

Get Ready

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung 3/30/2019

This is a Pre-Passover sermon. It is time to begin to prepare. If you have **not** begun your spiritual preparation, it is time to **get ready** for Passover!

Some of us have observed Passover 20 – 30 – 40 years or more. Maybe we do not look as hard for “crumbs” as we once did. Some people mistakenly think only of the **physical** aspects of preparedness. As we prepare for Passover and Unleavened Bread, we put **leavened** bread and **leavened** products out of our homes as Israel of old did.

We are New Testament Christians and we should **also** see that **spiritual** preparedness is called for. We are told that a spiritual **examination** of ourselves is the correct way to prepare for Passover. It is appropriate that we examine ourselves **throughout the year**, but **especially**, as Passover approaches. **Extra effort** should be made in the Passover season.

1Corinthians 11:28 Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

As New Testament Christians, we apply the spiritual lesson by **also** putting **sin** out of our lives. In the days of the apostle Paul, the brethren de-leavened their homes just as we do today.

1Corinthians 5:7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as **you are unleavened**. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

You are unleavened – not only have the yeast products been thrown out of the house... You are unleavened – because, spiritually you have been washed by the water of the word:

1Corinthians 6:11 ...You are **washed**, but ye are **sanctified**, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

You are unleavened because:

Revelation 1:5 ...Unto [Jesus Christ] that loved us, and **washed** us from our sins in his own blood,

You are unleavened because:

John 13:8 Jesus told Peter ...If I **wash thee not**, thou hast no part with me.

You are unleavened because our sins have been forgiven: And yet, we must renew our Baptismal vow each year. Jesus taught us this lesson in the yearly Footwashing ceremony.

John 13:14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have **washed your feet**; ye also ought to **wash one another's feet**.

1Corinthians 5:8 Therefore let us keep the Feast [of Passover], not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Jesus Christ is the **unleavened bread** of sincerity and truth – that we begin again to take of – on the evening of the Passover observance.

It is God who directs us to do this each and every **year**. It is not only because we are forgetful – that we renew our pledge to **sin no more**... We understand the concepts surrounding Passover – but every year we should be understanding them more and more. We renew our pledge to **sin no more** every year because we are yet sinners... That is why we examine ourselves deeply – – not comparing ourselves to others... but measuring ourselves against Christ's perfect example.

Matthew, Mark and Luke each wrote very similar narratives about the Passover service. Let's take a look:

Matthew 26:14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

Matthew 26:15 And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him [Jesus Christ] unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

Matthew 26:16 And from that time [Judas Iscariot] sought opportunity to betray [Jesus].

Matthew 26:17 Now the first (day of the Feast) of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover?

The King James Translators knew little of the Feasts of the Lord so they sometimes stated it wrongly:

This verse should read, "Now the first of unleavened bread..." (Leviticus 23:5, Leviticus 23:6; Numbers 28:16, Numbers 28:17)

When is the **first time** unleavened bread is eaten each year? It is at the **Passover Service!**

Exodus 12:18 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even.

That is at the beginning of the 14th of Abib – **not** the 15th which is the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Matthew 26:18 And [Jesus] said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master says, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples.

It was time to **Get Ready**...

Matthew 26:19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they **made ready** the Passover.

Brethren, there is preparation before the Passover service – physically and spiritually.

Physically: we chose a place for the Passover service, and we procure the **wine** and **matzos** – or make our own unleavened bread. We get our **foot tubs** and towel ready as well.

Spiritually: Our pre-Passover preparations are not so evident – but much more important.

Matthew 26:20 Now when the evening was come, [Jesus] sat down with the twelve.

Luke 22:14 And when the **hour was come**, [Jesus] sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him.

There it is – that is the proper time, at **evening** – at the beginning of the 14th of Abib – right after sunset.

Matthew 26:21 And as they did eat, [Jesus] said, Truly I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

Matthew 26:22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto Him, Lord, is it I?

Matthew 26:23 And He answered and said, He that dips his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

Matthew 26:24 The Son of man goes as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born.

Matthew 26:25 Then Judas, which betrayed Him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

Judas knew good and well that **he was the one** who betrayed Jesus.

Matthew 26:26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

Matthew 26:27 And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

Matthew 26:28 For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Matthew 26:29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom.

It was the night of His last Passover supper that Jesus introduced these New Testament emblems - the unleavened bread and the wine - in place of the lamb that was always slain annually. God does things on time. He has given us an exact time for this ordinance. Jesus instituted the New Testament symbols "when the hour was come." Let's look at that in Mark:

Mark 14:12 And the first day of unleavened bread, **when** they killed the Passover [lamb], [Jesus'] disciples said unto Him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou may eat the Passover?

Mark 14:13 And He sent forth two of his disciples, and said unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.

Mark 14:14 And where-so-ever he shall go in, say ye to the good-man of the house, The Master says, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?

Mark 14:15 And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us.

Luke 22:7 Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed.

Luke 22:8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat.

Luke 22:9 And they said unto [Jesus], Where wilt thou that we prepare?

Luke 22:10 And He said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he enters in.

Luke 22:11 And ye shall say unto the good-man of the house, The Master says unto thee, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?

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

Luke 22:13 And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover.

Jesus saw to it that **preparations** were made for the Passover service. He had His disciples **get ready** the arrangements ahead of time. Three times in John Chapter 19, John refers to the Passover – as the **Preparation Day**.

John 19:31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation [*paraskeue* – the **Get Ready** day], that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an High Day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

The High Day of which John is speaking is the First Day of Unleavened Bread – the 15th of Abib. The High Day begins with the **Night to be Much Observed**. (Exodus 12:42; Leviticus 23:6)

We find that there is an instruction in the Bible that tells us to prepare for the Sabbaths and to **get ready** for the Passover and all the Holy Days. We often mistakenly think only of the physical aspects of readiness. John will develop the **spiritual** aspects in John 13. Paul writes later – some 20 years after Matthew and Mark wrote.

We will see a progression and **development** of thought as the meaning of the Passover is fully developed and revealed to us by God. First in the Synoptic Gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke – then Secondly in Paul's writings – and finally John's writings. John wrote very late – nearly 100 AD.

John, in Chapter 13, puts the icing on the cake – when it comes to understanding the meaning of Passover – with the addition of the Footwashing and explanation that Christians are to serve one another – even to laying down their lives for one another – just as Jesus did at Passover – and so we have come full circle.

John had all the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke and Paul in front of him as he wrote under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit.

As John grew in understanding and wisdom throughout his latter years he came to realize what was needed to complete Jesus Christ's intentions for the Passover service – and John came to realize the paramount importance of the Footwashing in showing the overriding lesson of self-service and Godly love toward others.

Paul had adequately shown the problem with **division** among the brethren. John rounded out the equation with the Footwashing showing the willingness to lay down our lives – **AS** Jesus did – for our brethren.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, it shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

So John, writing very late – nearly 100 AD – puts it all together for us. Let's see what Paul **adds** to development of Passover by going over to 1Corinthians. Jesus Christ **inspired** Paul to write these words of 1Corinthians 1 about **division** in the Church of God – which ought not to be.

1Corinthians 1:10 Now I beg of you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be **no divisions** among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Let's go to 1Corinthians 11 where we will see some "On the scene coverage" of a typical Passover Service in the church in the mid "50's AD. Passover had gone awry. Paul describes the problem to us – they were not observing Passover properly:

1Corinthians 11:17 Now in this that I declare unto you **I praise you not**, that ye come together not for the better, but **for the worse**.

1Corinthians 11:18 For first of all, when ye come together in the Church, I hear that there **are divisions** among you; and I **partly** believe it.

Paul says "I partly believe it" - I believe it in part because there were a few brethren who were not caught up in the duplicity. Not everyone was guilty of causing division – but an awful **lot of them** were! Brethren, do you have **any idea** how many Church members see a person that they used to **attend Passover with**, and say to themselves, "Oh, he's in XYZ group, so I don't talk to him anymore."

*That same **spirit of Division** – Paul is talking about here – is prevalent in God's Church today! Passover is supposed to be a Unification Feast of the Lord. Can you believe it – that is what was going on at Passover services in the First Century Church of God. Continuing... Paul says

1Corinthians 11:18 When you come together??? – [**you are not together!**] ... there are **divisions** among you; and I partly believe it.

God is **taking note** of those who are **approved** in His sight:

1Corinthians 11:19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are **approved** may be made manifest among you.

There we see that some had the right attitude of Forgiveness, understanding, Patience, Reconciliation, Discretion and Discernment.

1Corinthians 11:20 When you come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.

The Old Testament Seder Passover supper is no longer a part of the New Testament Passover Service – in that it looked forward to the slain Lamb of God. Now, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, has been slain ONCE and for all. (Hebrews 10:10)

The Passover symbols have been changed to Unleavened Bread and Wine. Paul describes their Passover service as near pandemonium:

1Corinthians 11:21 For in eating everyone takes before others his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.

Paul was correcting a terrible situation in the Church that was occurring at the Passover service. Members were treating each other horribly – totally disregarding that Christ made His abode in those brethren. There was division – strife – drunkenness – and bickering. Disorderly and drunken is no way to understand and appreciate Christ's sacrifice:

1Corinthians 11:22 What? Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? Or do you despise the Church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? **I praise you not.**

That is a stern admonition from Paul – because they were entirely out of line.

1Corinthians 11:23 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:

1Corinthians 11:24 And when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body for you: do this in remembrance of me.

Not a bone of Christ's Body was broken. (Exodus 12:46, John 19:31, 36) There is deep meaning in these Scriptures – the Church Brethren are not to be **broken** apart.

1Corinthians 11:25 After the same manner also [Jesus] took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as often [once each year] as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

1Corinthians 11:26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death until He comes.

1Corinthians 11:27 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.

"Unworthily" – Paul is referring to the improper **divisive conduct** of the Church people – then and **now**.

1Corinthians 11:28 But let a man **examine himself**, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. [That is **Getting Ready** for Passover]

1Corinthians 11:29 For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks condemnation to himself, not **discerning the Lord's Body**.

When reading the phrase, "the Lord's body," in this Scripture, many will mistakenly think about the **dead** body of Jesus.

They will then begin to try to "discern Christ's **dead** body." Paul's instructions are not about how many holes, stripes and thorn scars were in Christ's physical body – or which "part" of Jesus' torso covered our ailments. That is not what is meant here. Not at all! That is getting things all mixed up. Brethren – let's get this straight. Paul is not speaking of the **dead body** of Christ.

*Paul is speaking of the **Living Body** of Jesus Christ – the Church of God! Brethren, if you do not fully grasp that we must answer the question, "What does Paul mean by the "Lord's Body?" Paul was speaking of the **Church of God brethren!** Discerning the

Lord's body is recognizing who our brothers and sisters in Christ are – and then acting accordingly toward them!

"The **Body of Christ**" is a common term meaning all the converted people of God. All the brethren who are in the Church of God are the "Body of Christ." It does not matter which group they are in! Notice Paul's dogged consistency. The urgency should be evident. Brethren, make a list and study it until it becomes abundantly clear to you: I'll go slowly enough that you can get the Scriptures down:

Ephesians 1:22-23 The Church, which is His Body.

Romans 12:4-5 We, being many, are One Body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

1Corinthians 12:27 You are the Body of Christ, and members in particular.

1Corinthians 10:16-17 The bread which we break, is it not the fellowship of the Body of Christ? For we being many [brethren] are One Bread, and One Body.

Colossians 1:24 For [Christ's] Body's sake, which is the Church.

Colossians 3:15 You are all called into One Body; and be ye thankful.

Ephesians 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints ...for the edifying of the Body of Christ.

Over and over Paul defines who the Body of Christ is! Now, let's plug it in to the Passover service:

1Corinthians 11:29 For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks condemnation to himself, not discerning **the Lord's Body**.

The brethren are the **Lord's Body**. It is abundantly clear from these Scriptures that in explaining the meaning of the Lord's Body, Paul is referring to all the members of the Church of God. The Moffatt translation has for "not discerning the Lord's Body," as "without a **proper sense** of the Body," with 'Body' capitalized.

Brethren, do we know WHO makes up the Body of Christ – and do we properly recognize them as our brothers and sisters in Christ? "Discerning" means to discriminate, decide, look at decisively. Translation of:

1Corinthians 11:29 "Since he does not discern who the Lord's Body is, he is eating and drinking condemnation to himself."

The apostle John, in Chapter 13, closes the loop with regard to our dealing with one another with the addition of the Footwashing and explanation that Christians are to serve one another – even to laying down their lives for one another – just as Jesus did at Passover – and so we have come full circle.

There is so much to the Footwashing that goes unnoticed. As I mentioned, John had all the writings of Matthew, Mark and Luke – and Paul – on the Passover... And so, John – being one of the original eye-witnesses of the Passover, was inspired to include the narrative of the Washing of Feet in the Gospel accounts.

There is something very important in the Footwashing Lesson that Jesus taught to His disciples – and us. The Footwashing is so much more than a lesson in humility by getting down on the floor for a minute and washing some stinky old feet.

John 13:1 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.

Jesus compares the Footwashing to His own ultimate act of love to save us all.

John 13:3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and was going to God;

Jesus Christ was given the authority and power from on High to **enhance** the Passover service and symbols for a Spirit led congregation – and add the meaningful and necessary Footwashing.

John 13:8 ... Jesus answered, If I wash thee not [Peter], thou hast no part with me.

John 13:14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have **washed** your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

John 13:15 For I have given you an example, that **ye should do** as I have done to you.

John 13:16 Truly, truly, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither He [Jesus Christ] that is sent greater than He [God the Father] that sent Him.

Jesus is telling us that when we willingly **lower** ourselves in service to our fellow man – He assures us our place in His Kingdom will be **high**. Jesus said:

John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; AS [the same way that] I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

Notice how Jesus compares the Footwashing to His own ultimate act of sacrificing Himself for others!

John 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

But we are not to love one to another **in their sins** – but love them and help them out of their sins. Come out of Egypt – come out of sin.

Galatians 6:1-2 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

James 5:20 Let him know, that he which converts the sinner from the error of his way [come out of sin] shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

This is the explanation of how we are to act toward one another in love as we prepare for Passover.

Brethren, if you have a chance, and for a much more complete explanation of the **Footwashing**, see the notes and listen to the sermon, "**A Servant's Towel.**" It can be found here:

<http://sabbathcog.net/sermons2007.htm>

Time is rapidly running out on the Church of God brethren. Many of us are becoming "old timers." We are dropping like flies! The sad part is, we are teaching the younger members at Church that it is okay **not to gather together** into one the children of God that are scattered abroad. That is wrong! And, for that we will be held accountable.

Brethren, is everyone self-satisfied with only his own special group? There is no more important preparation for Passover than understanding who **discerning the Lord's Body** is about. Discerning the Lord's Body means answering the question, "Who are God's people," and then acting accordingly! Could Paul be any clearer? This comes straight from God:

1Corinthians 12:25 There should be no schism, [**no division**], in the Body [of Christ]; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

1Corinthians 12:27 Now ye are the **Body of Christ**, and members in particular.

Brethren, do your part and share this sermon with your friends before Passover. Too many of our friends are loyal to **men and organizations**. It is not about who is in charge or has control. Today, Church of God groups are operating independently from one another. That too, is wrong! They have no policy to recognize the other groups, or the scattered brethren.

The Scriptures do not allow for groups of Christians to co-exist side-by-side without recognizing one another. We need to understand from Scripture that God does not allow us to have an attitude of independence from other brethren. Here is Christ's clear instruction – which He repeats five times in John 17:

John 17:21 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.

Unity is required by God, and unity comes only when we have a right relationship with God and man. It is about being there for each other – as Jesus was! Discerning the Lord's Body is the correct way to **get ready** for Passover. How do we then, examine ourselves with regard to the Body of Jesus Christ? It is a big job – isn't it? And it's more than **important** – it is an **imperative** task at Passover time. Paul said that we must **examine ourselves** as to whether or not we are a part of **any** division before we take Passover.

We cannot hate, despise, or reject any of the saints; as that behavior defines not discerning the Lord's body. We are obligated to extend our realm of fellowship to include all who have the earnest of God's Holy Spirit.

Paul said that because of the ongoing **division** between members – described as, not discerning the Lord's Body, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." (1Corinthians 11:30)

That is a nice way of saying we are dropping like flies before we are ready to stand before Jesus Christ to give an accounting of ourselves (Romans 14:10-12). Paul is speaking of Church brethren who are physically sick and prematurely dead. He is describing the spiritually destitute state of some members. Paul then calls for self-examination using the same word again:

1Corinthians 11:31 If we would **discern** ourselves, we should not be condemned.

Brethren, as we **get ready** for Passover let's act accordingly toward all of God's people.

End: Get Ready