

A NEW COMMANDMENT

While Jesus and his disciples were in Jerusalem, they gathered for a meal before the Passover celebration. Jesus knew that his time on earth was coming to an end, and that his disciple, Judas, would soon betray him.

Jesus felt a deep love for his disciples. Before the meal began, Jesus got up from the table, tied a towel around his waist, and poured some water into a bowl. Then he went to each of his disciples and washed their feet, wiping them with the towel.

This shocked the disciples—only hired servants were supposed to wash guests' feet! They wondered why he was doing this. As Jesus approached, the disciple named Peter said, *"Teacher, you must not wash my feet!"*

Jesus replied, *"Unless I wash your feet, you won't belong to me."*

So Peter said, *"Then wash my feet and my hands . . . and head, too!"*

After washing his disciples' feet, Jesus sat down and asked, *"Do you understand why I did this? Since I've washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I've given you an example to follow."*

"Now I am giving you a new commandment: Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for each other will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

CONNECTED TO THE VINE

As Jesus and his disciples sat around the table, Jesus continued to share from his heart. He said, *"If you love me, live out my teachings each day. Soon I will be leaving. But don't worry or be afraid. You'll never be alone—God's Spirit is with you and will live inside of you, guiding you into all truth and reminding you how to live."*

Jesus continued, *"I will remain in you. Remain connected to me! Like branches that grow from a tree, I will be your source of life and strength. Remain in my love and follow my ways, and your life will produce lasting fruit. This will bring great joy to you and to God!"*

Jesus finished with these words: *"There is no greater love than to lay down your life for your friends. You are my friends. I choose you. I have called you to go and produce lasting fruit."*

A NEW COVENANT

During the Passover, Jesus and his disciples celebrated a meal together. Jesus' disciples prepared the dinner in a large guest room in Jerusalem.

As Jesus and his disciples were eating the Passover meal, Jesus said to them, *"I've been so eager to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. I won't eat this meal with you again until its meaning is fulfilled in God's kingdom."*

During the dinner, Jesus picked up some bread, thanked God for it, and broke it into pieces. Giving it to his disciples, he said, *“Take this and eat it; this is my body given for you. From now on, do this in remembrance of me.”*

After dinner, Jesus picked up a cup of wine and said, *“This cup is a new promise—a new covenant between God and God’s people—an agreement guaranteed by my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.”*

As they continued to gather around the table, the disciples began to argue about who was the greatest among them. Jesus interrupted them and said, *“Kings and rulers strive for power and control over people. You should be different. The greatest among you will be the one who serves the others. The first will be last. In God’s kingdom the one who serves is the leader. Follow my example.”*

Later than night, when it was dark, Jesus and his disciples went to an olive grove to pray. Jesus felt troubled in his heart . . . he knew that soon he would be betrayed and arrested.