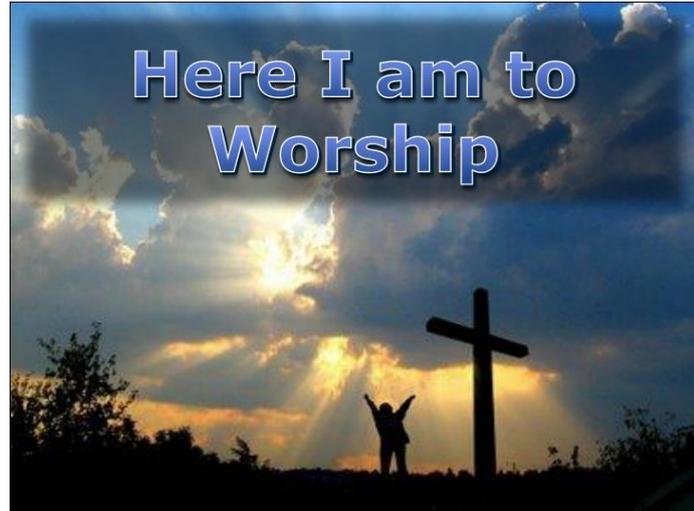


27th June 2021

Sing to God in praise.
Worship the Creator, all peoples.
All that lives and breathes,
join in praise of the maker.

We praise and worship you,
living God,
for the world you have created,
all that lives and grows,
all that is shaped by human hands,
all that is sacred and holy,
inhabited by you.



We give you thanks for the story, embodied in Jesus Christ,
of healing and teaching, of welcome and feasting.
Of pain and brokenness, of dying and new life.
And so we join with all who seek to live out your story,
all who choose your truth, praising you and saying:
Holy, holy, holy God, heaven and earth delight in your wisdom.
Blessed be the one who breaks bread with the hungry and feasts with the poor.
Blessed be the one who declares your love.

God, maker and lover of justice,
we ask that your Spirit may be present within and among us,
making us into a people called by your name
and that what we share this day
may be, for us, a sign of new life and a feast of joy. **Amen.**

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Holy words long preserved
for our walk in this world,
They resound with God's own heart.
Oh let the ancient words impart

Holy words of our Faith
Handed down to this age
Came to us through sacrifice
Oh heed the faithful words of Christ.

Words of Life, words of Hope
Give us strength, help us cope
In this world, where e'er we roam
Ancient words will guide us Home.

Holy words long preserved
For our walk in this world.
They resound with God's own heart
Oh let the ancient words impart.

*Ancient words ever true
Changing me
and changing you,
We have come with open hearts
Oh let the ancient words impart*

*Lynn Deshazo © 2001 Integrity's
Hosanna! Music CCCL: 88203
[Michael W. Smith - Ancient words -
YouTube](#)*

Mark 11:1-16:8 focused on **Mark 14:12-26**

The condemned man ate a hearty breakfast. Tradition tells us that occupants of death row are allowed to choose the menu for their last meal before they are executed. I have no idea how true that is and shudder at the thought of even attempting to enjoy a meal when looking such a death in the face. It doesn't strike me as a good example of how to treat someone although, of course, we all need good food.

Have you ever eaten a Passover meal? For Jewish people this is a very real annual remembering and celebration of the freedom of their ancestors from slavery in Egypt when the Hebrew people sprinkled lamb's blood on their doorposts so that the angel of death would 'pass over' and not kill their 1st born sons. After that final plague Pharaoh allowed the slaves to leave and they crossed the Red sea to find freedom (Exodus 12).

The meal involves telling that story with the youngest person present asking questions that others answer as they share food and wine. Each ingredient of the meal, unleavened bread, lamb, egg, bitter herbs, charoset paste (made of apples, nuts and wine) and karpas vegetables (greens) represents a different element of the story and four glasses of wine are consumed at particular points in the tale.



Within the Christian church we also sometimes share a Passover meal on Maundy Thursday eating similar food and then going on to tell the story of the Passover meal Jesus shared with his disciples just before he died, which we call the Last supper.

Mark's account of the Last supper is almost too familiar for many. We hear it told in the other gospels, it is retold in 1 Corinthians and when we gather for worship that includes communion, we hear it again. As with many accounts of the same event by different witnesses each version varies, including details missed by some and omitting others. In Luke's accounts the disciples have an argument about who is the most important and Jesus tells them off, remarking that he has led them as one who serves and in John's (which is a Passover meal but may not be the last one they ate together) he demonstrates his servanthood by washing their feet, an act usually only performed by a Gentile slave.

Each version does make it clear that, on this occasion, although Jesus may have followed the usual format of the meal, he was keen not just to focus on the telling of the ancient story from many years before, but also on what was happening amongst them at that time and what was going to happen very soon, as well as what he wanted them, and us, to do in the future to remember all of this.

Deeply significant is that in order for anyone to share this meal the Passover lamb has to be sacrificed. The lambs were killed the day before the meal was prepared and eaten. Even meat-eaters are sometimes squeamish about witnessing the slaughter of the animals that provide the meat we eat. Yet it is a reality. Here it becomes clear that Jesus views the Passover as the basis for understanding the meaning of his forthcoming death. He himself is the sacrificial lamb about to be slaughtered, yet he

does not refer to this and instead speaks of both the bread and the wine as representing him. Even if they remembered Jesus saying: *I am the bread of life* and: *I am the vine*. his friends would surely have been shocked and possibly appalled when, with the bread in his hands, he said: *this is my body* and invited them to eat and later, taking the cup of wine, said: *this is my blood* and urged them to drink. It wasn't in the script at all. It didn't make any sense. And what did he mean and when he said he would never drink wine ever again until he drank it in the Kingdom of God? Where? When? How? Why?



In the almost immediate death of Jesus the words of Isaiah 53:7 were fulfilled
*He was beaten, he was tortured,
but he didn't say a word.
Like a lamb taken to be slaughtered
and like a sheep being sheared,
he took it all in silence.
Justice miscarried, and he was led off—
and did anyone really know what was happening?
He died without a thought for his own welfare,
beaten bloody for the sins of my people.
They buried him with the wicked,
threw him in a grave with a rich man,
Even though he'd never hurt a soul
or said one word that wasn't true.
(The Message version)*

We like so many people of faith both Jewish and Christian eat a meal that recalls a past event of personal significance to us with food and drink symbolising the details of the story. As we eat and drink the story is told.

The Passover meal would never be the same for those friends of Jesus again and, very soon after the events that followed that fateful evening, those who formed the early church began to share bread and wine together in a meal that has become central to our faith.

For Christians as we celebrate Holy Communion/ the Lord's Supper/ the Eucharist/Mass, we who eat the bread (firstly the disciples but now us) participate in his body; through communion with him and with one another we share all the benefits of *being in Christ* and *members of his body*. We who drink the wine participate in the atoning effects of his sacrificial death and in the blessings of the new covenant it inaugurates. In such a way we reach far back into the past, are very aware of Jesus in the present and look forward to a future when we too will share our first celebration meal with Jesus in the Kingdom of God. I wonder what will be on the menu that day!

An Upper Room did our Lord prepare
for those he loved until the end;
and his disciples still gather there
to celebrate our Risen Friend.

And after supper he washed their feet,
for service, too, is sacrament;
in him our joy shall be made complete
sent out to serve, as he was sent.

A lasting gift Jesus gave his own —
to share his bread, his loving cup;
whatever burdens may bow us down,
he by his cross shall lift us up.

No end there is! We depart in peace;
he loves beyond the uttermost;
in every room in our Father's house
he will be there, as Lord and Host.

*Fred Pratt Green (1903–2000) Words: © 1974, Stainer & Bell Ltd, 23 Gruneisen Road, London N3
1DZ www.stainer.co.uk CCCL: 88203
[Hymn – An Upper Room Did Our Lord Prepare - YouTube](#)*

Christ, you are the bread of life. We pray for those who are hungry: those whose lands have been seized or destroyed by war, those bent down under the burden of debt, those struggling to survive on low incomes. Give the bread of justice to feed the poor of the world.

Christ, you are the light of the world. We pray for those who are in darkness: those trapped in abuse and violence, those who suffer under oppressive regimes, those imprisoned without hope of justice or liberty. Let the light of your justice shine to bring freedom.

Christ, you are the good shepherd. We pray for those in need of your tenderness and care: For all known to us who are ill or in pain, for those who care with compassion, or wait in helpless love, for those who are vulnerable and afraid of the future. May your love lead them in the hope of healing.

Christ, you are the living vine. We pray for your church: for unity and reconciliation where there is division, for justice and love to take precedence over doctrine and dogma, for renewed vision in worship and witness. May your people find life in union with you.

Christ, you are the way, the truth and the life. We pray for the knowledge of your love, for direction for those seeking to follow your way, for clarity for all those seeking meaning and purpose, for life and freedom for all whom you have made. May your life in all its fullness be known in this, your world. **Amen.**

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Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us peace. **Amen.**

