

Mark 14: 12-16

12 On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, 'Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' 13 So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, 14 and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, "The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" 15 He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.' 16 So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

Meditation: The association of the last supper with the Passover meal has rich theological significance for Mark and the early Christian community. Jesus himself will become the Passover lamb. In him the way is opened for all people to experience atonement (forgiveness) for their sin. Even though the Passover itself is about liberation from slavery rather than forgiveness of sin, Jesus redefines it so that the deepest liberation, internal liberation, must begin with forgiveness of sin, for his people, and through them, forgiveness and reconciliation in the world.

This is God's dream Jesus is enacting. Forgiveness is necessary in a world where people wrong each other. But opening oneself to receive forgiveness is also an acknowledgement of wrongs one has committed requiring forgiveness. It requires justice and seeking to address the injustice with confession and reparation in order for reconciliation to be a possibility. How likely is that given the world we know and live in? How likely is that all too often in our own lives and relationships?

We know what will happen to Jesus very soon. He anticipates it in redefining the Passover around his own fate as broken body and blood. We continue to think about broken bodies and blood even today. Bodies are ravaged by disease and a virus. Bodies are broken by being choked to death with a knee on their necks. People are broken as they fall off a balcony. How long, O Lord, will your body keep getting broken and your blood keep getting spilled?

But there is hope. The cross is about God's eternal offer, with hands outstretched, to be forgiven, acknowledging our complicity in injustice, with the promise of reconciliation. This is God's dream and God, we're told in scripture, will never give up until that dream is realized. And it always must begin with us. How important is forgiveness, confession, engaging the injustice and then seeking a path to reconciliation for you, in your personal life, and through your life in your engagement in the world?

Prayer: We miss it, O God... we miss gathering together to share a meal together as communities of faith, sharing your broken body and blood in Jesus that becomes new life in us. We miss the opportunity to share love in person, to be reminded that forgiveness and justice go together, that reconciliation is always a possibility when your love is activated through our care and concern, our openness to truth, even when it hurts, trusting that the truth will make us free. Fill us with your love today. Fill us with your assurance that we are forgiven for what we have done intentionally, and what we

have done because it's in the air we breathe in our societies and the ways we're taught to relate. May our ignorance fall away and may our eyes be further opened. May our resistance to truth fall away and may our hearts be further opened. You can do all things, O God. Give us faith and hope this day in what you can do in us; Amen.