

The final meal that Jesus shared with His disciples was the Passover Meal. It was familiar for the Jews. The Passover was to celebrate what God had done in releasing the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. God used Moses to pronounce 10 judgements on the Egyptians so that they would release the Jews but Pharaoh kept hardening his heart and would not release them. The final and 10th punishment was the death of each firstborn. The Jews were not exempt and so God provided a passing over. The night before the angel of the Lord came to take each firstborn, the Israelites were to mark their doorposts with the blood of a lamb and then have a meal together. That blood protected them from death of each firstborn. Anyone without the blood were not protected and Pharaoh finds his firstborn dead and so released the Jews.

Every year after the Israelites were released they would share a meal together and remember what God had done. **Matthew 26:26-29** *Now while they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is being poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it with you, new, in My Father's kingdom."*

This was a familiar meal that was shared at Passover each year. The breaking of bread was a common practice at the beginning of each meal that they had together. A prayer of blessing offered and then the bread would be broken and passed around. **Acts 2:43-47** *Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all the believers were together and had all things in common; and they would sell their property and possessions and share them with all, to the extent that anyone had need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

The meal was significant - a lifestyle of breaking bread together. **Mark 6:41** *And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food and broke the loaves and He gave them to the disciples again and again to set before them; and He divided the two fish among them all.* **Luke 24:30, 35**

Jesus on His final night was breaking bread and offering a blessing. Jesus changed focus from looking back at what God had done and was now pointing forward to what will come. **Matthew 22:19** *"This is My body, which is being given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."* Jesus added the remembrance of His work to this breaking of bread. After Jesus' resurrection, they continued breaking bread but with a new significance.

**Leviticus 17:11** *For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.*

- Life is in the blood.
- Blood must be ordered to make atonement for souls.
- Atonement means to make peace between God and man.

Atonement is not about sin but about souls. Sin is an action that misses the mark. A soul is the entire person. Atonement is about the entire person not just the things that we do. Nothing can replace blood. Blood is sanctified or set apart. The blood in the Old Testament had a divinely ordained purpose. The blood of animals was poured out for a temporary solution to the problem of sin.

Pastor Dennis explains the stem cell transplant of his late wife, Jan. She became a new person with a new identity when she received her sister's stem cells. Because of the blood transfer, a new person was alive.

Jesus offers us a divine transfusion of His sacred blood, His sinless blood, that was poured out on the cross. Jesus' offering and sacrifice on the cross became the opportunity for whosoever will.

The Lord's supper represents a covenant of God with man. Some try to bargain with God and make a contract where they work for salvation. But with Jesus, there is no bargaining. **John 3:3** *Jesus responded and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless someone is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."* This "covenant blood" provides us with a new life, an eternal nature, and His powerful Holy Spirit, His thoughts, His desires, His love for mankind, and fellowship with Him. Jesus held up the cup and declared it as the cup of the new covenant by His shed blood so that every one of us would have the same wonderful life.

**Matthew 26:27-28** *And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is being poured out for many for forgiveness of sins."*

Anyone who will come can participate in this new covenant - the very nature of Jesus coursing through our veins and giving life everlasting. Each of us can be born again by realizing our sin, asking Jesus for forgiveness, believing and receiving His shed blood on the cross that cleanses us completely.

Do you want to be a follower of Jesus? Here is a sample prayer to get you started talking to God:

*Jesus, I come to you because I'm a sinner. I admit that I have sinned before You and I have come to confess my sin. I'm asking that You take my guilt away. I'm asking for forgiveness once and for all. I'm asking You to give me new life. Let Your Holy Spirit come upon me and in me now. I claim the covenant promises that You made that if I would confess my sins, You would be faithful and just to forgive me and give me new life. Now Lord Jesus, I'm a Christian. I'm born again. I'm destined for Heaven. Thank You Jesus.*

Tell someone else of your decision to follow Jesus: text "freedominjesus" to 94000 so we can celebrate with you.