of some sort) as a platform for an extended discourse. In this case, the foot-washing, along with the betrayal of Judas, and the prediction of Peter's denial all serve as the platform for an extended discourse on what it means to be a disciple. A disciple is one who serves (foot-washing), a disciple is one with Jesus through thick and thin (contrary to Judas and Peter's eventual denial).

Luke may not have a foot-washing, but in his Gospel, like John's, the Last Supper includes a significant service component. In Luke Jesus states that he is among them as one who serves.

Commentary: Mandatum / Love Commandment

The Mandatum (*mandatum* means "command") or "Love Commandment" is found only in John: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."

The obvious parallels in the synoptic Gospels (Mark 12, Matthew 22, Luke 10) is the Summary of the Law: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40). That Summary of the Law is not a command, and it references love of neighbor, rather than the self-giving love of Jesus.

"Love" dominates the farewell/discipleship discourse of John 14-17. The Love Commandment is repeated in John 15:12 and 15:17. Jesus' giving of himself is the model of discipleship, it is based on his love for the world, and he commands his disciples to follow that model. Love is a very important theme in Johannine literature: 1 John 4:8 "God is Love".

Commentary: The greatest / Drinking the cup and sitting on thrones

In Luke the argument of who is the greatest ensues after Jesus predicts that someone will betray him. This argument takes place in Matthew and Mark after the second Passion Prediction. Luke uses this argument for Jesus' teaching on what it means to be a disciple: service to others.

In Luke the argument of who is the greatest is mixed with a teaching about drinking the cup that Jesus drinks and sitting on thrones judging the nations. This material appears in Mark and Matthew after the third Passion Prediction.

Commentary: Discipleship

All four Gospels contain teachings about discipleship and service. All four also use the actions of the disciples themselves (arguing about who is the greatest) as foils for what discipleship looks like. Luke and John use the Last Supper and Jesus' own service to the disciples as an additional example, though Mark and Matthew both note that "the Son of Man came to serve". Finally, Luke and John both use Judas as an additional example of what discipleship does not look like.

Commentary: Two swords

Luke adds 22:35-38, and there is no parallel passage in Mark, Matthew, or John. The point is presumably that they will not need many worldly things when they are sent out as servants. The disciples' response about two swords can (should?) be interpreted that they still don't understand – they were after all just arguing about who is the greatest – and they are still not ready. Jesus' response "It is enough" can (should?) be translated "Enough!" which would indicate that he's heard enough of their misunderstanding and his hour has come. As a narrative device, the mention of swords also prepares the reader for the events in the garden when a sword will be used.

Conclusion

Mark and Matthew are concerned with narrating the specifics and little more. This serves their purpose of telling the story and being generally unsympathetic toward the disciples who will fail but will be redeemed after the resurrection.

Luke and John add commentary about discipleship which necessitates softening their portrayal somewhat.

Matthew, Mark and Luke have peppered all of Jesus' ministry with his comments on discipleship. Matthew and Luke contain quite a bit more than Mark (Sermon on the Mount and Sermon on the Plain; numerous parables). Luke likewise adds a significant final word on discipleship (failure and redemption) at the Last Supper.

John uses the Last Supper as his primary comment on discipleship. Some of the details are narrated (Supper, Peter's denial, Judas betrayal), but the Eucharistic elements are removed completely and placed earlier in the narrative (a year before, on Passover). This allows John to use those details (Washing of Feet, Peter's denial, Judas betrayal) to emphasize what it means and does not mean to be a disciple.

Each Gospel moves directly from the Last Supper to the garden scene where the failure of the disciples will continue (they fall asleep while watching) and the predictions of the betrayal of Judas and the scattering of the disciples will come true.

FINAL THOUGHTS ON LITURGY

Maundy Thursday

The name Maundy Thursday is taken from "Mandatum", and it is the day that we (can) mirror Jesus by Washing Feet. Anthems assigned for that portion of the Liturgy are about the Love Commandment and are taken from John's Gospel. Other anthems tend to be based on 1 Cor 13 (the Love Hymn).

The Readings for the day do an excellent job of getting all of the content in. The OT is Passover (Exodus 12). The Psalm incorporates elements of the Passion Predictions. The Epistle is Paul's account of the Last Supper Institution Narrative. Gospel assigned for the day is the Foot-washing and Love Commandment from John. I would argue that all of chapter 13 should be read for the full context.

Aside from the foot washing, the BCP Maundy Thursday liturgy is light on details. The day has traditionally been celebrated as a Feast Day (white/Gloria/bells, etc.) in keeping with the content of the liturgy which is about service and discipleship, rather than repentance.

The Reservation of the Sacrament and stripping of the Altar are liturgical lead ins for Good Friday more than elements of Maundy Thursday.