

Maundy Thursday Evening

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Living In A Good Friday World

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Maundy Thursday is one of the calendar events of the Christian Church that is sometimes forgotten about in many denominations and many of our congregations do not hold it in a place of much importance. I feel we must embrace it as it is a part of our Christian faith journey and practice which is part of our beliefs, the early Christian community made a deliberate recognition of this evening much more than we do today, and it is particularly vague with we Presbyterians as we have often only made reference to it in one or two phrases of the Communion Service.

We must try and see in this evening of remembrance and celebration, a form of parable that was acted out in the life and teaching of Jesus and then concluded by His command to His loved ones to continue to celebrate this meal until He comes again. First, we note that it was, *the celebration of the Passover*. You will recall the delivery of the children of Israel out of Egypt. You will also recall that it was the blood of a lamb that was used to mark the lintels of the doorways of those who were to be delivered. You will remember also that Moses gave the people instruction on the preparation of the bread to be used at that time.

On the eve of Maundy Thursday, we now refer to it as history was repeating itself many, many times. The new twist in the story was the delivery about to be made was not just for those who were holy or religious or even Jews, or whose nationality was Hebrew, but the delivery was about to be made for all of God's created children. Jesus was to be the center of the delivery.

His body therefore could be understood as, **THE BREAD OF LIFE**, and His blood as, **THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB THAT WAS TO BE SHED FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS** – the washing away of sin – the debt of sin paid for by the precious blood of the Lamb.

We must then note the deliberate participation for Passover and the meal. Jesus was a Jew as to His religious label and standards. But He was first a child of God the Father. In his humanity, he shared the lineage of Abraham and it was his lineage that was delivered that night in Egypt. His humanity called upon him to participate in that thankful celebration and to acknowledge the working of God in the human community. He made time for the event because it was important that

the event not be passed by carelessly or forgotten. He knew he had much to accomplish and that his life's work was about to come to the proverbial end – but He still made time to celebrate and thank God. Could not more of us also take time to celebrate and thank our God? Could not more of us make time to follow the Saviour's example today?

But Jesus, the great teacher also seized the opportunity to use the event as a teaching moment to help us understand his message, his life and more importantly, the love of God that was to be revealed Easter Sunday morning. Out of the darkness was to come light. Out of death was to come life. Out of sin was to come forgiveness and renewal. Moses was not the hero in Egypt, it was the working of God in human lives. Jesus did not put himself as the hero either as he gave the place of honour to His Father. His example shows us the degree of love and the degree of obedience and dedication that we are to have before the God whom we testify that we truly love.

As we prepare ourselves to come to His table, let us remember tonight that God has always been present in the life of the world from the first day of creation. He has always loved his created hand has always sought a way to help us understand so we might cease our rebellion and yield to his love, receive him as Lord and receive the benefits he has prepared for every one of us. The ultimate desire of Jesus is that all whom he loves and cherishes will be with him in house of many rooms that He has prepared for those who love Him.

Jesus, the Son of God reveals as himself as we are obedient to His command and in this celebration. Hear the word of Scripture anew: ***AS OFTEN AS YOU EAT THIS BREAD AND DRINK FROM THIS CUP, YOU DO SHOW FORTH THE LORD'S DEATH UNTIL HE SHALL COME AGAIN.***

For me this night is very special. It is always a privilege to be the celebrant of the Sacrament, but tonight I think of what it is as we join the larger community of believers all around the world, putting aside our quirks and quarks, we may once again realize our kinship in the whole family of God. Indeed, it has often been said that blood is thicker than water, and as we celebrate together tonight, we find that the food on the Holy Table allows us to have communion with the community of believers and in the wonderful Body of Christ, our Lord.

I want to close this evening with a thought from Matthew 26:29. I hope you can capture the sense of anticipation and excitement in the words of Jesus. Listen to them anew: ***Until that day when I drink of the fruit of the vine with you in My***

Father's Kingdom. May all of us look forward to that great meal together, because of what we remember in obedience to night. Amen.