

COME TO THE FEAST
BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS
ON THE EUCHARIST

St Mark's Gospel

Programme

- ▶ Who were the “Markan” Christians? (Mark 13)
- ▶ Insiders, outsiders and novelty (Mark 2:1-3:6)
- ▶ Feeding the 5000 (Mark 6:32-7:23)
- ▶ Feeding the 4000 (Mark 8:1-21)
- ▶ **The Lord’s Supper (Mark 14:22-25)**
- ▶ Lessons for today’s church



Sequence

- ▶ The Lord's Supper
- ▶ Backgrounds
- ▶ History: Passover, original words and meaning
- ▶ Early Christian tradition
- ▶ Unique to Mark
- ▶ The Markan Community
- ▶ And so...



Lord's Supper

Mark 14:22 While they were eating, he **took bread**, and after **blessing** it he **broke** it, **gave** it to them, and said, "Take it. This is my body." 23 And after **taking** the **cup** and giving **thanks**, he **gave** it to them, **and they all drank from it**. 24 He said to them, "This is my **blood**, the **blood** of the **covenant**, that is poured out for **many**. 25 I tell you the truth, I will no longer **drink** of the **fruit of the vine** until that day when I drink it **new** in the **kingdom of God**."



Background: Passover

Exod 12:6 You must care for it until the fourteenth day of this month, and then the whole community of Israel will kill it around sundown. 7 They will take some of the blood and put it on the two side posts and top of the doorframe of the houses where they will eat it. 8 They will eat the meat the same night; they will eat it roasted over the fire with bread made without yeast and with bitter herbs. 9 Do not eat it raw or boiled in water, but roast it over the fire with its head, its legs, and its entrails. 10 You must leave nothing until morning, but you must burn with fire whatever remains of it until morning. 11 This is how you are to eat it—dressed to travel, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. You are to eat it in haste. It is the LORD's Passover.



Background: Unleavened Bread

Exod 12:14 This day will become a memorial for you, and you will celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—you will celebrate it perpetually as a lasting ordinance. 15 For seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. Surely on the first day you must put away yeast from your houses because anyone who eats bread made with yeast from the first day to the seventh day will be cut off from Israel.



Background: Early Judaism

The observances of Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread may have ancient roots in separate agrarian spring fertility rites, offerings of the firstlings of livestock and first fruits of grain. In the Hebrew scriptures, however, they are presented as joined festivals with significance both as historical rites for the Israelites related to their flight from

Egypt, and as perennial commemoration of the exodus to be observed throughout subsequent generations.

Exodus 12–13; 23:15; 34:18;
Lev. 23:4–8; Num. 9:1–15;
28:16–25; 33:3; Deut. 16:1–8;
Josh. 5:10–12; 2 Kings 23:21–
23; Ezek. 45:21–25; 2 Chron.
8:12–14; 30:1–27; 35:1–19;
Ezra 6:19–22.



Background: Mishnah

Mishnah Pesah. 10:5

In every generation a person is duty-bound to regard himself as if he personally has gone forth from Egypt, since it is said, "And you shall tell your son in that day saying, it is because of that which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt" (Ex. 13:8).

Therefore we are duty-bound to thank, praise, glorify, honour, exalt, extol, and bless him who did for our forefathers and for us all these miracles.

He brought us forth from slavery to freedom, anguish to joy, mourning to festival, darkness to great light, subjugation to redemption, so we should say before him, Hallelujah!



Getting the date wrong

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Synoptics	Lord's Supper	Crucifixion		First day of the week
	<i>Eve of Passover</i>	<i>Passover</i>		
John	Last Supper	Crucifixion		First day of the week
		<i>Eve of Passover</i>	<i>Passover</i>	



Traditions

Matthew

Matt 26:26 While they were eating, **Jesus** took bread, and after giving thanks he broke it, gave it to **his disciples**, and said, "Take, **eat**, this is my body." 27 And after taking the cup and giving thanks, he gave it to them, **saying, "Drink from it, all of you,** 28 **for** this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, that is poured out for many **for the forgiveness of sins.**

Mark

Mark 14:22 While they were eating, he took bread, and after giving thanks he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take it. This is my body." 23 And after taking the cup and giving thanks, he gave it to them, **and they all drank from it.** 24 He said to them, "This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, that is poured out for many."

Luke

Luke 22:19 Then he took bread, and after giving 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 in the same way he took the cup **after they had eaten**, saying, "This cup **that is poured out for you** is the new covenant in my blood."

Paul

1 Cor 11:23 **For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed** took bread, 24 and after he had given thanks he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, he **also** took the cup **after supper**, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. **Do this, every time you drink it, in remembrance of me.**"



Reconstruction

He took bread, and giving thanks [or: pronouncing a blessing],

broke [it] and said:

“this is my body”.

Likewise also the cup, after supper, saying,

“This cup is the covenant in my blood”.



Originally

- ▶ Looking back doctrinally:
 - > Institution of the Eucharist for the church
 - > Perhaps (even) ordination



Originally

▶ Looking forward historically

- > Event in the life of Jesus
- > Context: open table fellowship
- > Context: God's compassion extended to all
- > Jesus saw his destiny as somehow part of the coming of the Kingdom

> Called to extraordinary faithfulness

> Prophetic gesture

> Body: my whole self

> Blood: my life (principle)

> Covenant: Restoration of Israel / New Covenant (Jeremiah)



Markan Community

Mark 14:22 While they were eating, he took bread, and after giving thanks he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take it. This is my body."

23 And after taking the cup and giving thanks, he gave it to them, and **they all drank from it.**

24 He said to them, "This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, **that is poured out for many.**



Markan Community

5000

He **took** the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he **said the blessing** and **broke** the loaves. He **gave** them to his disciples to serve the people...

Jewish

4000

After he **took** the seven loaves and **gave thanks**, he **broke** them and began **giving** them to the disciples to serve.

Gentile

Last supper

he **took** bread, and **after saying the blessing**, he **broke** it, **gave** it to them

And after **taking** the cup and **giving thanks**, he **gave** it to them,

Both Jews and Gentiles

Markan Community

- ▶ They all drank from it
- ▶ Mark 10:35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him and said, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask."
36 He said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" 37 They said to him, "Permit one of us to sit at your right hand and the other at your left in your glory." 38 But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking! **Are you able to drink the cup I drink** or be baptised with the baptism I experience?" 39 They said to him, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "**You will drink the cup I drink**, and you will be baptised with the baptism I experience, 40 but to sit at my right or at my left is not mine to give. It is for those for whom it has been prepared."



Markan Community

▶ The blood of the covenant

▶ Mark 3:13 Now Jesus went up the mountain and called for those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 He appointed twelve (whom he named apostles), so that they would be with him and he could send them to preach 15 and to have authority to cast out demons. 16 He appointed twelve: To Simon he gave the name Peter; 17 to James and his brother John, the sons of Zebedee, he gave the name Boanerges (that is, "sons of thunder"); 18 and Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, 19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.



Markan Community

- ▶ that is poured out for many
- ▶ “Many” recurs almost recklessly throughout Mark.
- ▶ “Many” is in contrast with “few” and it really means all.
- ▶ Mark 1:34, 45; 2:2, 15; 3:7-8, 10, 12; 4:1-2, 5, 33; 5:9-10, 21, 23-24, 26, 38, 43; 6:2, 13, 20, 23, 31, 33-35; 7:4, 13; 8:1, 31; 9:12, 14, 26; 10:22, 31, 45, 48; 11:8; 12:5, 27, 37, 41, 43; 13:6, 26; 14:24, 56; 15:3, 41



Markan Community

- ▶ Mark 2:15 As Jesus was having a meal in Levi's home, **many** tax collectors and sinners were eating with Jesus and his disciples, for there were **many** who followed him.
- ▶ Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for **many**."
- ▶ Isa 53:11 "Having suffered, he will reflect on his work, he will be satisfied when he understands what he has done. "My servant will acquit **many**, for he carried their sins. 12 So I will assign him a portion with the **multitudes**, he will divide the spoils of victory with the powerful, because he willingly submitted to death and was numbered with the rebels, when he lifted up the sin of **many** and intervened on behalf of the rebels."



Markan Community

- ▶ fruit of the vine
- ▶ Mark 2:22 "And no one pours new **wine** into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the **wine** and the skins will be destroyed. Instead new **wine** is poured into new wineskins."
- ▶ Mark 12:8 So they seized him, killed him, and threw his body out of the **vineyard**. 9 What then will the owner of the **vineyard** do? He will come and destroy those tenants and give the **vineyard** to others.



Markan Community

- ▶ **drink it new**
- ▶ Mark 1:27 They were all amazed so that they asked each other, "What is this? A **new** teaching with authority! He even commands the unclean spirits and they obey him."
- ▶ Mark 2:21 No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the **new** from the old, and the tear becomes worse. 22 And no one pours **new** wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the skins will be destroyed. Instead **new** wine is poured into **new** wineskins."



Markan Community

- ▶ **in the Kingdom of God**
- ▶ Frequent: Mark 1:15; 4:11, 26, 30; 9:1, 47; 10:14–15, 23–25; 12:34; 14:25; 15:43
- ▶ Mark 1:15 Jesus said, “The time is fulfilled and the **kingdom of God** is near. Repent and believe the gospel!”
- ▶ Mark 15:43 Joseph of Arimathea, a highly regarded member of the council, who was himself looking forward to the **kingdom of God**, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.



And so...

- ▶ What would they have “heard”?
- ▶ Their experience of the Lord’s Supper
- ▶ Biblical and early Jewish backgrounds
- ▶ Immediate context in Mark’s Gospel
- ▶ Wider context: multiplications of the loaves



The Didache

- ▶ The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles
- ▶ Didache = teaching
- ▶ Text: www.thedidache.com
- ▶ Eucharist: Didache 9

