

**Grace Evangelical Church
 Pastor Paul Bawden
 Sunday, January 4, 2009 – Communion Sunday
 "Guests At The Lord's Table"
 Mark 14:17; 3:13-19**

As we come to the Lord's Table this morning, a question we should ask on this first Sunday of the New Year is: "Who can come to the Lord's Table?"

Obviously, Jesus is the one who is commemorating the Passover Meal with His disciples in the Gospel records. In that commemoration, Jesus takes something old, and institutes something entirely new based upon His upcoming death, burial, and bodily resurrection.

In so doing, Jesus will fulfill and terminate the commemoration of the Old Testament Passover, and will become the new eternal Passover pictured in the bread, which represents His body given as our substitute to be the sacrifice for our sins, and pictured in the cup, which represents His blood, which will be given as the eternal payment for our sin, the basis of the new covenant.

After our Lord's death, burial, bodily resurrection, and ascension, the apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians in his first letter, chapter 11, penned that the Lord's table was given to the local church to commemorate.

But who can come to the Lord's Table that Jesus instituted those many years ago?

Perhaps the best way to answer that question is to take a look at the first guests who were present when Jesus established His table in the context of the Old Testament Passover commemoration of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

From Mark 14:17, we are told that "when it was evening, Jesus came with the twelve, as they were about to commemorate the Passover meal.

Of course, Jesus selection of the 12 disciples was an important advance in His ministry. Probably Jesus selected 12 for leadership over Israel's 12 tribes during His messianic reign (Matt. 19:28). In view of Israel's rejection of Jesus, they became the nucleus of the New Testament church.

These particular men would be the primary ones to be trained by the Lord to carry out His mission after His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. The exact location of their selection is not specifically given, although Mark mentions that it was on a mountain (Mark 3:13). It was probably somewhere in Galilee since that is where Christ's ministry began.

It has been suggested that from a mountaintop is an imagery reminiscent of Yahweh's summons to Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:20). Jesus sovereignly summoned the Twelve into a new community (Mark 3:13-19) and to a mission that is founded on a relationship with himself ('in order that they might be with him,' v. 14). He confers his authority on the Twelve and sends them out with dominion over demons (6:7-13) and with freedom from the tradition of the elders (7:5-13).

Who were the twelve?

I. The twelve disciples listed (Mark 3:16-19).

There are actually four lists given in the New Testament of those who were the Twelve, and were at that Passover meal at which time Jesus instituted His table that we commemorate today.

Let me put the four different lists of the twelve disciples on the screen for you. I have used Mark's list in my study notes. There is also in the twelve a list of four each, who were perhaps the ones' sent out together to minister. Peter always appears at the beginning of the list and Judas at the end of the list. In Acts Judas Iscariot is not listed for he betrayed the Lord and took his own life. In his place, as Acts 1:36 tells us, Matthias was added to the eleven apostles or disciples.

Mark 3:16-19

1. **Simon Peter – Andrew’s brother, Peter (Greek) and Cephas (Aramaic) means “rock.”**
2. **James – brother of John, son of Zebedee; one of the “sons of thunder.”**
3. **John – brother of James; son of Zebedee, one of the “sons of thunder.” Known as the disciple that Jesus loved.**
4. **Andrew – Simon Peter’s brother.**
5. **Philip**
6. **Bartholomew – meaning “son of Tolomai” – also called Nathanael**
7. **Matthew – Levi – Roman Tax Collector – hated by the Jews.**
8. **Thomas – also called Didymus, meaning “twin.” – the doubter.**
9. **James, son of Alphaeus (also called James the less).**
10. **Thaddaeus (Jude)**
11. **Simon the Zealot – also called the “Cananean” –the Aramic form of Zealot – referring to his personality – also political party desirous to overthrow Rome.**
12. **Judas Iscariot**

An unusual group of men Jesus chose to be His 12 disciples. Four were fishermen, one a Roman Tax Collector, one belonged to a radical political group, six of them we know very little or nothing about them. Thomas was the doubter, and Judas Iscariot betrayed the Lord. All were laymen with no formal training in the Scriptures or in speaking. Yet, our Lord chose them to be part of the Twelve that He would train for ministry after He left the earth following His death, burial, and bodily resurrection.

II. The twelve disciple’s purpose (Mark 3:13-15).

1. **They were selected by the Jesus** – He summoned them to come to Him (3:13).

Jesus took the initiative in selecting the men He wanted as His twelve disciples. This was not of their doing, but God’s doing.

2. **They were to be with Jesus (3:14) – disciples – learners.**

These 12 men that Jesus selected were to first of all of have fellowship with Him and learn of Him and from Him.

3. **They were sent out by Jesus to preach**, or to herald the good news about Jesus and His kingdom (Mark 3:14) – **apostles** – sent by the Lord to preach and bring His healing power to the people in bondage.

4. **They were to use the power that Jesus gave them** in confronting the evil one in order to have victory over him - the greatest demonstration of having the Lord’s power (Mark 3:15).

The 12 disciples were chosen by the Lord to fellowship with Him, learning of Him, and then to become involved in ministry with His authority and power (chosen, learning, and ministering).

Now after some three, three and half years, Jesus knew that it was His time to go to Jerusalem, be rejected, suffer, be crucified, be buried, and rise from the dead. He directed two of His disciples to go and prepare the Passover commemoration. They found the place as Jesus had said and prepared the Passover (Mark 13:13-17).

Now think with me again who was there at the table reclining with Jesus at the first Lord’s Table.

III. The twelve disciples at the first Lord’s Table.**Mark 3:16-19**

1. **Simon Peter** –The one who did not understand when Jesus started talking about going to Jerusalem to suffer, die and arise again. Jesus had to tell him to “get behind me Satan.” The one who said that he wouldn’t deny the Lord but he did. His enthusiasm was an embarrassment at the time. But he knew who Christ was when the Lord asked them who He was. You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Impulsive and enthusiastic, yet fickle Peter was at that first Lord’s Table.

2. **James – brother of John, one of the “sons of thunder.”** He was valued highly by the Lord as he was one in the circle of three, along with his brother John and Peter, that was on the Mt of Transfiguration, and other experiences with Jesus (healing of the synagogue official’s daughter (Luke 8:48-56); Jesus took Peter, James and John with Him as He went from the others to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-42) . He was certainly loyal to Jesus yet along with his brother John displayed a righteous indignation, for when the Samaritans did not receive the Lord, he and John wanted to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them (Luke 9:51-56). Jesus rebuked them.

3. John – brother of James; one of the “sons of thunder.” Known as the disciple that Jesus loved. He also was a faithful follower of Jesus Christ, who when he saw someone casting out demons in Jesus name tried to stop him. Jesus told John that he who is not against you is for you.” (Luke 9:49-50). John and James both approached Jesus about each one having a place to sit next to Christ, one on His left, and one on His right in the kingdom. Jesus told them that they did not know what they were asking. He told them about drinking His cup, referring to His death, and they said they were able to do that, and Jesus said that would happen, but for deciding on who would rule with Him in His kingdom, His Father would decide that. The other ten disciples hearing the question of James and John became indignant (Mark 10:35-45). Then Jesus started to tell them about what real service was, it was being a slave to Him. At the same time, John had real compassion as Jesus would tell Him to take care of His mother at the cross. **John was a man who had a temper, yet had deep passion for Christ. He had a strong purpose in His life to serve the LORD.**

4. Andrew – Simon Peter’s brother – the evangelist, who found his brother, Peter, and told him that they had found the Messiah, the Christ, and brought Simon to Jesus, and Jesus told Simon, that he would be called, Cephas, which means Peter, a rock. He called the attention of our Lord to the lad with loaves and fishes at the feeding of the five thousand (John 6:8). He introduced to Jesus certain Greeks who were desirous to see Him (John 12:20-22). He was in the upper room after the ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:13), as the others were accept Judas Iscariot.

5. Philip – Philip was found by Jesus in Bethsaida, and Philip found Nathanael, who is also called Bartholomew. He had a heart for bringing Nathanael, Bartholomew, to the Lord. Philip wanted Jesus to show them the Father (John 14:8), and Jesus told him that those who had seen Him had seen the Father.

6. Bartholomew – meaning “son of Tolomai” – also called Nathanael – questioned about any good thing coming out of Nazareth, when he heard about Jesus being from Nazareth. Nathanael became a believer as the Lord told Him that He saw him before Philip called to him.

7. Matthew – Levi – Roman Tax Collector – hated by the Jews sat at the first Lord’s Table. He was deeply resented by the Jews, but Christ called him and he followed. He forsook Rome when he followed the Lord. He turned his back on his lucrative business and followed the Lord. He gave all his talents to the Lord to be used by Him.

8. Thomas – also called Didymus, meaning “twin.” – called doubting Thomas. He was one who had to see the evidence to believe. There is nothing wrong with asking questions, and searching out answers for one’s faith. Once convinced, he believed. Christ wants to confirm to the doubter’s heart that He is real and can change their live into a life of service and fulfillment for Him.

9. James, son of Alphaeus (also called James the less). Evidently the least things were important to him.

10. Thaddaeus (Jude)- none is known about him, but faithful.

11. Simon the Zealot – also called the “Cananean” –the Aramic form of Zealot – referring to his personality – also apolitical party desirous to overthrow Rome. Evidently a enthusiastic heart for the Lord.

12. Judas Iscariot- who was the treasurer for the twelve disciples, was the one who betrayed the Lord for 30 pieces of silver. He left before participating in the first Lord’s Table. He returned the money and eventually hung himself.

IV. The twelve disciples after the first Lord’s Table.

1. They became recommitted believers in the bodily resurrected Christ.

(1) Peter was restored to fellowship with the Lord, and became a great witness for the Lord, taking the gospel to the Gentile world. He was used to write two letters, I & II Peter. Tradition has him ministering in Italy.

(2) James – was the first martyr being slain with the sword at the command of Herod (Acts 12:1 – A. D. 44).

(3) John served with Peter, and wrote the Gospel of John, I, II, III John, and Revelation – exiled for his faith.

(4) Andrew - Tradition has him preaching in Scythia, others in Greece.

(5) Philip – Tradition - that he preached in Phrygia

(6) Bartholomew – Tradition - that he preached the gospel in India, others say in Armenia.

(7) Matthew – wrote the book of Matthew. Tradition - Preached in Judea and went to other nations.

(8) Thomas – Tradition - Preached in Persia.

(9) James the less – Faithful to the end.

(10) Thaddaeus (praise) - (Lebbaeus) – Faithful to the end.

(11) Simon the Zealot – Faithful to the end.

(12) Matthias – Tradition – preached the gospel in Judea, perhaps in Ethiopia as well.

Foxes book of Martyrs gives this description of the end of the twelve disciples/apostles.

2. The lives of the 12 apostles ended on planet earth, but continue in heaven.

1. Peter - crucified upside down
2. James, son of Zebedee - beheaded
3. John – son Zebedee - exiled for his faith; died of old age
4. Andrew - crucified
5. Philip - crucified
6. Bartholomew - beaten then crucified
7. Matthew - speared to death
8. Thomas - speared to death
9. James, son of Alphaeus - stoned to death
10. Thaddeus – (Judas) - stoned to death
11. Simon –the Zealot – crucified
- 12. Matthias - stoned to death**

V. At the Lord's Table Today

Who can come to the Lord's table today as we commemorate the Lord's Table at least once a month at Grace?

1. Whosoever may come to Jesus.

What did Jesus say, "Whosoever comes to Me and hears my words and acts on them" (Luke 6:47)" or "Everyone who comes to Me."

"Whosoever (everyone) who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved" (Acts 2:21).

"Whosoever (Whoever) will call on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13).

All who accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior, that He died in their place to pay the penalty for their sin, was buried, and conquered the grave to provide them forgiveness of sin and eternal life.

Whosoever who comes to Jesus Christ to accept Him as personal Savior can come to this table and partake of these elements to day!

That includes:

- **The Peters – the impetuous.**
- **The James – those with integrity.**
- **The Johns – the hot-tempered.**
- **The Andrews – the practical and decisive.**
- **The Philips – the matter of fact person**
- **The Bartholomews – the obscure yet faithful**
- **The Matthews – the agents of enemy power**
- **The Thomases – the investigative and doubters**
- **James, Son of Alphaeus – to whom the least are infinitely important**
- **Thaddeus – the obscure yet faithful**
- **Simon – the Zealot – the enthusiastic**
- **Judas – Iscariot – had the invitation but turned it down in unbelief.**

All different personalities and temperaments come to the Lord's Table today here at Grace as at that first Lord's table.

We all come first to Jesus accepting Him as personal Savior. He then accepts us. He tell us that we are accepted in the beloved and forgiven of all of our sin. He tells us to take of the bread, which represent His body, and to take of the cup which represents His blood, and give testimony to our faith in Him until He comes again for us.

Pause here to partake of the elements.

2. We are to live for Christ.

1. We are chosen by Jesus - selected by Jesus (Ephesians 1:4).

He summoned His twelve disciples to come to Him (3:13). Jesus took the initiative in selecting the men He wanted as His twelve disciples. This was not of their doing, but God's doing. God has done the same for us. He has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

2. We are to be with Jesus disciples – learners (Philippians 3:10-14).

These 12 men that Jesus selected were to first of all have fellowship with Him and learn of Him and from Him (Mark 3:14). Paul said in Philippians, " That I might know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the

fellowship of His sufferings being conformed to his death, in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead, not that I have already attained, but I press on that I may lay hold of that for which I was laid hold of by Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:10-14).

Daily Fellowship with Christ is basic to being able to serve the Lord effectively.

3. We are sent out by Jesus to herald his gospel in His power (Acts 1:8).

The disciples were to herald the good news about Jesus and His kingdom (Mark 3:14) – **apostles** – sent by the Lord to preach and bring His healing power to the people in bondage. In that process They were to use the power that Jesus gave them in confronting the evil one in order to have victory over him - the greatest demonstration of having the Lord's power (Mark 3:15).

As our year verse in Acts 1:8 tells us we are to be witnesses for the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

We are chosen by the Lord to learn of Him and be a witness for Him by life and word as we serve Him each day.

All this is ours through faith in Jesus because of what He has done for us through His death, burial and bodily resurrection.

We will always know that He loves us and gave His life for us by scars on His body, the nail prints in his hands and the scar on His side.

Their home on fire, a young boy was trapped upstairs. The grandmother attempted to rescue him, but she died in the horrible flames.

A man who saw the fire climbed up an iron drainpipe to the lad's window. With the boy clinging to his neck and with a firm grip on the drainpipe, he lowered himself and the boy to safety.

Weeks later, a public hearing was held to determine who should be given custody of the boy. A teacher, a farmer, and the town's wealthiest citizen all gave reasons why they should be chosen to give the boy a home. But the sad boy only stared at the floor.

Then a man walked to the front of the room and announced his desire to adopt the boy. He slipped his hands out of his pockets and held them up for the crowd to see. His palms bore hideous scars.

The boy cried out in recognition and leapt into the man's arms. This was the man who had saved the child's life. His hands had been scorched when he climbed up the hot iron pipe. As the boy nestled in the arms of the man who saved his life, the other men walked away. Those scarred hands settled the issue.

In the same way, our Savior's nail-scarred hands have settled the issue for us. Our Lord's sacrifice saved us and made us children of God. Like the young boy, we have been "adopted" as God's sons (Ephesians 1:5, NIV).

As believers, we are not orphans who are homeless without parents or family. We have an incredible parent, our loving Heavenly Father, who cares for us deeply and cares for us each moment of the day. We also have a wonderful family, consisting of brothers and sisters all over the world. And we have a marvelous home waiting for us in eternity.

How fitting for us to remember that Jesus not only recognizes us as part of His family – chosen us in Him, but we always know we are His welcome guests at His table because of His sacrifice for us.

**There were twelve disciples Jesus called to help him:
Simon Peter, Andrew, James, his brother John,
Philip, Thomas, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus,
Thaddeus, Simon, Judas, and Bartholomew.**

**He has called us, too. He has called us, too.
We are His disciples, I am one and you!
He has called us, too. He has called us, too.
We are His disciples, I am one and you!**

As Christ's disciples, let's enjoy our fellowship with the Lord this week as we serve Him in the Holy Spirit's power in the New Year!!