

## The Essentials: The Church

### Session 8: COMMAND

#### Mark 14: 12-25

#### Opening Collect

*Together:* Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

#### Read: Mark 14:12-25

#### Opening Thought

We have focused largely on Old Testament figures that describe the people of God, but this passage gives us the initial commissioning and charter of the church—the invitation to be one with Christ and extend his gracious presence into the world through her life. The command that Jesus gives during the last supper is thus less a description of what the church is, and more a vision and promise for how God will permanently sustain his people in every generation. Just as Israel could abide in God’s presence through the sacrificial economy of their temple life, so Jesus continues these promises *through his own body and in our invitation to be part of his body*. This passage is thick with multiple overlaid metaphors and images, so the options for conversation are many, but at its core, this is about a commandment given to the church for our own life.

#### Discussion:

1. Think of all the images that this command involves—the Passover, the crucifixion, a feast, temple sacrifice, and so on. Which of these do you most often think about when receiving the Eucharist?
2. Most of the commands that Jesus gives can be genuinely challenging—care for the poor, turning the other cheek, rest—but what about this one? Is this commandment to participate in communion difficult for you?
3. In the passage, Jesus refers to the wine as “my blood of the new covenant” (v. 24). What is the New Covenant (see Jeremiah 31:31-34)? What is the new promise given in this covenant?
4. According to our passage, the Eucharist imputes a new heart to the Church. What does a community with a new heart look like?

#### Check in and Closing Prayer

## Mark 14:12-25

<sup>12</sup> On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, “Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?” <sup>13</sup> So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, <sup>14</sup> and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ <sup>15</sup> He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.” <sup>16</sup> So the disciples set out and went to the city and found everything as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

<sup>17</sup> When it was evening, he came with the twelve. <sup>18</sup> And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.” <sup>19</sup> They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, “Surely, not I!” <sup>20</sup> He said to them, “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. <sup>21</sup> For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.”

<sup>22</sup> While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” <sup>23</sup> Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. <sup>24</sup> He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. <sup>25</sup> Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”