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Gathering with God

Bring a piece of bread and place it on a plate in front of you and breaking it say:

Christ, You are the Bread of Life. May Your Grace and Love nourish this place, and the people it
– be present in all we do, all we say as we consider your Word this day. Amen!



Devotion

On this Wednesday of holy week, we consider Christ's final words to His disciples as they gathered for Passover. Jesus was gathering His disciples together to celebrate this most holy feast in the Jewish Calendar, and he chose to have with his disciples – his new family. They gather together around the table in the upper room and he broke bread with them and he called them to understand the new institution that He was putting into place. The Communion we celebrate ourselves! Jesus spoke to his disciples through this beautiful ritual of the Passover, and in one gesture – he not only spoke of the pain and the difficulty of what he was about to go through but also the reality that sin plays in leading Him to go and give His life for us. So that we might be free, so that we might experience liberty.

John 13:21-31 [Contemporary English Version]

²¹ After Jesus had said these things, he was deeply troubled and told his disciples, "I tell you for certain that one of you will betray me." ²² They were confused about what he meant. And they just stared at each other.

²³ Jesus' favorite disciple was sitting next to him at the meal, ²⁴ and Simon motioned for that disciple to find out which one Jesus meant. ²⁵ So the disciple leaned toward Jesus and asked, "Lord, which one of us are you talking about?"

²⁶ Jesus answered, "I will dip this piece of bread in the sauce and give it to the one I was talking about." Then Jesus dipped the bread and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷ Right then Satan took control of Judas.

Jesus said, "Judas, go quickly and do what you have to do."

²⁸ No one at the meal understood what Jesus meant.

²⁹ But because Judas was in charge of the money, some of them thought that Jesus had told him to buy something they needed for the festival. Others thought that Jesus had told him to give some money to the poor.

³⁰ Judas took the piece of bread and went out.

It was already night.

³¹ After Judas had gone, Jesus said:

Now the Son of Man will be given glory, and he will bring glory to God.

This passage reminds us that Jesus already expected to be betrayed, that Jesus understood that betrayal would come from one as close as His very own 'family'. You see, He gathered His disciples together instead of gathering with His family for his final moments. In another passage Jesus said:

"Who is my mother and who are my brothers?" Then he pointed to his disciples and said,

"These are my mother and my brothers!"

Matthew 12:47-49 [CEV]

You see, in this way we also, although we ourselves have caused the sin that has taken Jesus to that tomb – we are also responsible. And just like how Judas' betrayal means that Jesus still breaks bread with him and sends him out on his mission, so Christ accepts us – in our sin, in our flawed state. So that we would be the ones who would send Him to die on the cross that even in that, He can express love for us, cherishing of us, a desire to see us saved!

That is the awesomeness of the God we celebrate this Easter, of the Christ whose resurrection we look forward to this coming Sunday. May God's Word bless you and be with you this day, as you consider Jesus Christ, His love for us and the way in which He has expressed that through His death and resurrection.

Prayer

Say this aloud, if you are with others you may wish to share the paragraphs between you.

Lord Jesus Christ,

As you broke bread with sinners, so we too break bread.

As you welcomed the broken and flawed, so we hope to welcome all of God's children.

May we be mindful of your sacrifice this day, the bitter herbs of the Passover have a new meaning,

May we be mindful of your journey to the cross, the cup of repentance takes on deeper significance.

May your death and resurrection remind us that we must die to self and live for You

Holy God,

Pour out your Grace upon this flawed world,

May we break bread in our state of seclusion and isolation, aware that in homes the world over;

The same bread is being broken, the same words being said, the same Christ is being glorified.

Holy Spirit, be welcome among us,

Bring us together in our dispersion and be present this Holy Week

May this be a moment of waking for your church

May your children look to You and your saving Grace in this time of great need.

We pray in the name of our Risen Saviour, Jesus Christ

Amen

We recommend you sing 'Calvary' and a video with lyrics can be found here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=iR9ygGyE2ew