**Lord’s Supper for Liberation**

**Narrative Lectionary**

**September 3, 2017**

Mark 14: 12-25 Russell Mitchell-Walker

In today’s reading, Jesus’ disciples ask him what they are going to do for the Passover meal and he obviously has made preparations. He tells them to go into the city and find a man carrying a jar of water who will show them where to go. There is a few things that is significant about this. Men did not usually carry jars of water as that was traditionally a woman’s role, so it would be easy to find this person, as they would be the only man carrying a water jar. Also, this would be a gender non-conforming role for a man, and Jesus is using this man who is breaking the norms, for his purposes. Jesus affirms diversity even in giving basic instructions and in the pre-arrangements for this important meal.

The Passover meal was a significant meal in the Jewish tradition – a high holy day. It was the time when they remembered the story of Moses and the Exodus of the Israelite people from slavery. In the passage, Mark has Jesus mention the Passover meal 4 times within 5 verses, emphasizing the connection of Passover with the act of remembrance Jesus is planning. In the tradition of the church, Jesus is often referred to as the Lamb of God. It is important to understand in this context, that if Jesus is the lamb, then it is the Passover lamb he is connected to, when making the connection with his sacrifice on the cross. In the temple lambs were often used as a sacrifice for forgiveness of sin. However, the Passover lamb is sacrificed so God’s people will be liberated from slavery and oppression in Egypt. So if we view Jesus’ death as a sacrifice, according to Mark, it is not a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins, but a sacrifice for liberation. Liberation – freedom and justice, this is the gift we are called to remember and embody when we celebrate the Sacrament of communion.

Kimberly Leetch creator of [Clergy Stuff](https://clergystuff.com/daily-devotions/1-samuel-211-9-matthew-121-8-or-mark-1412-25-the-lords-supper) writes on the daily devotional for todays reading:

*The Lord’s Supper is much more than a meal or a ritual. It is a profound invitation to radically change the way humans approach food, power, class, and war. When we share the meal in our congregations, we are claiming Jesus’ mission to feed the hungry, to lift up the lowly, to bring down the powerful, and to work toward peace throughout the world.*

There is much hunger in the world including in our communities. Embracing the message of Jesus through the remembrance he invites us into means we seek to do our best to address issues of hunger, poverty and injustice. These issues are prevalent in the news every day. This week we have been haunted by the images in Texas following the devastating hurricane and rains of [Harvey](http://www.businessinsider.com/tropical-storm-harvey-hurricane-updates-map-texas-where-landfall-damage-2017-8). There will be a great increase in those who are hungry and in need as a result of this climate event. While our media has been focused on this devastation, it is not the only area affected by massive amounts of rain at this time. South Asia and Nigeria both have had extreme amounts of rain and flooding.

We have been hearing in recent years that the poor and vulnerable are more deeply impacted by climate change. This is evident when we compare Harvey with Impact of the Typhoons in [South Asia](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/30/mumbai-paralysed-by-floods-as-india-and-region-hit-by-worst-monsoon-rains-in-years) and [Nigeria](https://www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/256711/as-the-world-focuses-on-texas-floods-ravage-makurdi-in-nige.html). Both Texas and South Asia have experienced over 1200mm of rainfall, which is over 4 feet. Nigeria, has experienced heavy rains throughout the summer resulting in over 100,000 people displaced. In South Asia over 1200 people have died in India, Bangladesh, and Nepal and millions of people affected. In Texas the death toll is around 50 and expected to increase as the water recedes, with over 50,000 people displaced and staying in shelters. The most vulnerable in each of these areas are most dramatically affected.

Unfortunately, these extreme weather events are not new. This weekend we went to see Al Gore’s Inconvenient Sequel and it was striking to watch with the devastation of Harvey fresh in my mind. I noted that the high levels of rain are not new. There were clips of storms in [India](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jun/28/india-floods-man-made-disaster) in 2013 that had 1300mm of rain and multiple other storms that devastated areas in poorer countries. The needs keep growing as these events get worse, and so our call to action and response will continue.

We may feel helpless as we witness these events from afar but we can help to make a difference. We can support [Mission and Service](http://www.united-church.ca/tags/mission-and-service) or World Development and Relief of The United Church of Canada that work with organizations on the ground. We can change our consumption of energy in our daily use, of electricity and gas. I noticed last night, in looking for a campaign on the [United Church Website](http://www.united-church.ca/) to support those affected by these floods, that there is a [Car-free Sunday](http://www.united-church.ca/social-action/act-now/make-your-church-car-free-september-24) campaign on Sept 24. Can we make the commitment to support this? Next time you purchase a vehicle, make a commitment to purchase a low emissions one. Take advantage of this unusually dry weather and hang your clothes out to dry. There is much we can do as we seek to support the most vulnerable and God’s creation.

As we receive communion, we claim Jesus’ mission to care for the vulnerable including the earth. We embrace the compassion of Christ as we reach out and seek to find ways to respond to the most vulnerable in our community. As we remember Jesus’ sacrifice for liberation, may we work for the liberation of all, in whatever context it is needed. We give thanks for God’s presence in this meal, that calls us to grace, in love, and life in all its fullness for all.