**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Sermon

*The Good News According to Mark,*

*An Apostle of Jesus Christ*

 *365 Day Disciple ~ Mark 14: 1-16*

*Passover ~ God’s Basic Revelation*

August 5th In the Year of Our Lord 2018

God covers a lot of subjects when He came to be one of us. He came to teach us how to be the person that He designed and planned. Throughout the Bible, there are teachings covering all of life. People today search for self-help books. Americans spend millions of dollars to learn how to be successful.

I notice titles in the book store on books for beginners on many subjects. The computer industry seems to draw a need for instruction books, titles like Windows for Dummies or Excel for Dummies. I searched on-line for more Dummy books. I found Personal Financing for Dummies, Football for Dummies, Politics for Dummies, and the list continues: Golf, Chess, Law, Starting a Business.

So, I searched “God for Dummies.” What-da-you-know – bingo -Catholic Mass for Dummies Cheat Sheet and Atheism for Dummies Cheat Sheet. https://www.dummies.com

I then found other books for Dummies - Torah, Islam, Saints, Book of Revelation, Koran, Mormonism, Freemasons 2nd addition. However, my search on “God for Dummies” ended without finding anything specifically titled as such. I did find “The Bible for Dummies.” However, I did not find “God for Dummies.” The company that publishes the Dummy books has filled a niche in the publishing world by addressing a well-known fact: people need basic instruction. Obviously, all the Dummy books tell us that people are willing to teach themselves. There is an incredible populace that is starved to know the basics. They thirst for answers to basic life functions. What this tells us is that we need to prepare ourselves to teach them.

Many people are lacking the basic understandings in civility like just how to be a decent person. These people could do better if they just simply knew and lived by the basic stuff, that is, the things that God presented as a foundation on life. You know. . . like keep your word, don’t lie, steal, cheat, covet, hate, murder, and don’t be with people that do those things. America’s prisons would be empty, if these basic rules were followed.

To do all of these successfully, God has one most important request for people: surrender to Him and allow Him to come into your heart.

The Bible provides all the answers to be successful in life regardless of a person’s occupation or vocation. Jesus is asked by a religious lawyer testing Him, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And Jesus responded to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' "This is the great and foremost commandment. "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets" (Matthew. 22:35-40). In the Gospel of Luke Jesus is asked a very similar question by a lawyer. "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?" And the lawyer answered and said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And Jesus said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live." (Luke 10:25-28)

What we learn from this Jesus teaching is that we are designed to love God. These are the two greatest teachings in the whole Bible and they lead to eternal life. Remember, when we love God that loving relationship gives us the ability to love our neighbor the way God wants us to. All of our relationships are then impacted by the love of God.

 Learning the basics in life starts with those two truths. How to be a successful human being starts with loving God. Obviously, to love God starts with humbling yourself to Him and listening to what God has to say.

God came and walked in our shoes, and the world rejected His message. The world desired to set-up its own kingdom that is perishable and will pass away. All earthly kingdoms that man has established have passed away. There have been some long-standing governments, but they eventually faded into history. So, these man-made governments came and went taking with them their rules for nation, state, community and the individual.

 God’s design and plan has been here since the time He created people. His covenant asked people not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Another way to say it, do not let thoughts enter your mind that God did not intend for you to think, and do not do the things that God did not intend for you to do. That is right, do not think for yourself; let God think for you. Let God think through your brain. Of course, people did not listen. God’s arch enemy, Satan, is constantly offering an alternative from God. Obviously, the Satan plan is always destructive.

There cannot be enough emphasis of why God allowed Satan and evil to exist. This is because God created the creation with a choice: to choose Him and His ways or an alternative. Love is a choice. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16). Belief/Faith is a choice. This is not a static verb in the text. This is an active choice that keeps us moving in God’s direction.

God came as Jesus to personally present the plan, and people plotted to kill Jesus. All Jesus did was instruct them that, if they loved God like God wants them to do, they could love their neighbor like God had planned. It did not work that way, and they killed The Messenger, Jesus. Jesus’s murderers did not view Him as God incarnate. In fact, this is one of the main reasons they killed Jesus. He claimed to be God.

Mark 14 starts ~~out~~ with the plot to kill Jesus and then transitions into Jesus explaining the value of His physical presence after the woman with the costly perfume anoints His feet. Judas is highlighted as the one who betrays Jesus to the Chief Priest. Then Jesus sends His disciples to find a place for them to meet together for Passover.

One of the main teachings and realities of Christianity that we need to witness and teach others is the understanding of the mission of God as Jesus. You and I have come to an understanding a long time ago about these basic and fundamental Truths.

Why did God have to become man? The short answer is man cannot save himself from eternal separation from God.

What is the difference in the Messiah that Jesus claimed to be and the messiah the Jews were seeking? The short answer is that people wanted an earthly king (Messiah/Deliverer), and God came as an eternal Messiah whose kingdom is not of this world.

**Plot to Kill Jesus by High Priest and Scribes**

**Costly Perfume for Jesus**

**Iscariot Betrays Jesus**

**Passover Prepared**

**Mark 14:1**

**Plot to kill Jesus by High Priest and scribes**

 Now the Passover and Unleavened Bread was two days off; and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to seize Him by stealth, and kill *Him*;

 2 for they were saying, "Not during the festival, lest there be a riot of the people."

What does it take in a person’s heart to plot to kill/murder another person? Jesus said in Matthew 5:20-22.

20 "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

 21 "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'You shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.'

 22 "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty *enough to go* into the fiery hell.

From the very beginning of Jesus’ Public ministry, He identified the religious leaders as those whose righteousness did not rise to the level to gain them entrance into the kingdom of God. In the Sermon of the Mount, Jesus chooses to present hate as the cause behind murder. There are two different Greek words used in Matthew 5:21 and Mark 14:1. However, the context of the words reveals a person’s inner being determined to take the life of another as the same. There is a disrespect for life that God created. The High Priest and scribes had been humiliated by Jesus in front of the people. They had no biblical response, because their heart was not with God. In fact, Jesus had demonstrated to them that the very Law they reported to uphold and lorded over the people, they violated (Matthew 23). So, they turned to doing away with Jesus to remove His threat to their rule. Their hearts were bad just like Cain.

**Costly Perfume**

**Mark 14:3-9**

 3 And while He was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and reclining *at the table*, there came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard;

*and* she broke the vial and poured it over His head.

 4 But some were indignantly *remarking* to one another,

"Why has this perfume been wasted?

 5 "For this perfume might have been sold for over three hundred denarii, and *the money* given to the poor."

And they were scolding her.

 6 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you bother her?

She has done a good deed to Me.

 7 "For the poor you always have with you,

and whenever you wish, you can do them good;

but you do not always have Me.

 8 "She has done what she could;

she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial.

 9 "And truly I say to you,

wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world,

that also which this woman has done

shall be spoken of in memory of her."

This teaching is to demonstrate that the power of a simple act can reverberate throughout history. Jesus said it would: *Wherever the Gospel is preached in the whole world that also which this woman has done shall be spoken of in memory of her.* The world only had God in the flesh with them for less than thirty-four years. In fact, there was only about three and one-half years of that time Jesus proclaimed that He was God incarnate.

This account in Mark has a number of elements that are worthy of note. The location is at the home of Simon the leper. Lepers were social outcasts. Jesus broke many cultural taboos. The woman’s name is not given. It was not culturally acceptable for a woman outside of a man’s family to touch him. And then there is the expensive perfume. In this context, what people perceive as bad, Jesus declared good. Jesus also mentions that the poor are at the mercy of society by saying, “*For the poor you always have with you, and whenever you wish, you can do them good*.” Jesus points to the responsibility of the community to do good concerning the poor. This is not meant that the poor do not have a responsibility to raise their economic condition themselves (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12).

**Iscariot Betrays Jesus**

**Mark 14:10-11**

 10 And Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve,

went off to the chief priests, in order to betray Him to them.

 11 And they were glad when they heard *this*,

and promised to give him money.

 And he *began* seeking how to betray Him at an opportune time.

 Much has been written about why Judas Iscariot followed Jesus around for three and one-half years and then betrayed him in the end. As they say: ‘The Devil is in the mix.’ No doubt that Satan who is the “ruler of this world” (John 12:30-31; 16:11) wants God in the flesh removed from the surface of the earth. Satan had attempted to make a deal with Jesus with the test in the Wilderness chronicled in Matthew 4. Jesus refuted Satan and was not enticed in thought or heart to accept Satan’s wilderness offerings. Adam and Eve accepted Satan’s offer and were removed from the Garden (Genesis 3). The mission of God was to go to the Cross to pay the price of everyone’s sin and to demonstrate that God the Creator has the power over life and death. The Resurrection proves this. Satan never resurrected anyone. God is the life creator and the life restorer.

 So, Judas’s reasons? He allowed Satan to seduce his mind. This is true. Many scholars see Judas as a Jew who was desperately looking for the Jewish Messiah who would defeat the Romans and set-up a great earthly kingdom. Judas did not accept that Jesus had come as the Messiah who would die (substitutionary blood atonement) for the sins of the world and defeat death by resurrection. It is viewed by some that Judas’ plan was to push Jesus into using His supernatural powers upon arrest to destroy the Romans. Once Judas realized that his plan was not materialized, he committed suicide (Matthew 27:5). This demonstrates that Judas had not believed Jesus was the Messiah to go to the Cross. Judas believed and looked for Jesus to be the conquering Messiah of Jewish understanding.

**Passover Prepared**

**Mark 14:12-16** 12 And on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover *lamb* was being sacrificed, His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?" (see Exodus 12)

14 'Now this day will be a **memorial** to you, and you shall celebrate it *as* a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it *as* a **permanent ordinance**. (Exodus 12:14)

 13 And He sent two of His disciples, and said to them,

"Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him;

 14 and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house,

'The Teacher says,

"Where is My guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"'

 15 "And he himself will show you a large upper room furnished *and* ready; and prepare for us there."

 16 And the disciples went out, and came to the city, and found *it* just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

The location of the “Upper Room” is a point of discussion among scholars. However, what took place there is the most important. Jesus took time to give instruction to His disciples to go and find the room and prepare for the Seder meal described in Exodus 12. This is a traditional Hebrew meal commemorating the Passover event in Egypt.

 We take note that specific preparation was directed by Jesus for this observation. This must have been a place the disciples had not been. Remember that the Hebrew religious leaders were seeking to arrest Jesus. Therefore, Jesus did not go to a place that they had previously been.

We can receive from this that we too need to make preparation before we come to worship and participate in the Lord’s Supper. Yes, we pray together before we take the Lord’s Supper. However, note here that the place itself was sought as a specific place. God seeks for us to come to a specific place to connect with Him. A sanctuary. This place is by design and not a place of convenience. The focus here is not a geographic place but a spiritual place. God seeks for us to come to a spiritual state to worship Him. Taking the Passover Meal was a special time for the Jews. Jesus grew-up observing the Passover every year of His life. Jesus’ parents made trips annually to Jerusalem for this most sacred observation.

So, how did the disciples prepare for the Passover?

They had a relationship with the Lord.

They were walking with the Lord.

They were close to the Lord.

They had a daily relationship with the Lord.

They listened to the Lord.

They followed the Lord’s instruction and were guided to a place of worship.

We all have busy lives. We too are called to the same day-to-day walk with Jesus as described. From this kind of relationship, we can find the best spiritual place to worship the Lord.

 From this account of the disciples preparing for the Passover, unknown to them, their participation in this Seder meal would soon be known as the “Last Supper.” This is the transition to our observation of the Lord’s Supper.

The Hebrews observed Passover once a year and made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to do so. Their hearts and minds were focused on the Exodus and the death angel passing over the houses with doorposts marked with animal blood. Most of us know the account. If the animal blood was not present then the first-born son died as the angel of death came to the house. This is the event that broke the Egyptian Pharaoh’s determination to keep the Hebrew people from leaving Egypt.

**Exodus 12:1-20**

1 Now the LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt,

 2 "This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you.

 3 "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, 'On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers' households, a lamb for each household.

 4 'Now if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons *in them*; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb.

 5 'Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.

 6 'And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight.

 7 'Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.

 8 'And they shall eat the flesh that *same* night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

 9 'Do not eat any of it raw or boiled at all with water, but rather roasted with fire, *both* its head and its legs along with its entrails.

 10 'And you shall not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire.

 11 'Now you shall eat it in this manner: *with* your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste-- it is the LORD's Passover.

 12 'For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and **against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments-- I am the LORD.**

 13 'And the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and **when I see the blood I will pass over you**, and no plague will befall you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.

 14 'Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it *as* a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it *as* a permanent ordinance.

 15 'Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

 16 'And on the first day you shall have a holy assembly, and *another* holy assembly on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them, except what must be eaten by every person, that alone may be prepared by you.

 17 'You shall also observe the *Feast of* Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent ordinance.

 18 'In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening.

 19 'Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether *he is* an alien or a native of the land.

 20 'You shall not eat anything leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.'

 From this Exodus event to the life of Jesus, the Hebrews viewed Passover in the way described in Exodus 12. After the Cross, some of the Jews received the Gospel, and they came to a new understanding. Jesus was the unblemished lamb. Faith in Jesus saved them from death. This same faith is what saved them from death during the night of Passover. God’s judgement passed over them when the time of judgement came. They would not die. This is why Paul can witness that “Faith Saves.”

1 Thessalonians 5:1-10 **1** Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you.

 2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.

 [Passover was at night. The Egyptians were taken by surprise]

 3 While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief;

 5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness;

 6 so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

 7 For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night.

 8 But since we are of *the* day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

 9 For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

 10 who died for us, [Passover Lamb] that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with Him.

 1 Peter 1:3-9

 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

 4 to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

 [At the Great White Throne Judgment - Revelation 20:11]

 6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,

 7 that the proof of your faith,

*being* more precious than gold which is perishable,

even though tested by fire,

may be found to result in praise

and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

 8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith

the salvation of your souls.

This is why the first Christians or members of “The Way”

(Acts 19:23), those considered followers of “Christus”, were observed to gather in the morning and pass a cup and have a meal.

Pliny then details the practices of Christians (sections 7-10): he says that they meet on a certain day before light where they gather and sing hymns to Christ as to a god. They all bind themselves by oath, "not to some crimes", says Pliny, as though that is what he would have expected; rather, they pledge *not* to commit any crimes such as fraud, theft, or adultery, and subsequently share a meal of "ordinary and innocent food". <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pliny_the_Younger_on_Christians>

First record of the Lord’s Supper

The [Didache](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Didache) (Greek: Διδαχή "teaching") is an early Church treatise that includes instructions for [Baptism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptism) and the Eucharist. Most scholars date it to the late 1st century and distinguish in it two separate Eucharistic traditions, the earlier tradition in chapter 10 and the later one preceding it in chapter 9.  The Eucharist is mentioned again in chapter 14. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eucharist#Early\_Christian\_sources

Ignatius of Antioch (born c. 35 or 50, died between 98 and 117), one of the Apostolic Fathers,[[note 4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eucharist#cite_note-45) mentions the Eucharist as "the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ"

Today the Lord’s Supper, Mass or Eucharist is observed with many different rules. There are a few biblical examples of how to participate in the Lord’s Supper. Here at the Christian Fellowship, we have an open invitation to all Believers who have examined their heart in a time of prayer. This is a prayer for forgiveness of sin andthanks to God, a prayer seeking reconciliation to God and neighbor. A person must come to the front table to choose the elements (grape juice and bread) for themselves and return to their seat and then we all take the elements together. There isn’t an intermediary serving. This is all accomplished in remembrance of Jesus, His Cross and Resurrection and continuing presence in each of our lives. The Lord’s Supper represents all the Lord has done and is doing and will do for us.

**Basic Observations**

Reflecting upon the whole Gospel Message in Scripture, we see that God (Jesus) became one of us to show us how to live as He had originally planned. God came to fallen man presenting an eternal kingdom that was rejected. However, God’s plan was to come as the Messiah to die for the sins of the world. Fallen man rejected this and pursued his own earthly kingdom. Both the Jews and the Romans lost their earthly kingdoms to the wars of history. Regardless of man intentions, earthly kingdoms sooner or later fail.

However, God transcends His plan through the incarnation as Jesus to be highlighted in Hebrew culture and history. The Passover is for all mankind. From the time of the Exodus, the Passover represents God’s desire to substitute Himself for us. God had already provided the ram for Abraham in the account of Isaac. By this display of faith, Abraham was righteous before God (Hebrews11:17).

In the Exodus, God provided the instruction to place lamb’s blood on the doorposts, and lives were spared to further serve God. The ram and the lamb both symbolize God’s substituting life-blood for us. It just takes the application of faith to access God’s grace. With Christ, He is the lamb without blemish. Christ is the ram for Isaac. In a symbolic way, Christ’s blood is on the doorpost in the Exodus. This is all to prove to man that God desires for us to live our lives to the fullest now but come to Him by faith to gain an eternal life with Him. Of all symbols in front of man, The Cross points to our future eternal life where tears are no more and the Light of God illuminates all of Heaven. The Cross is the pinnacle symbol in all of man’s history that says God loves you.

Revelation 22:5 And there shall no longer be *any* night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God shall illumine them; and they shall reign forever and ever.

 **AMEN**