

MARK 14:21-26 **BROKEN BREAD AND SHED WINE**

²² While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."²³ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. ²⁴ "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. ²⁵ "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."²⁶ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

In the Last Supper, Jesus enacts the explanation of the events that were to unfold over the next 24 hours in the context of the Passover meal. In that atmosphere of delivery and salvation, the elements of the Seder are transformed in Jesus' hands to symbols of his saving work on Calvary. Although casting himself in the role of sacrificial victim, Jesus is anything but a victim. He is ever in control. Jesus takes the bread. Jesus breaks the bread. Jesus distributes the bread. Jesus takes the wine. Jesus offers the wine. And he does all these things in the attitude of thanksgiving to God the Father.

Jesus gives us the Last Supper as the explanation that makes sense out of his death and resurrection. In addition, he gives it to us as an explanation in which we are to participate. Bread was seen as a necessity for life. By partaking of the bread of Jesus we are receiving that which is necessary for eternal life. Throughout the Old Testament the shedding of blood was required for the forgiveness of sin. So by accepting the cup we receive the cleansing from our sins. Through the symbolism of a meal, Jesus changes the old external means of reconciliation into the new internalized transformation of being. Also, by making it a meal Jesus forces us to take an active, yet humble role. We can do nothing to save our selves, but we can block our salvation by refusing to accept that which is offered. Jesus offers you eternal reconciliation and life, and urges you to receive it. Only you can say, "Yes, Lord, and thank you."

Thank you, Lord for the offer of new life in you. Fill me with your Holy Spirit, as I partake of your gifts, that I might truly see the magnitude of your gift and make my entire life into an offering of thanksgiving back to you. Amen.