

## On the way to Calvary - Hilary McDowell Week

Thursday - The Meal



### **The Last Supper**

*On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"*

*So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there."*

*The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.*

*The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant.*

*"Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him.*

*"Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, "From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise'?"*

*And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.*

*Mark 14:12-16 (NIV)*

'Are you going to sleep forever?' she heard DC's question as he gently shook her awake.

'Is it a dream?' she asked, rubbing the sleep from her eyes.

'Not anymore,'

He sang out as he jumped aside and showed her the eastern scenery with a flourish, 'not unless you call all this time-travelling a dream also?'

'Don't confuse me, DC,' she laughed. 'This is hard enough for me as it is. I suppose I'm invisible again?'

'Yep,' he grinned.

'So what about the other five objects in my dream? Don't I get to try them out after all?'

He tapped his nose cryptically. 'We'll see, Tracy, we'll see.'

'Stop being so mysterious. DC! Help me out here. Nothing I've attempted so far has been of any use whatsoever to the Master on this journey, and you didn't help with your dream.'

He looked somewhat crestfallen and she regretted taunting him, but he spoke before she could retract her sharp words.

'You didn't learn anything, Tracy? Not about donkeys, or flags, or enemies, or children, or worship, or rest, or...Hey, where are you going? Don't you walk away from me, Tracy?'

She was moving alight: something had caught her attention and she was hot in pursuit, with DC bringing up the rear.

'Hold on!' he called out, catching up, a trifle breathless. 'Where are you going?'

'Look,' she said, quickening her step, 'look, DC, a man carrying a water jar.'

'So? It's a thirsty land.'

'Yes, but didn't the woman bring human the water in these days? Come on, DC, you ought to know that better than I do.'

'My, my.' DC sounded comical, shaking his head in mock astonishment. 'So the "new man" mentality didn't wait for the 20<sup>th</sup> century then, Tracy, is what you're saying?'

She flashed him a scathing glance and pointed to a small knot of disciples stepping forward to waylay the water carrier.

'See?' she exclaimed. 'It was a sign, I knew it had to be some kind of a sign.'

Jesus told them to look for a male water carrier, and here he is. I don't believe in coincidence when we're in God's will, DC, and this was no coincidence.'

The disciples and the man entered a house with an upper room and she stopped at the door, hesitant to follow. 'This is it, isn't it, DC? This is *the* upper room.'

They are going to have the last supper here, aren't they? Jesus had already booked the room and now the disciples had come to prepare it, haven't they?'

'Well, why don't you go inside and see?' he retorted.

But she hung back with a mixed feeling of awe and dread restricting her progress. 'I can't go in, DC. Please don't make me go in,' she pleaded.

He knelt beside her where she had sunk back on her knees on the dirt road.

'Why not, Tracy?' he whispered softly. 'You're as much his guest as they are.'

Suddenly a welter of emotions overwhelmed her. Dozens of times she had taken Communion in her home church - perhaps even hundreds by now; she had never counted. It was a regular routine, a blessed duty, sometimes even an inspiration, but here it was real. Here Jesus had reworked the Passover meal into a celebration of a freedom not from Egypt, but from death and slavery and sin. Here he would sketch them an outline of his own death and resurrection and command them to remember him always enacting his sacrifice through engaging in this meal. What a drama, she thought; what a potent channel by which to commemorate him; what a powerful vow-bonding with the Saviour! How dare she intrude? She was not worthy; she was not ready. He would see how imperfect she was, invisible or not, she was sure of it.

DC gently took her hand and led her through the door and up the flight of steps to a moderately large room already furnished and prepared for the Passover. She saw again on the table all those elements mimed by DC when he had taught her about the original feast celebrated for centuries. But now she stared at the boiled egg and it was the destruction of Christ's body she mourned; the salt brought an experience of his tears to her eyes; the sight of the herbs evoked great bitterness in her breast over the treachery of those who plotted his downfall; and the lamb in the centre position on the table...she could not bear to look upon it. she was full of such pain and anger and guilt and fear that she did not even have the strength to flee from the room but stood, rooted to the spot, as the twelve disciples files in, laughing and joking, to take their places casually at the table.

*Dear Lord,*

*How could they? How were they able to eat and drink and laugh and joke and listen and ignore and fail to understand what was happening that night in the upper room?*

*But Lord, forgive me, for don't we too fail to understand all the time, even though we ought to have the wisdom of hindsight? Next time I come to the table, help me to vow-bond with you. Amen.*