

Thoughts from Pastor Rodney

Maundy Thursday

April 9, 2020

Today is Maundy Thursday. It is the Thursday before Easter and is also known as Holy Thursday. This day is usually observed as the day Jesus shared a Passover meal with his disciples. In keeping the Jewish law, surely Jesus had celebrated Passover with, at least, some of these men in prior years. This time, however, was different. This time, they were all together celebrating Passover with the one which they earlier confessed, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." This time they were with the one who, just days earlier, had been celebrated and praised as the "one who comes in the name of the Lord...the King of Israel." This time, Jesus was showing them God's perfect Lamb "who takes away the sins of the world." And they missed it! One disciple was going to betray Jesus. Two other disciples argued about who was Jesus' favorite. Another was told that he would deny Jesus three times before sunrise. Yet they were all invited to partake of the body and blood that was going to be broken and shed for them. They were all commanded to "do this in remembrance of me."

That's what "maundy" means. It is derived from the Latin word "mandatum" meaning commandment. But the commandment to observe The Last Supper in remembrance of Him is not the only commandment given on Maundy Thursday. Jesus also used this occasion to wash the disciples' feet. This was a task given to the servant of the house when guests entered. When Jesus and the disciples came to the upper room to eat the Passover feast, no servant was there to wash their feet; and no one stepped up (or maybe I should say, stooped down) to perform the task. So during the meal, Jesus got up, "took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him."

When it became Peter's turn, he said, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet? He later exclaimed, "No, you shall never wash my feet." And Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." Jesus continues a little later with the command, "Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you." Jesus was telling them, and us, that we are to have a servant's heart. As He serves us, we should be willing to serve others. Sometimes that means "stepping up" and sometimes it means "stooping down". In all times it means "loving others".

That brings us to another command on Maundy Thursday. It is a motivating factor in observing The Last Supper and serving others. That command is that we "Love". John 13:34 reads, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." I receive the bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus because I love Him and I know He loves me. I serve Jesus because I love Him and I know He loves me. I serve others because Jesus loves me and therefore I am commanded to love others. Others will know that I love Jesus because I have love for them.

My prayer today is that I will remember the sacrifice that Jesus made for me; I will serve others because Jesus has taught me to serve selflessly; and I will love others the way Jesus has shown love to me.

May the love and peace of Jesus Christ be with you all.

Pastor Rodney