**Introduction**

There are a couple of themes in the biblical texts we’ll be reading in the midweeks this season. The Psalms are all Psalms traditionally associated with the Passover. And the reading is going to be reading through the Passion account of Luke. They won’t always share an immediate connection, but tonight they do.

**Text**

Of all the Jewish holidays, Passover is probably most like American Thanksgiving. It is about the identity of a nation or people. It has a cultic religious aspect, but it is not centered on the temple, but it is centered on the hearth and home. And most importantly both Passover and Thanksgiving are holidays focused on a meal.

And that is the emphasis of the ending of today’s Psalm. The LORD who is high about the nations…who looks far down on the heavens and the earth…has his eyes upon the poor and needy. In the Passover context this is Israel in Slavery in Egypt. And what does the LORD do with them? “He makes them sit with princes…he gives the barren woman a home.” This is the emphasis of the Passover holiday – the hearth and home, the deliverance of God from Slavery to freedom. And it takes place seated around the table.

And while Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday. The Passion begins seated around a table. “Now the feast of unleavened bread drew near, which is called the Passover…the chief priests…were seeking how to put him to death…Jesus sent Peter and John saying, “Go and Prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.”

And there is a lot of stuff that happens around this table. Just like the original Passover, you have the deliverance of God. The body and blood of the Passover Lamb of the new covenant. You have the mystery of Judas and betrayal. You have the reality of our failure in the time of testing – Peter’s betrayal – but the importance of faith and return. “And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” And you have the sense of mission that proceeds from that table. The table renews the covenant for those sent out into the midst of the world with all of its troubles. “But now, let the one who has a moneybag take it…and let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one.”

But unique to Luke’s account I think is this definition of who we are gathered around that table. The Psalm talks about being sat with Princes. And the disciples pick up that definition. “A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest.”

**Christology**

And this is where Jesus defines himself and who his people are to be. He rightly calls out that his disciples are thinking in a worldly way. “The Kings of the Gentiles – the nations – exercise lordship over them.” The seating at the table of the world is highly controlled. Anybody who has sat a wedding know that. Or I’d say watch a documentary on how a state dinner is planned. Parsing small differences in status is the coin of the realm. Both so that the high can feel held up, and so those seeking favor can “call them benefactors.” As someone said recently, “have you ever said thank you?”

But that is not what the covenant of this table is about. Rather this people is about service. THE PRINCE at this table is not reclining, but service. Christ has prepared the meal and is himself the offering. If you want to argue about who is greatest, do it by service. The Kingdom of Heaven stands the Kingdoms of the World on its head. Because the King himself has done this.

**Moral**

And Jesus sets this identity of service for a good reason. Because you have been assigned a Kingdom. That Kingdom might be as humble as your hearth and home, your family. That Kingdom might be something larger. But if you are staying with Jesus in his trials, you have your own table assigned. A table where you have the responsibility of the Kingdom. And the responsibility of this Kingdom is one of service.

**Eschatological**

This is what Jesus has done when we talk about communion. All of these tables are common tables. And the goal of all of these tables is what Jesus says, “that you may eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom.”

Because we want to be at that table. We want to be at the wedding banquet. We want all of our loved ones at that table. If we are to judge the tribes, we want that judgement to be one of grace. To say welcome to the feast.

So today, we serve. We prepare a table. So that our day of judgement is as joyful as it can be.