

# Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday

Matthew 26:1–35; Mark 14:1–31;  
 Luke 22:1–38; John 13–17

*“. . . Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end” (John 13:1).*

After the argumentative wars on Tuesday, God gave Jesus a day off. We do not know where He was on Wednesday, with whom He spent that day, or what He did. The silence thunders at us! The Pharisees had rejoiced over the rout of the Sadducees by Jesus, but their humor quickly turned to hatred when Jesus silenced them. His enemies reasoned, “Since we cannot answer Him, we must kill Him.”

Jesus may not have been busy on this day, but Judas was. His betrayal was not impulsive—it was deliberate. The Sanhedrin, the Jewish high council, was also busy, meeting in a secret session. Satan, too, was busy. Wednesday was the calm before the storm. Wouldn’t you guess that Jesus spent that day in prayer to God?

## **PREPARING FOR THE PASSOVER**

Jesus awoke on Thursday morning never to sleep

again. The “hour” had come. Following a respite on Wednesday, Jesus renewed His march to the cross. He was in charge of what would happen. Others thought they were, but they were not. Jesus initiated and brought about the cross. He was determined, but not in a hurry.

The objective for this day was to prepare the Passover meal (Matthew 26:17–19; Mark 14:12–16; Luke 22:7–13). Jesus told His apostles to find and follow a man carrying a pitcher of water. He would be the only man in Jerusalem doing that, for it was “women’s work.” The apostles did as Jesus said and found a room prepared. Consider how amazing this is! They needed a large room. The Passover was for a group. Jerusalem was overflowing with people. Surely, there were no empty rooms. Not only was this room empty, but it was also ready! How could this be? God’s awesome providence was at work here! God can make impossible things possible in our lives too.

Jesus had a deep interest in eating this Passover with the apostles (Luke 22:14–16). Several reasons can be given: (1) Jesus announced His desire to eat the Passover because of His approaching suffering. He wanted and needed the apostles’ companionship. (2) Furthermore, this was to be God’s last Passover meal. Jesus nailed the law of Moses to the cross (Colossians 2:14). What God gave, God took away. (3) Jesus is now our continuous Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7). (4) In this situation of eating the Passover in the upper room, Jesus initiated His Supper.

Two things command our attention: (1) the authority of the Scriptures and (2) Jesus’ obedience. Jesus kept God’s law! He was born, lived, and died under the law of Moses. He obeyed the law of Moses to the letter and in the right spirit (Matthew 5:17–20), but He did not yield to the man-made rules of the Pharisees. *Do not devalue*

*the Scriptures. Oppose false teachers and false teaching in the spirit of love.*

### **SERVING WITH A TOWEL**

We now come to Thursday night, the beginning of the Jewish Friday. As Jesus was about to die, the apostles fussed over who was the greatest (Luke 22:24–30). Could it be that Judas was involved in this? He had led in the tirade against Mary and the anointing that had honored Jesus (John 12:1–8). His spirit displayed the kind of heart he had.

Every group has to have a leader. Someone must be responsible. Jesus designated Peter, James, and John to be His leaders. Could there have been resentment, jealousy, or a power struggle going on among the apostles?

Judas' betrayal of Jesus was no impulsive decision. The seating at the meal could have triggered the outburst, but the problem was far greater. Jesus had taught against the heathen idolatry of power, saying, "It is not this way among you" (Matthew 20:20–28; Mark 10:35–45). James and John (with their mother) had requested special privilege and power. Jesus said much about pushing and shoving for chief seats (see Matthew 23:6–12; Mark 12:38–40; Luke 20:45–47). We have similar problems with pride and arrogance today. We can overcome these by developing the humble attitude displayed by Jesus (Philippians 2:5–8).

How did Jesus handle all that He had to endure? He did not yell, threaten, or harshly rebuke. If we had been in charge in place of Jesus, we would have prayed to God, "We need a whole new group of apostles!" Instead, quietly, He taught and taught! He picked up a towel and washed their feet (see John 13:1–17). The silence was deaf-

ening. It was shattered by Peter's outburst: "You will never wash my feet!" Firmly, yet gently, Jesus silenced Peter. It is easier to wash feet than it is to be washed. The Son of God began laying the foundation for His church with a towel. He declared Himself to be "The Servant" (see Luke 22:27). Jesus washed the feet of those who were present, including Judas. He then began the first of many warnings to His apostles, but they were given without success.

### IDENTIFYING A BETRAYER

At the Passover meal, Jesus announced the betrayal that was coming. We would probably think it was obvious to the others that Judas would be the betrayer, but that was not the case. The apostles did not believe that any of the others among them would betray the Lord . . . but each was afraid that he himself could (Matthew 26:21–25; Mark 14:18–21; Luke 22:21–23; John 13:21–30). Judas asked, "Is it I?" (Matthew 26:25; NKJV). Jesus told the apostles that His betrayer was the one to whom He would give the "morsel" (John 13:26). When He gave the piece of bread to Judas, amazingly, the other apostles totally missed it. Judas knew that Jesus knew! (See Matthew 26:25.)

Years ago, Reuel Lemmons had a sermon entitled "And It Was Night," based on John 13:30, which says, "So after receiving the morsel [Judas] went out immediately; and it was night." God is light; sin is darkness. Judas left the light for the darkness. Satan's entrance into Judas was not mystical or supernatural. Judas allowed and welcomed him in. *How tragic it is to leave light for darkness!* Judas left before Jesus said the words in John 13:34, 35: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have

love for one another.” Sin does catastrophic harm; part of the tragedy of sin is in what you miss. Judas missed so much! He never saw the risen Lord.

### **INSTITUTING HIS SUPPER**

After Jesus dismissed Judas, He instituted the memorial we call the Lord’s Supper (Matthew 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:17–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26). Read John 6:48–58. This is not a reference to the Lord’s Supper, but it is doctrinal truth. To be saved we must ingest Christ—His life, doctrine, and salvation.

The Lord’s Supper was initiated in an assembly. The early church assembled to partake of it (Acts 20:7). New Testament worship glories in its simplicity—the bread and a cup.

### **FINAL DETAILS**

Jesus’ attention next centered upon Peter, who vowed unlimited allegiance. Jesus stated that before the rooster crowed, Peter would deny Him three times. Read Matthew 26:33–35; Mark 14:29, 30; John 13:36–38. Luke 22:31–34 offers more detail. Satan desired Peter, but Jesus said He had prayed for him. Had Jesus equally prayed for Judas? Surely, He had. Not all our prayers can be answered the way we want them to be!

Little is known about where, when, and how Jesus prayed “The High Priestly Prayer,” the real “Lord’s Prayer” in John 17. This prayer is perhaps the greatest prayer ever prayed! He prayed for His apostles, Himself, and us!

*The cross . . .  
there is no other way!*