



## ***St. Paul Evangelical Community Church (SPECC)***

**Worship Address :** Cerritos High School Auditorium  
12500 E. 183<sup>rd</sup> St., Cerritos, CA 90703  
(Enter at Bloomfield, across Heritage Park)

**Mailing Address :** 11428 E. Artesia Blvd. # 4 ; Artesia, CA 90701  
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**Website :** [www.sp-ecc.org](http://www.sp-ecc.org)

April 19, 2009

**Theme: The Last Supper, The Lord's Supper**

**Text: Matthew 26:14-25**

At the beginning of the celebration of their last Passover together Luke tells us that Jesus said, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." This will be a memorable Passover for the disciples because Jesus will claim that he is going to fulfill the Passover through his death. During the Passover meal the story was told how God delivered the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. Each part of the meal had a specific meaning. The host of the meal would explain the connection between each part of the meal and the story of the Hebrews' deliverance from slavery in Egypt. While Jesus was eating the Passover with his disciples, he took a piece of unleavened bread and said, "Take and eat; this is my body."

These words would have shocked the apostles. Jesus was claiming that the bread represented his death. Two thousand years later, the Lord's Supper has been removed from the Passover; but we understand its meaning better than the apostles did on that night. The meaning of Jesus words was that his death would bring about the deliverance from our sins. He would do this by dying for us. Christians often say things like, "Jesus died for us;" or, "Jesus died for you." What do we mean by that exactly? Scripture says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Scripture also teaches that the wages of sin is death. We will all die physically of course. However, Scripture teaches that if we don't deal with our sin problem, we will experience eternal death. In other words we would face eternal judgment as punishment for our sins. When Jesus died on the cross, he paid the death penalty for our sins. God transferred our sins on to his shoulders. God also poured out the judgment that we should have received on to his shoulders. When I come to accept that I am a sinner, and place my trust in Jesus' death on the cross as payment of the death penalty for my sins, God declares that I am totally righteous. This is what we mean when we say that Jesus died for us.

Then Jesus did another startling thing. During the Passover meal, there were four cups that were shared. Jesus took the third cup, which was called the "Cup of Redemption," and claimed that it represented His blood of the New Covenant which is poured out for many. This would have been startling to the apostles as well. Almost certainly they did not understand the meaning of what Jesus was saying in that moment. The Bread and the cup represent the body and blood of Jesus Christ who was tortured and nailed to a cross. It is our faith in what the bread and the cup represent that brings about the forgiveness of our sins.

Before they drank of the fourth cup, Jesus said to the apostles that from then on he would not drink of the cup until he would drink it new with them in His Father's kingdom.



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There was a promise associated with this cup. God had said, "I will take you as my people, and I will be your God." Revelation 21 has language which reflects the final fulfillment of that promise, "And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them and they shall be his people. God himself will dwell with them and be their God.'" Jesus' speech about his sacrificial death is an indication that He must go away. This gives the apostle's another reason to be sorrowful. But he inserts a note of joy into their sorrow. Jesus' death on the cross is a "permanent reminder that he is coming again to bring the final establishment of the kingdom to those who await his fellowship." Jesus inserts another note of Joy into what must have been a sad moment for the apostles. They sing a hymn together. Because the Passover was a celebration of Israel's deliverance, the hymn would have been a hymn of praise for God's deliverance.

Jesus and his disciples then go to the Mount of Olives where Jesus predicts that all of them will desert Him even as He is arrested. He cites a passage from Zechariah to show that it is God's will that He, the Shepherd of the sheep, should be struck down. He understands that what is about to happen to him—including the desertion of his followers—was foretold in Scripture. In the same breath He promises that He will go before them into Galilee. We can learn two things from Jesus prediction of the apostles' desertion of Him and his promise to see them again. (1) We are reminded that in ourselves, we are completely undependable as far as obedience to God is concerned. We are no better than the apostles. (2) Jesus forgives our weaknesses and continues to see us as His disciples. He will continue to lead us just as he continued to lead the apostles after his resurrection.

Peter is shocked by this prediction and refuses to accept it as being true. He vows that he will never desert Jesus, even if all of the rest of the apostles do. Jesus, as we know, then makes another prediction: that Peter will deny Jesus three times that very night. Peter's denial also teaches us something. We must be careful not to trust in the strength of our own commitment because that might fail. We must place our trust in God's power which is given to us through the Holy Spirit. No believer should be so self-confident that they would claim that they would never fail Jesus. This would amount to spiritual pride. The Scriptures say that pride goes before a fall. Our trust must always be in the unflinching grace of God who promises to empower us to follow Jesus.