

TRINITY GRACE CHURCH

MAUNDY THURSDAY

TABLE LITURGY – APRIL 14, 2022

INTRODUCTION

When you read through the accounts of Jesus' life in the Gospels, you may notice that a great deal of focus is spent on the last week of Jesus' life. In the last three years of Jesus' life, when his public ministry is underway, we see Him announcing the Kingdom of God in declarations and in teaching, showing what it was like in power and miracles, and inviting many to take part in it. Yet, in the last week of His life, the narration slows down to include more and more detail.

In the last week, Jesus gives some of His clearest teaching to those to whom He would carry on the movement He began. Then He goes to the cross to make a way for us to receive salvation, be totally forgiven for all of our sins, be drawn into a never-ending relationship with God, and join in the Kingdom of God now and forever. This glorious final week of Jesus' life is what we remember and mark during Holy Week.

Maundy Thursday of Holy Week is the day that we remember and observe Jesus' last supper with His disciples. During that meal we see the incredible act of service that Jesus, God Himself, washed the disciples' feet.

Along with his key teaching in this moment and the giving of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Jesus once again powerfully demonstrated the unexpected nature of life in His Kingdom where a leader with authority was so filled with love that He was willing to truly serve.

PART ONE » PRAY AND SHARE A MEAL

Either with those you are with in-person or those who are joining online, begin with prayer thanking God for His presence, love and gifts. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct your time together. One or more people may choose to pray during this time. This may be a time to mourn for a moment what we have lost in this time, even as we prepare to give thanks.

As you share a meal together, reflect on the simple and yet profound gifts that you are enjoying. The power of gratitude is very important in difficult times.

The gift of good food to nourish your body and the gift of companionship and friendship to nourish your soul and all in union with God. It is through these simple means that God intended to move His Kingdom along. He left us with a meal to share in remembrance of Him and a command to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Give time for people to answer one or more of the following:

1. What ways have you experienced God in your life during this Lenten season?
2. What are the ways your life has changed the most in the past weeks?
3. Are there particular ways you are hungry for God to move in your life?

PART TWO » GOSPEL READING – JOHN 13:1-17

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, 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.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "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. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

PART THREE » MEDITATION

Allow a few minutes of silence for each person to pray and slowly reflect on the text that has been read. Ask God to call to your mind what He desires to say to you through this passage. If children are involved who cannot read on their own, this may be a good time to retell the story to make sure they grasp what is happening.

After some silence, begin interaction as a group around these reflection questions.

Questions:

- In washing the disciples feet, Jesus performs an act of service that would have been reserved for the lowest of servants in that culture. Yet, just before He does this, the story records that Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God. Why do you think it is important that this is mentioned just before Jesus washes His disciples feet?
- Why do you think Peter is resistant to Jesus washing his feet?
- What do you think Jesus is referring to when He says, You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand?
- John says at the beginning of his Gospel that Jesus is making God known to us. What does this story reveal to us about the nature of God?

PART FOUR » PARTICIPATION

Jesus does not simply perform this incredible act of service to show His disciples the inverse nature of how things work in the Kingdom of God compared to the rest of the world. He also instructs them to join in. He washes their feet and instructs them to wash one another's feet.

We as Jesus' disciples as well are invited to adopt this paradigm of loving service towards one another and towards our world.

WASHING FEET

This would be a good time in the evening to perhaps put some worship music on quietly in the background and to allow each person to reflect for a few moments.

If people are comfortable doing so, ask them to remove their shoes. As people are ready, let them sit in a chair in front of a basin of water. One person will wash with water and dry with a towel. Perhaps then the one who was washed can wash the next person and so on. Once everyone's feet have been washed sit for few moments of reflection with the worship music still playing. You may also consider the alternative practice.

ALTERNATIVE

If you are not able to physically wash feet, spend some time sharing ways you have experienced this type of love. Can you think of a time when you felt like someone had metaphorically washed your feet? When someone so humbled themselves to preference your needs by graciously, sacrificially serving you?

Whether you can recall an experience like this or not, try to reflect on what it means that your Creator loved you enough to do this for you. Allow some time for everyone who wants to share. You may make a plan to reach out to encourage someone who has loved or served you in this way.

PART FIVE » COMMUNION

We will end the Table Liturgy by receiving communion. Have someone read this passage from 1 Corinthians 11:23–26.

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Spend a few moments of silence in prayer, confession, and commitment. As Jesus was broken and poured out for us, so we are meant to be broken and poured out for our neighbors. Have someone pray for the elements and then allow each person to receive the bread and the cup:

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the incredible love of Jesus and Your rescuing love that has given us salvation. May we be those who look to wash feet and pour out our lives. Would you lead us by the Holy Spirit to follow in Jesus example in each day of our lives. Bless the bread and the cup and your church as we receive this meal. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Look for tangible ways to show the love of Jesus in the upcoming days leading to Easter.