

In this holy supper we celebrate the new commandment, and we show that we love one another by sharing in the bread that gives life to the world and by washing one another's feet in loving humility. +In the Name of God, the holy and life-giving Trinity. Amen.

Last night our Jewish neighbors and friends rehearsed an ancient story as they sat down to eat the Passover meal. The story they told was an act of remembrance, a tale of bondage and God's gift of liberation. The story they told within their families and have retold and remembered for thousands of years is the first reading from scripture this evening as we gather at the Table to celebrate the great festival of Christian liberation.

As the first Christians gathered to tell the story of Jesus, they spent a lot time reflecting on the meaning of his last days and of his resurrection. Naturally they saw in the story of the Jews in Egypt and of the Passover, a way to understand Jesus and the events of his life, death and resurrection.

The Passover is the last supper in Egypt. It is eaten the night before the Hebrews journey to freedom. On that night the people were commanded to sacrifice a

lamb. The blood of that lamb protected them from the angel of death. The hurriedly cooked body of the lamb gave them nourishment for the long, hard journey that lay before them. The significance of the whole event was this: They had been liberated by God.

It was not hard for Christians with their roots in the faith and traditions of Judaism to make the connection to what had happened in the life of Jesus. God had brought about a new Passover – the transforming miracle of liberation from bondage. And when they looked back at the ministry of Jesus they saw how his own words and actions made this clear.

Jesus found that the most powerful means of expressing the kingdom of God was through the shared meal. Jesus knew the power of the Passover meal. He experienced the deep significance of the weekly Sabbath meals and of the fellowship meals with his disciples. It grew upon Jesus that God was gathering all humankind into a community and leading them to a new promised land.

So Jesus went looking for those normally could not sit and down at eat at table.

