

## The Story of the Last Supper



The Jewish leaders were extremely frustrated at their failure to get rid of Jesus. One night they gathered at the house of the chief priest, Caiaphas, for an emergency meeting. They were in the middle of discussing what they could do next when there was a knock at the door. A servant ushered in a most unexpected guest. It was Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' twelve disciples and closest friends.

"I'm here because I can give you what you want", he said, his eyes glinting coldly. "Jesus of Nazareth - how much is He worth to you?"

The Jewish officials didn't know what had made Judas become a traitor - and they didn't care either. They could hardly believe their good luck. They put their heads together for a few moments and then announced, "Thirty pieces of silver."

Without a word, Judas held out his hand and Caiaphas counted out the coins. From then on, Judas stayed by Jesus' side, waiting for the opportunity to betray Him.

Mysteriously, Jesus knew everything. With a heavy heart, He prepared for one last meal with his disciples - the Passover supper. He organised a room in secret, so that the Jewish leaders would not find out where He was, and only His twelve friends knew about it at the last minute.

The disciples were in a very serious mood as they gathered together. After all, Jesus had warned them two days earlier that He was about to fall into the hands of His enemies and be put to death. As everything Jesus said came true, they were extremely worried.

While they settled at the table, Jesus wrapped a towel around his waist and filled a bowl with water. The disciples were shocked to realise He was going to wash the dust from their feet - a job usually done by

the very lowliest servant. Peter was especially shocked and tried to stop Jesus kneeling before him, but Jesus insisted. "I am setting you all an example," Jesus said afterwards. "Always put others before yourself."

Then it was time for dinner. Jesus took a loaf of bread and asked for God's blessing over it. "This is my body," He said with great sadness, "which will be given up for you." He broke the bread and gave it to all the disciples to eat.

Then Jesus poured a cup of wine and asked for God's blessing over that too. "This is my blood," He announced gravely, "the sign of a new promise from God. My blood will be spilt so that everyone's sins will be forgiven." One by one, the disciples took the cup and drank.

Then Jesus gestured for everyone to begin sharing out the different dishes on the table. As they did so, He gave a deep sigh. "I know that one of you will betray me," He said softly. Cries of protest came up from around the table, but Jesus refused to explain further. As the disciples reluctantly turned back to eating, Peter murmured to John, who was sitting closest to Jesus, "Ask Him which of us He means."

John leaned over and spoke in Jesus' ear. He whispered back, "The one to whom I will give this piece of bread." John told Peter, and they watched as Jesus tore some bread and offered it to Judas Iscariot. "Do whatever you have to," Jesus told His disloyal friend, "but do it quickly." And without a word Judas got up from the table and left the room.

Credit: Matthew chapter 26; Mark chapter 14; Luke chapter 22; John chapter 13

Miles Kelly, Five-minute Bible Stories; short stories to share (Essex, 2019) 2nd ed.