

## Maundy Thursday

9<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Welcome to our online Maundy Thursday service in which we remember the events of the last supper. If you have some bread and wine prepared we can share those together after the talk.

### Confession:

Let us confess our sins to Almighty God.

**Father in heaven,  
we confess that we have gone astray;  
we have chosen to go our way  
instead of your ways.  
We have chosen to please ourselves  
rather than you;  
we have not loved you with all our heart.  
We are sorry for all our sins;  
we ask you to forgive us all that is past  
and to help us to be obedient to you,  
today and always.  
Amen.**

### Reading: Luke 22:14-23 The Last Supper

<sup>14</sup> When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. <sup>15</sup> And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. <sup>16</sup> For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfilment in the kingdom of God."

<sup>17</sup> After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. <sup>18</sup> For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

<sup>19</sup> And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

<sup>20</sup> In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>21</sup> But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. <sup>22</sup> The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him!" <sup>23</sup> They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

This is the word of the Lord

### **Thanks be to God**

You might like to prepare by having a piece of food and drink with you, such as bread and wine. We can share it together although we are each in our own homes, at the end of this talk, in remembrance of the events of the Last Supper.

First, a prayer of confession.

Lord, we come before you now conscious of our failings but also of your great mercy and forgiveness. Help us to believe and trust, to put our wrongs behind us, and to accept the gift of your sacrifice for us with its promise of eternal life. Amen.

The disciples knew it would be a Passover meal but they were going to be surprised by several things that evening, and horrified by the events of the next day. Jesus loved, and loves, his disciples. He began by telling them how 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer'. From John's account we know that Jesus had already greeted them with the traditional kiss of peace, including Judas. Yes, Jesus kissed Judas that evening – we always think of the kiss of betrayal in return later that night but don't forget the first kiss.

Passover commemorated the exodus from Egypt by Israel all the centuries before, when God's judgment passed over his people as they escaped from slavery, and now his judgment would pass over all sinners and fall on Jesus, the sacrificial lamb, on the cross. An animal's death was a sign of redemption price for sin, but only Jesus can fully pay the cost for us.

He took a towel, knelt and washed their feet as a model for them of what God longed them to do, and note that this included Judas. Jesus washed Judas's feet. He would continue to serve them and

could see beyond the cross, just as he loves and cares for us now. He reigns in glory but he is still serving all who call on him.

A Passover meal began with a prayer of thanksgiving, and Communion is also called Eucharist - in churches that like to use Greek words - which means 'thanksgiving'. After eating bitter herbs, unleavened bread and lamb, Jesus instituted the ritual of Communion. He picked up a piece of unleavened bread from the table, broke it in two, telling them that it represented his body which would be broken for them, and then he shared it with them. He shared it with Judas as well as with the others. He picked up a cup of wine, ordinary wine that was being used as part of the Passover meal, and said it represented his blood which would be shed for them. He shared the wine with Judas. The food and drink are simple; the spiritual truths are deep. Faith is not complicated; it is an act of living, of day-to-day trust as we go about our lives in relationship with God.

The new covenant had been promised through Jeremiah with these words: 'I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people...they will all know me from the least to the greatest, for I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more'. As we come to Jesus, remembering the Last Supper, let's hear the promise of the new covenant personally: 'I will be your God, and you will be my people...you will all know me from the least to the greatest, for I will forgive your wickedness and remember your sins no more'.

At this moment Jesus spoke openly about a traitor among them, 'the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table'. He had kissed Judas, washed his feet, and now protected him until the end, not revealing his identity to the other disciples. He gave Judas the opportunity to repent.

Why did Jesus choose Judas in the first place? Why condemn Judas if he was fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies? Jesus prayed for a whole night before he chose his disciples so presumably it was the Father's will that Judas would be among them. Divine foreknowledge does not take away human responsibility. Judas had the chance to understand and change, to be saved. He had that chance but made his decision, freely, to betray Jesus. A final thought is that Judas proved Jesus' innocence. If anyone could have given witness to Jesus' sins, it was Judas, but the authorities had to summon false witnesses to build their case against Jesus.

'Do this in remembrance of me', said Jesus. The primary purpose of Communion is to remember; it's a simple memorial meal. A second purpose is to proclaim his death until he returns. We are to look back to what he did for us at the cross, and look forward with hope to what he will do when he comes again. We also look inside ourselves and that's why we confess before we take the bread and wine, and we give thanks for the sacrifice made for us.

Let us take a simple meal of food and drink now, following Jesus' instruction to his disciples: 'Do this in remembrance of me'.

(Share food)

Almighty God,

you gave your only Son to be both a sacrifice for sin and also an example of how to live: give us grace to receive these gifts and to follow the life you prepared for us in all its fullness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.  
Amen.**