

the Upper Room

Introduction

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The church began in an upper room in Jerusalem. What Mount Calvary is to mountains, this room is to holy real estate. It was a special place. No one can be positive where either is. There are several sites that tour guides like to visit while claiming it is the "original" upper room. Given man's tendency to build shrines on such "so called" sacred property, it is perhaps best that God keeps some things secret. Holy relics and holy real estate are of little importance to a kingdom that is spiritual.

Whether we can find the actual room is not as important as whether we find the original lessons first taught there or the power that so enfolded and energized the early church. While the actual chamber may or may not still exist, the important thing is to experience and enjoy the timeless truths that were first revealed there.

It is in the upper room that we are catechized in a holy "higher" school of spiritual living. It is in the upper room that the church is given a primer in Christian protocol, peace, power, and purpose. It is through the ministry of the upper room that Christ prepares his disciples to face a hostile world and overcome it.

The disciples were still looking for and hoping for some kind of physical kingdom. They were anxious for and were anticipating some kind of religious and messianic uprising. They were prepared to assume positions of prestige and authority as cabinet members or prime ministers. They were not prepared for the crucifixion of their leader, his death, and his burial-- and in their wildest dreams, they never imagined the resurrection, although Christ spoke of it often. Although every promise of God will be fulfilled, and Israel will one day enjoy a renewal and revival, the Christian dispensation and life is primarily a spiritual one.

The lessons of the upper room are spiritual lessons. They cannot be understood except in the spirit. Never were the words of the Apostle Paul more appropriate than here, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1Cor. 2:14). The "breaking of bread," the peace that passes understanding, and the abundant life are as much a mystery to the unsaved as the cloud was to the Egyptians in the wilderness.

The hour had come. Christ was about to die for the sins of the world. The lessons of John thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen were not fully comprehended by those who were present. It was not until they returned to that upper room nearly sixty days later that it became clear. The classroom became the cradle. It was in the upper room that the church was born. It was not until the Spirit came that these believers knew what it was to be born-again.

The book of Isaiah has been called the gospel of the Old Testament as it is filled with Christ and his Spirit. God tells us through Isaiah that his thoughts are higher than our thoughts. We look too low. Although so close to the cross, the disciples still set their sights too low. The upper room is a good place to be challenged with God's higher thoughts, and a to be changed by God's higher power. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have

mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:7-8).

In the upper room the disciples were challenged with higher visions, higher thoughts, and the promise of a higher power.

Do you desire to understand the ministry and message of the upper room? Would you climb such holy steps into so sacred a chamber? Would you with Peter and John make ready the "upper room?" Would you desire to subject your thoughts to the authority and ministry of God's Word? Are you prepared to follow the Savior to and through Calvary if it means submitting to his Lordship, serving others, or suffering at the hand of a world that still hates him? Do you desire to "overcome" the world and the downward pull of evil? Do you want to learn about humility, humanity, tranquillity, prosperity, and fidelity? If you do, then make your way into this sacred chamber of the upper room and take your place as close as possible to the Master. Before Christ died upon the cross at Calvary, somewhere in an upper room, Christ taught his disciples how to live.

After nine plagues failed to break Egypt's resolve and Israel's chains, God was about to slay every first-born son throughout the land. By faith, God's children were to apply blood to the portal of every house and eat one final meal before the judgment and mass exodus. On that night 1446 BC a Jewish nation was born. Lest they should forget such a holy heritage, every head of household was instructed to celebrate and re-enact the event with the Paschal meal commonly known as the "Pass-over." When death fell on Egypt the faithful Jews who heeded the word of Moses were saved, for God promised, "when I see the blood, I will pass over you."

This Passover was but a shadow of a far greater deliverance and the birth of a greater nation. The Old Testament was about to be fulfilled with the New. A lamb was about to be slain and his blood would cover a multitude of sins. A lamb was about to be slain and an exodus was about to begin. A lamb was about to be slain upon the cross. His heel was about to be bruised, but the resurrection of the Savior was about to crush the serpent's head.

A Place at his Table

1

“And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.” Luke 22:12

A table brings a family together. The church is a family. Supper time is a gathering of kin and kindred spirits. Although commerce may carry its members in different directions and all may disappear into a vast sea of humanity at the start of the day, at its conclusion, each one makes their way back to where they belong. Each finds home.

The Passover was a family meal. As the day began to draw to a close, business was suspended, shops closed, and commerce ceased as individuals made their way home to a place around a table to be with their own family. Never was this more true than at Passover. No one should be alone on that night. It was a night to be with those one loved the most.

Notice that during this Passover and this Last Supper the disciples did not disband nor seek out biological family. There was a greater love. Jesus came to show us the Father, and through the new-birth, to bring us home. The church is a family. Once we become a member of the Father’s family it is obvious around whose table we belong.

Peter and John had the responsibility to make things ready. If they followed the pattern of history, they would have had to stand in long lines at the temple in order to procure a lamb for the Paschal meal. They would have prepared the room so mysteriously provided. Peter and John fulfilled this final mission. Surely such an honored service deserved his getting a place of honor at the table. Surely that place belonged to Peter, the spokesman and outspoken leader among the disciples. Instead, the place of honor, the highest seat, the place just left of Jesus, went to Judas, the treasurer. To the right, John leaned on Jesus’ bosom. If human nature was fully at work that evening, it is not hard to picture Peter sulking silently in the lowest seat. We can imagine him thinking “If the Master does not realize that I am more worthy than Judas, if I am to be so overlooked, I will take the lowest seat.”

The custom of the day and of the hour suggests such a seating arrangement. The sop was customarily given to the one in the seat of honor which was next to the host. Judas was in position to receive the sop. In order for John to lean on Jesus, he would have to be to the Master’s right. If the table was in the usual horseshoe shape, with its upper and lower seats, Peter had to be near enough to discretely request John inquire of the Lord, who it was that was going to betray him.

Such a seating arrangement would also set the stage for the great and important lesson about humility. No servant was attending to this party or their needs. Whoever was in the lowest seat should have assumed the required role and brought water for the others. If Peter was indeed in this position (as we speculate) service was the last thing on his mind. A similar oversight had occurred before, but the disciples were slow to learn. Jesus spoke of it in Lk. 7:44. “Simon, seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.”

The disciples seemed to be ever quarreling about their place or position. Chickens will not roost at night

until the pecking order had been established or re-established. One bird will take the highest place and havoc will reign should any try to unseat it. The bushes or trees of the barn yard are alive with posturing and positioning until every creature is “in its place.”

The disciples were always arguing among themselves about who was the “greatest.” Christ once took a little child into his arms and set him in the midst in an attempt to teach a difficult law of heaven. But the truth seemed to be lost to these apostles in apprenticeship. “And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.” (Lk. 22:24) Again and again, the disciples of Christ fail this most simple test. It was a most important lesson of love that was taught in the upper room.

“Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” (Jn. 13:1)

In this chapter Christ makes clear that once we are clean (and made so by the authority and power of his word) we need only to be washed in part “splashed” (nipto) rather than plunged again beneath the waters (baptizo or louo). Although this is a great and beautiful truth, it is not the heart of what took place in the upper room. The upper room is a lesson of the “first communion” and new family.

Christianity and this communion is founded in and upon God’s love. Jesus loved his disciples unto the end. He loved them, not because they were lovely, but because he was love and could do nothing else. If they were to take up the ministry of Christ where he left off it must be here— it must be in love. John would take up this theme again when writing from Patmos. Perhaps what we fail to learn in a humble place in the upper room we may learn in the hard place, in a prison of Patmos, but let us learn to love one another.

The disciples of Christ need to revisit the upper room. It was the place of the farewell but also of the fullness. It was the place where they celebrated the Passover which comes from the word “Pesah” which means to “Pass over” or to “Spare.” The followers of Jesus would do well to truly “Remember” him who said “learn of Me.” Unfortunately the family has fallen to bickering. the church has been fractured and fragmented into a thousand pieces, sects, and denominations, each laying claim to the high seat of the “most faithful.” The church has argued about who is “closest” to Jesus. The church has even argued about the shape of the communion table, distribution of the elements, and the significance of the tokens. Heaven is patient with us.

Not long after these apostles died, the survivors all but fought for their mantles, positions, and bishoprics. By the third century, the church was divide up into higher (clergy) and lower (laity) seats. Among the chief places there were popes, bishops, and archbishops. Priests took charge of the simple tokens and administered the elements as a sacrament and held that either grace or God was found in the bread and the wine.

The disciples were shocked when Jesus took the place of the lowest servant. “He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciple’s feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.” (Jn. 13:4-5). He must have started with the one in the highest. That would have been Judas. Yes, he loved unto the end. The thought of Jesus washing the feet of Judas should break our hearts. And how many times have we failed our Master and yet he washes us daily with his word, and yet he loves us still.

Beloved let us love one another. Steal away to listen again to the conversation Jesus has with the Father to interpret the spectacle of humility in the upper room chamber. “And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (17:19-21). “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn. 13:35).

Knowing where to sit at a state dinner is an important part of protocol. Knowing where not to sit is a part of wisdom. The world fights for the best seats. Jesus taught that the first principle of the faith life was in understanding our place. “Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Our Lord told a story in Luke fourteen after he “marked how they chose out the chief rooms.” He told of a presumptuous man who took a seat at the head of the table, only to be embarrassed when asked to give up his seat for a man more honored than himself. The moral of the story was simple. “When thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend go up higher” (Lk. 14:10a). The first and hardest lesson of the upper room is that of humility.

A Basin

“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

The room must have grown strangely quiet as Jesus moved from the place of honor at the table and assumed the posture of a servant. He “laid aside his garments” and washed the disciples feet. They were amazed; they were embarrassed. There was silence until he came to Peter. “Lord, dost thou wash my feet?” asked Simon. Peter was not about to allow his Master to stoop so low. “Thou shalt never wash my feet,” he said. Jesus continued, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.” The disciple must be clean.

John 13 is a lesson in Holy Communion. For some “Holy Communion” sounds too much like the Roman Eucharist. We like to speak of the “Lord’s Table” and the “Lord’s Supper.” Some like to dissect the two and ascribe one to the visible and the other the invisible world; one to time and the other to eternity. This is unnecessary, for the word “communion” covers it all. While the Last Supper may be “ended” (vs. 2) the communion had just begun. The Church is communion and there can be none without it. The saints are instructed to participate in a living memorial “till he come” (1Cor. 11:26). The Church has been given a blessed memorial service called the Lord’s Supper. It is commonly called the “breaking of bread.” The tokens of the memorial are a simple loaf and a common cup. These blessed symbols continue to this day upon the communion table. They were tokens of God’s love and emblems of his grace. Jesus gave them to the Church as he was about to enter into the passion, as the Son of God was about to die for the sins of the world.

With the Last Supper, Jesus would leave one more lesson of love before he left this life. He employed the lowly implements of a servant to teach the church about communion. Communion in some circles amounts to kneeling at a rail and receiving what is called the “host.” Those who speak of “taking communion” mispronounce an important Shibboleth in the language of true communion, for communion is not something we “take” it is something we “have.”

A Spirit-filled assembly is more than strangers kneeling at a communion rail. It is more than a few saints sitting in a circle around two tokens. It is communion, communion with Christ and communion with one another. Communion is the birthright of the new birth. Yet many like Esau fail to appreciate the importance and significance of a birthright.

When we remember the last supper, and consider the Lord’s death; let us also consider the basin and the towel as a lesson for Christian living.

Some groups have added the basin and foot washing to the litany of worship. They insist that because Jesus did it, we must do it too. We must not be so intrigued with the practice that we miss the principle. The picture is one of holy communion. Let us not try to immortalize it in dogma, stone, or religious ritual. Let us discover the eternal flaming spirit of the night in which he was betrayed, a spirit of love, fellowship and communion and pass its fire like a torch from generation to generation. Let us not lose the spirit of the moment by reducing it to tokens, to bowls and basins. What Jesus demonstrated that “night in which he was betrayed” was love, humility, submission, service and holiness. We cannot hope to experience the sweetness of true Christian Communion without them.

Communion in the local assembly is based on:

1. God’s Love.

“Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” (Jn.13:1) Jesus is the demonstration and proof of God’s love. He was about to fulfill the greatest law of love, and die on the cross for our sins.

It is the love of God that gathers us into a sweet communion. It is the love of God that is the tie that binds. It is the love of God as embodied in Christ that makes a church a church. The Lord Jesus Christ is the center and sun of our spiritual solar system. His love is the gravitational force that is experienced by faith and which holds each planet in its orbit. It is love that holds a local assembly together. Take love out of the assembly and it falls apart. Our love for

Christ is seen in our love for one another. “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar;: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also” (Jn.4:20-21). This love will be the hallmark of the church. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples” (v.35). When Christ is in his rightful place an invisible power of love unites us in holy communion.

2. Purity of Heart.

Not everyone at the communion table was in communion. A single soul in that upper room felt a greater pull upon his heart. It was the pull of darkness. Judas was present in body but far away in spirit. The gravity of greed was about to draw him away into the night.

True communion must be based on a pure heart. Judas came but he did not commune. His heart was not pure. Why we are present is as important as “if” we are present. Later Jesus would ask Judas to take one long last look at his own heart when he spoke kindly to him saying, “Friend, why art thou come” (Matt. 26:50). Had not Jesus said at the onset of his ministry, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God.”? Judas never saw God, though he sat at the same table with him.

If we have truly come to worship, if we would know true and holy communion, we must have pure motives and a pure heart. “Now the devil having now put into the heart of Judas...” We must all watch our hearts. If Satan can put some evil thing in your heart you will find it impossible to commune with God and fellowship with others. If an assembly is to discover and remain in communion it must be made up of pure hearts. The writer of Proverbs gave good advice when he warned “Keep thy heart with all diligence.”

3. Humility

The third aspect of true communion is that of giving up one’s rights. No one is an island. No man lives unto himself or dies unto himself. We live in families, groups, cities, and societies. The church is no different. As in any union of people or things we must surrender certain rights and prerogative of the individual to accommodate the whole. If there is to be happiness and harmony in a home, country, marriage, or ministry each of the partners must at times defer and yield to the other.

There will never be true communion in the church without each member understanding what was happening when Jesus “laid aside his garments.” In order to have full and complete communion each must learn to “lay aside” his or her individual rights for the good of the whole. If Jesus did it we must learn to do it as well. If we are to experience a true communion we must lay aside our differences, prejudices, our pride. We must be willing to give up the better seat in order to make way for another.

Was there no servant in the upper room to take this important place? Obviously not. The hastily organized meeting contained no women, and no servants, it would seem. The thought never occurred to the disciples that in the absence of such an attendant, one of them should assume the role. Since none of them seemed to hear that the circumstances cried out for a servant, Jesus himself decided to leave them and Christianity a much needed lesson.

Many a sweet communion is broken when the disciples begin demanding their rights. Many an assembly fails when no one wishes to lay aside what they consider important rights in order to minister to the needs of others. Many reach for the crown, few for the basin. In order for a broken communion with God to be restored, Jesus had to leave the glories of heaven, lay aside the garments of splendor and take up a tabernacle of flesh. “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” (Phil. 2:7). Happy is the assembly and sweet is the communion where men come to serve, rather than to be served. Which brings us to the next characteristic found in that upper room fellowship and the last supper.

4. Servant’s Spirit

This fourth benchmark of true communion is found in the basin. It is found in service. Jesus said in another place “But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant,” and elsewhere, “Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister...even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for

many” (Matt.20:25,28;23:11).

5. Cleanness

Communion is also based on cleanliness. Someone rightly said, “Cleanliness is not next to godliness; cleanliness is part of godliness.” Peter did not understand how important this was until Jesus said, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me” (v.8). He who approaches God must be clean. “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” (Ps. 66:18).

Even disciple’s feet get dirty. We cannot pass through the streets of social contact and not become soiled or pick up some of this world’s contagion. The answer is continual cleansing. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1Jn. 1:9).

After he finished the living parable he said “I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” (8 s. 13). Peter was gently rebuked by the Savior and taught the meaning of humility, service, love, and of cleansing. Sensing that the Lord was about to do something drastic, he asked the question “Lord, wither goest thou?” “Where I go,” said Jesus “you cannot follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.”

What did Jesus mean when he said “you cannot follow me now?” Had he not invited Peter and the others to forsake all and follow him? Had they not followed him faithfully for over three years? How could Christ even think of such a thing? He even preached that whoever followed him would have eternal life. Are we not to follow him for time and all eternity?

“Peter said unto him, Lord why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.” Christ knew that flesh would fail and that Peter could never live up to his testimony. He knew even before Peter spoke that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. What Jesus was actually speaking about was the one place he was going where he must stand alone: Calvary. His disciples can stand with him in the city, and in the county, but when he went to the cross he had to go alone. That is why he said, “but ye shall follow me afterwards.” There was no following of him to the cross. There would be no fellowship there, only judgment. There was room on that altar for only one precious lamb, Jesus. There for those dark hours there was no communion, only crucifixion. Even the communion and fellowship of the Father and the Son was broken there, and the world turned dark.

“But ye shall follow me afterwards.” Because of the Cross we enjoy communion. We know something of that communion in the breaking of bread and the remembrance meeting as saints look on the tokens of loaf and cup. But the Lord’s Supper is a living and breathing memorial. It is not a lifeless picture, icon, or hieroglyphic inscribed on earthen pyramids. It requires that someone be there to “break it,” and share it with some other soul saved by the efficacy of the power it symbolizes. The Lord’s Supper is not empty seats and places around an untouched table. The picture is not complete without people. It is a communion; first a communion with Christ and then also a communion with the trophies of his grace. The cross is God’s call to communion. It is the only way a sinful, fallen humanity can hope to be near to God. “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13). It is only because of the Cross that we can have communion. “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1Jn. 1:3)

Communion is for those who want to be close to the Master. There is room at his table for all who would believe in him and worship him. There was room on Jesus’ bosom enough for Judas as there was for John, but the son of perdition did not believe. “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” (1Jn. 2:19).

John wrote a treatise on holy communion in what is commonly called First John. Holy communion is not the “rite” and “ritual” many have made it to be. Holy communion is the living body drawing close to Christ and close to one another.

When darkness would seek to invade the light it is quite obvious. Sin spoils the communion and soils the church. Times did and still come when the church must exercise discipline upon itself. There is a time when it is obvious and individual in not in communion with Christ and therefore not in communion with the rest of the body. Those are sad times, as sad and dark as when Judas went out into the night. But as the Master taught us “Unless I wash you, you can have not part with me.” How much better for each sincere believer to “examine himself” (1Cor. 11:31) so they need

not be judged by another. The church must be clean if it is to enjoy the presence of the Lord.

The Basin

Into the upper room they came to break the memorial bread.
In just one day their dreams destroyed and their master would be dead.

And although the time was short, and the hour very late,
the twelve could only argue about which one of them was great.

None of the twelve sought to take the humble servant's place,
and so they ate with dusty feet and presumed upon God's grace.

So our Lord then took the basin, and a towel 'round him gird,
he stooped to do what they would not, and taught them with his word.

"Ye call me master, and so I am," but learn from me this night,
"this is the way to greatness and don't forget this sight."

And so the Lord of glory bent down so very low,
and washed away the dirt and pride, and humility did show.

So remember, too, the basin, when cup and bread you see;
and show love to one another, and true humility.

ID

A Picture

"Take, eat; this is my body." Matthew 26:26b

Do This. What must I do to be saved? The question was first asked in the ruins of a Philippian jail nearly two thousand years ago. While holding a torch in his trembling hand the jailor listened to God's servant give the answer that still illuminates every soul sincerely seeking to know. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved." It is faith and faith alone in Christ that saves. Some churches add seven sacraments to that first simple answer? Some two. Let all who add (or take away) from God's Word beware (Rev. 22:18-19). The orthodox Jew counted 614 commandments in the Pentateuch and each knotted tassel of his prayer shawl was a reminder that he was a son of the law.

There is only one law that Christ has given the church. Not 614, not ten, not a thousand (Mohammed left thousands of laws for his followers to meticulously obey). Jesus left one. Love! That's it. That's all, but that's enough. He who will be governed by this single word has all the decalogue on a miniature microchip of holy government: Love. Some laugh at the simplicity. Some rage at its seemingly lack of restraint. Some see the ocean, but never attempt to comprehend or even imagine its depth. Some feel they need more but, love is the container that holds everything. It is the Christian "Ark of the Covenant." The old ark, contained the law, the loaf, and the leader's rod. Love contains all that and more. But that is another lesson. It is only mentioned here because the "Do this" of Christ's memorial feast is not the "Don't do this" of Mt. Sinai. It is the "Do this" of Mt. Calvary. It is not legalism, it is love.

When Peter's mother-in-law was cured she arose and began to serve Jesus. When the man of Gadara was delivered from the demons of darkness, he sought to follow Christ. When the Master speaks, the winds obey. How curious that men should lay claim to salvation with their words, but balk and resist, or neglect Christ's most simple requests. God may one day ask you to do some hard thing, or some fantastic thing, but first he asks all his children to do this simple thing. If we cannot keep this, the most simple of the Lord's wishes, how shall we expect to discover and delight in any other aspect of his will. Some even pray "Thy will be done," and yet fail in doing this most simple of things.

1. THE PRESCRIPTION. "Do this" Few things are more clear in the Scriptures than this. There are some teachings that are not easily understood. This is simple to understand. Believers find in these words, not a sacrament but an ordinance, not a requirement as much as a request. Salvation is by grace and not works, and since grace must be communicated "freely" and without cost, the Lord's Supper is not a means of grace or a means "to grace." In Christ we have moved from the realm of law to love. One of the last requests of the Savior before he went to the cross, was "do this." If there was ever a prescription of Spiritual worship entrusted to the Church, this is it. There are no candles, no robes, no bells ringing, or incense rising in a curl of smoke from an altar. There is no kneeling or genuflecting, there is no ritualistic washings, or recitations. There is a simple meal, consisting of bread and wine. The "breaking of bread" is the worship of Christ in his own prescribed way.

2. THE PERSON. "In Remembrance of me" In the ten commandments there is one commandment to "remember." The Jews were told to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. The Sabbath day principle was started before Moses. On Sinai, God merely established its observation as a covenant and a memorial and a reminder of his awesome creative power. The law came by Moses but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ. He is our Sabbath. He is our Rest. He calls us to a New Covenant and asks us, not to remember a day, but to remember himself.

3. THE PRECEDENT. It demonstrates our love, loyalty, faith, devotion, and obedience to Christ. It is not without significance that it was inaugurated on the "night in which he was betrayed" (1Cor. 11:23). Paul speaks of this

request as truth received in 1Cor. 11:23-34. “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.”

4. **THE PICTURE.** “Ye do show” Christ held up the bread and said “this is my body.” What he meant was that it was a picture of his body. It was a visual aid, and a token left by the Savior before he went to the cross. When we partake of the elements (the bread and the cup) we remember his work of salvation and the price he had to pay for our sins. The elements remain what they seem to be. They are not changed into the actual flesh and blood of the Lord Jesus (transfiguration), nor do they take on some mystical, mysterious, spiritual aura of his presence (consubstantiation). They are simply pictures to remind us not to forget him and his sacrifice. What we show is the great cost of salvation and the awfulness of sin. What we show (in his death) is the depth of his love and the depravity of man. What we show is so vast and so deep so in-exhaustible that we shall never touch its full weight and significance.

5. **THE PROFESSION.** It is a testimony.

All who are born-again through saving faith in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus are welcome at this memorial feast. In this regard, it is an open meeting. All who are walking in consistently with such a faith (according to their own conscience) and are not living in a state of open disobedience to God’s Word are welcome. At the same time, it is a closed meeting to all who are unbelievers and are living in open disobedience to Christ. Because it is something “we show” unbelievers are not allowed to participate. They are permitted to observe and ponder. (v.29).

6. **THE PROMISE.** The church is asked to observe this memorial “till he come.” Each time we remember his work, we also remember his words “I will come again to receive you unto myself.” With this we look at ourselves, to see if we are in the faith and in fellowship in the present. We look back at the ministry of the Lord upon the cross by which he paid sins penalty for us. And we look to the future realizing that he purchased, by virtue of his death, a place in heaven for us.

7. **THE PRIVILEGE** “As often” Few dare to reject the Lord’s Supper as much as they neglect it. The “often” would be better said “as seldom” in most circles.

8. **THE PRACTICE.** The early church “broke bread” on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). “And upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them...” It is also clear that the Lord’s Supper was an integral part of the church experience among the early believers. “And they continued steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers,” Acts 2:42.

The motive of gathering for the “breaking of bread” (as the Lord’s Supper was commonly called) was to “remember him.” This is spiritual worship in the truest sense of the word. (Rev. 5:9). Worship is an act of praise, adoration, appreciation, and submission. It is most beautifully expressed in “remembering him.” Anything that would hinder the act or atmosphere of worship should be carefully excluded from the memorial feast.

It is not a time to testify about the sweetness of the church fellowship, or discover deep doctrines of the Bible of which there are many. It is not a time to look upon Moses or on Elijah as Peter was tempted to do while upon the mount of transfiguration. If Moses speaks at this meeting, let him speak of Jesus. If Elijah or the prophets open their mouths as someone reads a text, let it only point to Jesus. Jesus, and Jesus alone is to be the center of attention. (Lk. 24:27).

It is not the time to marvel at the height of Goliath, not the weight of the gates of Gaza if it calls attention away from Christ and his work for us upon the cross. It is not a time for great oratory, or personal testimonies. It is not a time of fellowship as in some Agape love feast. It is a time when everything should stop and the world becomes dead unto the saint, as every soul concentrates, meditates, and celebrates the death, burial and triumphal resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Song has always been a means of worship and praise. So saints sing. However, since instrumental music can often call attention to itself, it is usually absent from the breaking of bread and believers sing without accompaniment. Since most ordinary hymnals have proved to be impoverished of themes appropriate to worship, and the Lord's Supper, a special book of hymns is often used. It is not time to sing rousing gospel songs, it is not the time to sing of the "Faith of our Fathers" nor the evangelistic and joyous strains of "Bringing in the Sheaves."

The mechanics of the "breaking of bread" vary. Arguments, debates, and divisions should be unnecessary if it is remembered that the memorial is not a sacrament. Some use one cup others use individual glasses. Practicality, sanitation, and ceremony are all considered and agreed upon by those who partake. It is the Lord we hope to focus upon, and not the symbols. Some insist that the bread be un-leavened, but this reads too much into the historical record, and turns the Lord's Supper into a feast of the unleavened bread. Some still use wine, some because of convictions about the use of alcohol of any kind use grape juice. In times when neither were available, any suitable beverage may be substituted.

The meeting is most simple and most precious. Saints gather in a circle (where possible) about a simple table that hold the bread and cup. Men led by the Holy Spirit are not only permitted but encouraged to contribute to the worship of the Lord by offering up a Psalm, a hymn, or lifting up a prayer of thanksgiving and gratitude. No ordained minister is necessary and no one individual officiates. Like the Greeks who came to Philip, we say "Sir, we would see Jesus" (Jn. 12:21). We are like the single leper who returned to say "Thank you." (Lk.17:17)

Any man may stand to read an appropriate text and make comments that might be edifying or beneficial to those present as they all seek to remember the Lord. After a brief season of such prayer, praise, and ministry of the Word, someone will give thanks for the bread and several men will arise to break and distribute that element. Next, another brother will give thanks for the cup and it too is passed among the believers.

As the Holy Spirit is the guide who will guide us into all truth there is usually a thread that interconnects the thoughts, verses, songs. Sometimes the theme is the cross, sometimes the crown. Sometimes his words, and sometimes his work, but always something that helps us to remember him. Sometimes we sit in silent awe as we consider the awful agony, sometime we are amazed at the depth of Christ's charity, but always, we remember him. There is no special order, but there is order.

Sometimes man gets in the way of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes a brother might offer a word that is neither insightful nor edifying. Apart from patiently waiting we must be careful not to seize control of the meeting, lead or lecture. Instead we must pray, or at times in a spirit of humility seek to guide and instruct those who may be "out of step" for the moment. All things should be done in love and charity, seeking to keep the unity of Spirit so we may truly say "We worship Thee."

Jesus Said "Do this." It is a simple request. To all who somehow failed to catch the beauty, importance and significance we can only wonder at the words of the Master who said in another place, "Why do ye call me Lord, and do not the things which I say." (Lk. 6:46).

Treason

“One of youshall betray me.” Mark 14:18

We know very little about what took place around the table in the upper room. We must attempt to reconstruct the Passion seek and the Paschal supper with the fragments of insight contained in the gospels. The principles, spiritual lessons, and quickening power of the words bring us life. The seating arraignment in the upper room, or its location are things we cannot be to certain of. We must speculate.

Christ sent his disciples Peter and John to prepare for the passover. They were to find a servant with a jar of water and inquire as to the location of the “kataluma” guest chamber. This is the same word used in Luke 2:7 referring to the inn (in which there was no room for him). The story begins and ends with Christ looking for room in the inn. This time it is arranged that the disciples be given a anavion “a place upstairs.”

The feast of the unleavened bread came on the 14th day of Nisan. lasted for seven days. It was on this first day (Thursday) that the passover lamb was slain. As Peter and John went up the stairs- Judas perhaps went to purchase the Paschal lamb. He held the purse.

As we come to this dark culmination of Christ’s earthly ministry, gone are the crowds, gone are those who ate the miraculous fish and loaves. A very small remnant remained. Now just the twelve gathered around the Master. To these would be entrusted a sacred mission. They too must “overcome the world.” Christ came now to fulfill all things and also to say farewell. As Elijah flew to heaven his mantle fell to Elisha who prayed for a “double portion” of his spirit. So now one far greater than that famous prophet was about to leave a little school of disciples but not before some important last lessons would be taught in the upper room. After three years of fellowship and intimacy, these last few hours would be precious. And although the world was locked out we are allowed by virtue of the Holy Book to look inside and sit with these to whom Christ would entrust the world.

As hindsight affords us a more perfect vision we can gaze on disciples who little knew what lie ahead. The disciples had no idea their leader was about to go to the gallows. They hardly grasped the pregnant meaning of Christ’s prophetic words, “Destroy this temple and in three days, I will raise it up again.” The disciples were students about to take a test. Just how difficult an exam it was, they were about to learn. twelve men, ordinary men, ere chosen by providence. What was about to happen would change their lives; what was about to happen would change the world.

The disciple that so greatly confuses and troubles us is Judas. We know little about him. He was the only disciple from Judea. All the others were Galileans. Judas must have had the gift of government or administration. He handled the money and financial affairs of the little band. He must have been looked up to and admired by those within as well as without. He had a place of privilege. He participated in miracles. He held the purse. But we are told by the sacred pen of divine inspiration that he was a traitor. He was also a hypocrite. He held an office of trust. Man looks on the outward appearance, God looks on the heart. Why would Christ allow such an one to hold the bag? Why allow a thief to sit inside the inner circle? The truth is there is a little bit of thief in all of us. Remember Adam and Eve took the fruit that did not belong to them. We have that same sin nature. Every saint is capable of the most heinous of sins. Beware and tremble.

Paul speaks of the Lord's Supper taking place on the night Jesus was betrayed. Is it not curious that this sad element is included in the eternal description of that holy night? Most character studies ignore the one whose name lives in infamy. Sad as this human figure is, the church would do well to remember this son of perdition before we in obedience remember the Son of God.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread..."(1Cor. 11:23) and then, after describing that first memorial feast of the new covenant, concludes with the admonition to the participants "wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." If anyone was ever guilty of the body and blood of the Lord it was Judas. One of the greatest lessons of the upper room was to learn of the tragedy of one who came so close to heaven and yet plunged head long into hell.

J.C. Ryle wrote of him "On all the coasts of England there is not such a beacon to warn sailors of danger, as Judas Iscariot to warn Christians." It is close to astounding to see the lengths a man may go in religious profession and yet "turn out in the end to be a rotten hypocrite."

As his impatience grew and his disappointment deepened, his darker nature rose up. He became more and more alienated. The gift of government implied a desire for it. It is a small step from desire to ambition. Careful! Judas was drawn to Jesus believing he was the Jewish Messiah. He earnestly and ardently expected victory and success. And in that success he fully expected to personally share in the spoils of triumph and somehow he recompensed. He was not alone. Had not James and John sought place and position? Selfish feelings lurk in the saintliest heart.

The spring-time of the ministry was a happy time; now it was autumn. Leaves once green with hope had now turned brown. The crowds left, John the Baptist was beheaded and unavenged. Christ refused and seemingly missed an opportunity to take the crown. There was enmity from Israel's leaders. And there was ugly talk, yet Christ failed to act. More and more Christ spoke of sacrifice, disaster and death. He spoke of his flesh and blood. Peter said, "to whom shall we go?" When asked if the disciples would follow the disappointed crowd. Although Judas was silent, he would wreck his ship upon these rocks.

Judas may have been caught up in the Jewish "cause." Then Christ began to speak of a spiritual kingdom. Jesus said "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Judas' heart was not pure, and Judas did not see God. Talk of a spiritual kingdom did not impress this man. He counted the money yet had trouble laying up treasures in heaven where ledgers are unseen by men. Whether the cause was Israel's or his own, he mistook it for his salvation. Beware when we set some cause, no matter how high or noble above Christ. Causes compete with Christ. Not liking the way things were going, Judas would try to snatch the reins from the very hand of Christ.

Judas saw that the movement was about to foreclose upon his dreams of grandeur. He would not be bankrupt if he could help it. He would employ personal knowledge and strike a bargain. He would trade his stock in the kingdom and sell his shares on the exchange of self interest. He would bargain with the Sanhedrin and agree to the price of 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 12) the price of a salve—and with that, he would sell his soul.

Have you ever been disappointed with God? Has Christianity not profited you as you hoped? Has your

will ever shifted and broken ranks with the will of God? Have you ever sulked when God refused to answer your prayer or take your advice, advance your cause, or erect your kingdom? Careful, you are walking in the footsteps of the man from Iscariot.

How could one be so close to the light and be so blind? How could one taste and fail to partake? How could one so privileged be so perverse? To these questions we can only speculate as to the depths one might sink should Satan enter one's heart. Did Judas lose his salvation? One cannot lose what one never had. And if he ever had it, he would not have given it for all the treasures of Egypt. Had Judas a place in his heart for Christ, the evil one would have never gained entrance. Paul would later write "that Christ may dwell in your heart by faith." In another place Jesus told of the man delivered of the demon who failed to allow God to take up residency and was reinhabited by spirits worse than the first.

There is no sin so heinous that the best of us is not capable of committing it in the flesh. There is no crime too crimson, no stain too black, but into which the careless may stumble should he fail to walk circumspectly. David never dreamed, in his worst nightmares that he should stoop so low as he did when he sent Uriah to his death. Christ stunned his followers with the pronouncement that one of his disciples would betray him. It turned out to be one the closest. One by one they asked, "is it I?" Let none presume a place in the inner circles of Christian power of privilege insulates them from the high voltage of spiritual irresponsibility.

Speaking to others, being able to preach, knowing facts, and being a close acquaintance of Jesus is no proof of salvation. Judas endured the difficult life of an itinerant ministry, was held in the highest esteem by his peers (he kept the purse), and played a role (however minor) in miracles, yet he failed in grace.

History is acted out on a stage between eternity past and eternity future and we at times are but spectators and at other times must play our part. Theologians, depending on their particular school of thought, argue about what "must" take place and what "may" have been when it comes to this pitiful human being. While we will leave for others to prove or disprove Judas' destiny and pre-destiny, we will consider the warning of the Apostle for ourselves, "But let a man examine himself...for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1Cor. 11:29).

On the one hand, let us not be staggered by the thought of a hypocrite fooling every other disciple, and on the other hand, let us not forget to examine our own hearts for the first signs of hypocrisy lest we too become sickly and even sleep.

Judas coming from either Karjetan or Kuriut (therefore called Iscariot) appears to be the only disciple chosen from Judea. All the others seem to have been Galilean. Any messianic fervor that drove him must have evaporated when Jesus made it clear that his mission was a spiritual one and his death was a necessity. Judas' ambitions were dashed when the crowds abandoned Christ after the difficult teachings of John chapter six. Turning to his disciples, Jesus asked the question "will you go away also?" Peter's answer was so moving that we often fail to consider the response of Christ which should send a chill down our back and cause us to tremble. "To who shall we go?" asked Peter "thou hast the words of eternal life." (Jn. 6:69). After this heartening display of loyalty and devotion, a shadow is spread across the face of this sun, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

Christ spoke of this man in his private and personal conversations with the Father noting the lostness of this saddest of souls of who Jesus said it would have been better had he never been born. As in all the events of Jesus' life an unseen hand of providence was working out a Sovereign will, so this too was done that "scripture might be fulfilled" (Jn. 17:12). The lesson of Judas is not that Judas had no choice, but rather that we had better be careful in what we choose. Providence had written a part for one to play in the role of the "son of perdition." That Judas fought to play that part, although ironic, was that of his own choosing.

Although it appeared that Judas was of noble and high ideals, the holy record reveals the truth, every choice that seemed to be for Jesus was, in fact, a choice for self. While some have suggested that Judas merely attempted to force Jesus to play his hand, the fact of the matter is this disciple was never interested in any cause but his own. And if that is indeed the case, the visible church has many sons of perdition peppering its pews.

John called Judas a "thief" (Jn. 12:6). His observation of the said disciple's pretended care for the poor could well describe many a modern-time minister who has sought to enrich himself while pretending to serve the interests of heaven. Such cases have been well documented. The real heart of Judas is exposed in the recorded conversation between him and Jesus' enemies. "What will you give me?" (Matt.26:15). Many men have emptied their pockets in pawn shops to feed some awful addiction and would have place their eternal soul on the auction block if it could command a price. But never was there a more pitiful sight that Judas bargaining with the devil, never was there a worse business arrangement than this: Jesus Christ, exchanged for thirty pieces of silver. Judas was a tool of Satan (Lk. 22:3;Jn 13:2, 27). At what point he relinquished control we have no way of knowing. Just when sinful human nature was fully swallowed up by the prince of darkness is not clear, but to know that such a horror is possible should cause us pause. Whenever that happened it was without observation for his companions never suspected he was the one the Master was referring to when he spoke of treason. Even as he left the table before the Eucharist was instituted the others assumed this most trusted disciple was off on some holy errand or act of mercy (Jn. 13:29).

The awful death of this one once so close to Jesus should cause the meek to melt. The tragic end of the world's most famous traitor is not the end at all. If hell is in fact a place of torment (and it is) and men reap what they sow (and they will), this poor man's plight is unimaginable.

It is not an accident that the holy record prefaces a holy rite, the Lord's Supper, and act of loyalty and devotion with the most despicable account of betrayal and treachery. To hypocritically touch our lips to the very symbol of the body of our Lord is tantamount to planting a Judas kiss again on the cheek of Christ.

No wonder the apostle warns those around Christ's table to "examine" themselves, for hypocrisy is a dangerous thing. None of us is so pure and so without sin that we should ever deserve Christ, but let us make sure that the blood of one greater than any Paschal lamb has been applied by faith. Let us make sure we have bowed before the King in spirit and in truth. Let us abandon all ambition and fully trust the one who calls us to "follow" him. And should we somehow in a fit of madness deny our Lord, as Peter did, the strongest of the twelve, let us quickly run to him alone in whom there is forgiveness and repent at his feet. And should our dear Savior break our heart with his pointed interrogation, let us search the heart for the one important thing, as did Peter. "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

“...for without me ye can do nothing.” John 15:5

There is a place of quiet rest near to the heart of God. There is in that same place power and prosperity. That place is not in some upper room, cathedral or catacomb; it is in Christ. When we re-enact the events of chapter thirteen we remember that Jesus is the bread (for so he called himself). In chapter fourteen Jesus described himself as the “way, the truth, and the life,” explaining that he and the Father were one and the same. In chapter fifteen he taught that he was the “vine.” All are familiar with its rich luscious fruit which is precious to drink.

Let us consider the Vine and learn from it.

The Simplicity of the Vine. Jesus was his own curriculum. He pointed to himself in a most unusual way. Study the vine and you will begin to understand the path to spiritual power and prosperity, success and survival even in this often hostile world. Look at the vine. You would be hard pressed to find a more simple or lowly plant in all God’s fields or forests. There is not plant as humble.

See the majestic Oak and its tight golden grain. Consider the Maple with its confident star shaped leaf and its giant bough. See the Pine which stands like a spire of an evergreen cathedral. See the Apple and Orange tree heavy with fruit and alive with color. Look at the Royal Palm tree standing upright as some proud monarch above the hot sands of Palestine. Then consider the proudest of the proud, the Cedar tree of Lebanon. It stood on the snow capped mountain and its wood was as close to heaven as men could get, and was used in the building of the temple. Jesus did not say, “I am the Cedar,” although he had every right to do so. No, he instead pointed to another humble species; he pointed to the vine.

Look at the vine so helpless and so humble. Jesus is the vine. No wonder the world missed the coming of God. As he came not as a captain of the Host, but as a companion of the humble. He claimed not to be the lofty, but the lowly. (Matt. 11:28; Phil. 2:13). While men compete to become cedars Jesus claimed to be the vine. God resists to proud, but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6, 1Pet. 5:5). The proud are disqualified. Put away all ambition and learn to abide. The secret of spiritual greatness is somehow found in this illustrative plant. A vine held no illusions of grandeur (Ezk.15:3).

The Tenacity of the Vine. A vine has little or no strength in itself. If left alone it would crawl along the ground. If a vine would rise above the dust, if it would drink full the sun, it must be lifted up. What a vine does best is cling, and because it does, it climbs. Enter the vineyard and there you will find stake poles driven into the ground upon which the vine clings, and as it clings, it climbs. It rises above the earth and rises high. If it clings to a post of oak it becomes as strong as the oak. If it clings to a limestone wall it is as strong as the stones. On the other hand, if it attempts to cling and climb weak and rotting things it trusts itself to weakness. The weak and lowly vine become as strong as the thing it clings to.

For thirty years the Lord Jesus showed us what it was to cling. During his mortal life he clove to the Father’s will. As ivy clings to the walls of Harvard and Princeton, may we cling to God. All the greats

knew how to cling. Elisha clung to Elijah. Ruth clung to Naomi. John leaned on Jesus' bosom. Let us find the will of God and cling to it. Israel should have learned this simple truth from its prophets (Jer. 13:11).

The vine takes the shape and the form of the thing it clings to. May my will be lost in his. As we cling we climb. Climb a steel girder and let the wind blow. If God gives you a cross, cling to it. If God gives you a word, cling to it. If God gives you a promise cling to it. "Jacob said, "I will not let thee go until you bless me." Cling by faithful obedience to the will of God. When you cling you climb.

The Capacity of the Vine. A vine exists to produce fruit. "ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that you go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain..." (Jn. 15:16). Here is what Jesus called an "abundant life." An abundant life is a life that produces fruits of eternal importance, a life that has enough for others, and a life that is spiritually empowered.

The vine, more than any other fruit bearing plant needs help from the farmer. A farmer must build the arbor. The farmer must guide or attach the vine to it. Then there is the knife. Yes the knife! All fruit bearing trees must be pruned, but none so severely as the vine. I've seen it done. I thought the husbandman was too aggressive, too reckless, too severe when he pruned back the branches. When he finished we felt there must have been some mistake. All that remained was what looked like a root sticking out of the ground (Isa. 53:2). Why does God take away? The answer is in John 15:2. That you might have more fruit. Watch the sculptor, the artist. He starts with a solid block of Marble. How does he create his work of art? By taking away. A little here, a little there, and so it grows in subtraction before our eyes, not by adding as much as by taking away. Commit your life to Christ, yield to his will and trust his pruning knife. Let him add if he wishes, but also let him freely take away.

The Veracity of the Vine. Never has so much come from so little. In the spring it does not look like much, but come back in October. By then the miracle will have done its work. By then the boughs are heavy with fruit. Never has a life produced as much as the life of Jesus. "I am come that ye have life, and have it more abundantly," he said. Then listen to him and learn, for he also said, "without me you can do nothing." The grape need not strive nor struggle to be a grape. It needs only to abide in the vine.

the servant of the Lord must not strive (2Tim. 2:24). they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength (Isa.40:31). I am crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20). Christ in you is the hope of Glory (Col. 1:27).

Keys to the Upper Room

Conclusion

A key is needed to open locked rooms. There is a key for this one as well. The lessons of the upper room are simple because they address common things, things as common as a loaf of bread and a cup of wine, but they are difficult lessons unless taught by the Spirit. If we could reproduce the order of every event around that table, if we could mimic the most humble of acts and possess the “original” basin Christ used to wash the disciples feet it would be only a “form of godliness, denying the power thereof.” there is much more taking place in that room than meets the eye.

Some are tempted to search for some secret element hidden in the sacred experience of the historic events that took place there. Our goal is not to capture or reproduce the experience of the upper room, either in the holy feast or in the holy fire. Christ is greater than the experience. Even the truths of the upper room must not be interpreted by our or another’s experience for such a foundation is too flimsy. Even if we were to witness with our own eyes, Christ stooping to wash his disciple’s feet, or were we later to watch as cloven tongues of fire fell on the early church, we would not be wise to interpret spiritual things with carnal organs. We have a more sure word of prophecy. We have the Bible. By it we are able to eaves drop on an intimate conversation between God the Father and God the Son. It is in this sacred dialog that we find the tools of discernment and the key with which we may unlock the door to the upper room.

The ministry of the upper room makes up the final lessons of the “Teacher come from God.” They afford us a wealth of spiritual knowledge in that they summarize the plans and purposes of God for the church. The ministry of the upper room begins with disciples setting out in obedience to Christ’s request to find an appropriate place and ends with the after dinner conversation before the Lord entered Gethsemane. To fully appreciate the depth and dimension of what was said during those last personal moments, the Master shared with his little group of followers in John thirteen, fourteen, fifteen and sixteen we should turn to chapter seventeen. It is there that Jesus conversed with the Father about the truths imparted in the upper room and thus affords an invaluable commentary. It is in this prayer that we find the keys to unlock the treasures and truths of the upper chamber.

In the upper room a new form of government was instituted. In chapter thirteen we learn something of the position and protocol of Christ’s kingdom. Chapter fourteen speaks of a new kind of other-worldly peace. In chapter fifteen Christ talks of a power available to every citizen of this kingdom and the place and posture disciples must assume to experience it.

“I have give unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou has given me; for they are thine, and all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition: that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled. And now I come to thee; and

these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. they are not of the world even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe through their word.” (Jn. 17:8-20)

There is power in the word of God. “In the beginning was the word...” Christ was the Word incarnate. He came to fulfil the word of God. As Christ gave us the word of the Father and lived in complete obedience to it, so we are to give the word to the world and live by faith in the word. there are many wonderful lessons taught in the upper room. After we have taken note of each precious word that fell from the Master’s lips, we should underline a sentence most precious. “If ye know these thing, happy are ye if ye do them.” (Jn. 13:17).