Maundy Thursday

April 9, 2020

This word about the love of Jesus is always the beginning of any time. By remembering the Passover and the Last Supper and the footwashing, we are not trying to get back to an old time. In the face of the suffering and death with which the world is filled, our trying would not come to much.

But God’s word comes to us now. To our time. Even when we cannot meet for the holy supper together, this word — which takes these three nights to say — comes to us: Jesus Christ is our forgiveness. He is the Lamb whose blood marks the doors of our houses and bodies. In the power of the Spirit, he has washed our feet and our lives.

And he turns us toward our neighbors. In this word — and in the cross proclaimed tomorrow and the resurrection proclaimed on Saturday night — Easter comes out to hold us already.
Gathering

You may wish to set out a candle and bowl of water and a clean towel. Sit with them before you as the service begins.

Welcome

Prelude

When Twilight Comes, ELW 566

You are invited to ponder the hymn text as the prelude is played.

1 When twilight comes and the sun sets, mother hen prepares for night's rest. As her brood shelters under her wings, she gives the love of God to her nest. Oh! what joy to feel her warm heartbeat and be near her all night long; so the young can find repose, then renew tomorrow's song.

2 One day the Rabbi, Lord Jesus, called the twelve to share his last meal. As the hen tends her young, so for them he spent himself to seek and to heal. Oh! what joy to be with Christ Jesus, hear his voice, oh! sheer delight, and receive his servant care: all before the coming night.

3 So gather round once again, friends, touched by fading glow of sun's gold, and recount all our frail human hopes: the dreams of young and stories of old. Oh! what joy to pray close together, kneeling as one family, by a mother's love embraced in the blessed Trinity.

As we begin this Three day journey, we, first, remember God's forgiveness:

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace we have been saved. Our sins are forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ. Almighty God strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in our hearts through faith.

Amen.

Then we pray for this night:

Holy God, source of all love, on the night of his betrayal, Jesus gave us a new commandment, to love one another as he loves us. Write this commandment in our hearts, and give us the will to serve others as he was servant of all, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.
The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: 2This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. 3Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. 4If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. 5Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 6You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. 7They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. 8They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 9Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. 10You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. 11This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the Lord. 12For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord.

The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

As the reading concludes, those assembled respond: Word of God, word of life. Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

As we welcome the gospel, we sing or say in our hearts.

Nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God.
Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.
The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

1Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 2The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper 3Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, 4got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. 5Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. 6He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” 7Jesus answered, “You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” 8Peter said to him, “You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.” 9Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!” 10Jesus said to him, “One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.” 11For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

12After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? 13You call me Teacher and Lord - and you are right, for that is what I am. 14So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. 15For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. 16Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. 17If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

31b“Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. 32If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. 33Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ 34I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. 35By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon

Michael Busbey, pastoral intern

A time for reflection follows the sermon.
Footwashing

On this night we have heard our Lord’s commandment to love one another as he has loved us. We who receive God’s love in Jesus Christ are called to love one another, to be servants to each other as Jesus became our servant. Our commitment to this loving service is signified in the washing of feet, following the example our Lord gave us on the night before his death.

During this time, you may wash your own feet or hands, using the water in the bowl, recalling Jesus washing his disciples’ feet. Or, if there are several of you worshipping together, you may wash each other’s hands or feet, thinking of the love of Jesus poured out on each of us in this difficult time.

You are invited to sing or speak the refrain.
The interludes give you an opportunity to meditate on the verses.

With towel and basin he washed their feet,  
So that they might share in his passion and death. Refrain

He asked, ”Do you know what I have done?  
I give you a witness of what you must do.” Refrain.

A new commandment I give to you,  
That you love each other as I have loved you. Refrain
Prayers of Intercession

As we begin our prayers, together, we voice the words we have sung when gathered together in worship:

Come bring your burdens to God, Come bring your burdens to God
Come bring your burdens to God, For Jesus will never say no.

United with Christians around the globe on this Maundy Thursday, let us pray for the church, the earth, our troubled world, and all in need. Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

After each petition, the assembly responds:
Hear us, Holy God. Your mercy is great.

According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

After the final petition, the assembly repeats “Come, Bring Your Burdens to God.”

Lord, remember us in your kingdom as we pray:
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Amen.

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you. And also with you.
Finally, remembering Jesus going to his arrest and his death, the events from which all the mercy that fills this night flows, we pray this Psalm.

Psalm 88

We begin, singing:

O LORD, God of my salvation, when, at night, I cry out in your presence, let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry.

For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to Sheol. I am counted among those who go down to the Pit; I am like those who have no help, like those forsaken among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, like those whom you remember no more, for they are cut off from your hand.

You have put me in the depths of the Pit, in the regions dark and deep.

We sing:

Stay with me, remain here with me, watch and pray.

Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and you overwhelm me with all your waves.

You have caused my companions to shun me; you have made me a thing of horror to them. I am shut in so that I cannot escape; my eye grows dim through sorrow.
Every day I call on you, O LORD;  
I spread out my hands to you.  
10Do you work wonders for the dead?  
Do the shades rise up to praise you?  
11Is your steadfast love declared in the grave,  
or your faithfulness in Abaddon?  
12Are your wonders known in the darkness,  
or your saving help in the land of forgetfulness?

_We sing:_  
*Stay with me, remain here with me, watch and pray.*  
*Watch and pray.*

13But I, O LORD, cry out to you;  
in the morning my prayer comes before you.  
14O LORD, why do you cast me off?  
Why do you hide your face from me?  
15Wretched and close to death from my youth up,  
I suffer your terrors; I am desperate.  
16Your wrath has swept over me;  
your dread assaults destroy me.  
17They surround me like a flood all day long;  
from all sides they close in on me.  
18You have caused friend and neighbor to shun me;  
my companions are in darkness.

_We sing:_  
*Stay with me, remain here with me, watch and pray.*  
*Watch and pray.*

_There is no blessing, sending hymn, dismissal or postlude to close the service this day. The service continues tomorrow on Good Friday._

April 9 is the commemoration of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, theologian, died 1945.  
Bonhoeffer was a German theologian who wrote profoundly, yet in an accessible manner. In the Second World War, he became a leader of the Confessing Church in Germany that resisted the Nazi movement. Linked to a plot to kill Hitler, he was hanged shortly before the end of the war.
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