

Sermon

Maundy Thursday

Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14

Psalms 116:1, 10-17

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

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John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Tonight, we begin our journey with Jesus, as he travels to the cross. We will stand at Jesus' side and listen as he is being condemned to death. We will watch as Jesus is stripped of his clothes. We will watch as a crown of thorns is placed on Jesus' head.

We will watch as Jesus is given his cross to carry. We will begin walking with Jesus, and watch him become weaker and weaker with each step that he takes. We will watch him fall from the heavy weight of his cross. We will watch as Simon the Cyrenian helps Jesus carry his cross.

We will watch as Jesus is nailed to the cross. We will watch as Jesus breathes his last. We will watch as the soldiers pierce Jesus' side.

We will watch as Jesus' body is taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb.

We will watch, and we will shed our tears along with Mary, the mother of Jesus. We will watch and shed our tears along with Mary Magdalene, and the other women of Jerusalem.

Before we can begin our journey tonight, we are being asked to first follow Jesus' example, and that is to love one another.

Just as Jesus loved us, we are to love one another. Jesus loved, and still loves each of us unconditionally, in spite of what we may have done. So we too, must love each other with that same unconditional love.

Before we can begin our journey tonight, we are being asked to first follow Jesus' example, and that is to forgive each other.

"Forgive them father, for they know not what they are doing." These are the words that Jesus spoke as he was being nailed to the cross. Just as Jesus forgave 'them', we too, are being asked to forgive 'them' who may have offended us in any way. "Forgive them father."

Before we can begin our journey tonight, we are being asked to first follow Jesus' example of humility.

(2)

Moses was asked to remove his shoes for he was standing on holy ground. John the Baptist said that he was not worth to untie the thong from Jesus' sandal.

Mary, the sister of Lazarus, took costly perfume and anointed Jesus' feet, and then wiped them with her hair.

This same Jesus, on the night before he was to die a horrible death, got up from the table took off his outer robe. Tied a towel around himself, poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and wiped them with the towel that was tied around his waist.

In those days, there were no paved sidewalks it was all dirt roads. Those who could afford it wore some sort of a sandal on their feet. Those who could not afford it wore nothing on their feet.

I can only imagine the condition of the disciples' feet. Remember when Jesus sent the disciples out? He told them to shake the dust off their feet from any household that did not accept them.

So I am imagining that their feet must have been very dirty, muddy, smelly, and very dry from the hot climate.

It was the custom, at that time, for the servant to wash the feet of the invited guest. Jesus, who was and is the guest of honor, humbled himself, by taking on a servant's roll and washed the feet of all of the disciples, even the feet of Judas, the one who would betray him.

Jesus came into this world as a servant, "I came to serve not to be served."

This was done by Jesus' willingness to die a slave's death, on the cross, for the forgiveness of our sins.

"Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them."

Through our Baptism, we are all called to strive to become, 'Servants of the Servants of God' and to become messengers by proclaiming the 'Good News' of Christ by word and by our example.

Just as Jesus humbled himself, we too, will be asked to humble ourselves, in a little while, by accepting the invitation to come forward and participate in the re-enactment of Jesus' act of humility and love.

(3)

“Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.

**Come and let me be your servant.
Come with all of your imperfections.**

**Come and allow me the opportunity to serve you.
I came here to serve only you.**

**You have journeyed for a long time.
Come and I will give you rest.**

Do not be afraid.

**I washed my disciples’ feet with the greatest love and compassion.
Come and allow me the opportunity to wash your feet with that same tender love
and compassion.**

**Now I am inviting you to come forward, just as you are.
Swallow your pride.
Allow the servants of God to wash your feet.**

Come and journey with me. Come!”