

A Maundy Thursday Reflection Guide

Coker United Methodist Church

Rev. Adam Knight

Maundy Thursday is a holy day as it is the day that we remember Jesus celebrating his final Passover with his disciples, otherwise known as the last supper. As you gather with family or simply on your own, I encourage you to reflect on the significance of the event as it happened then and how God is communicating his love to you even now. One resource that I have found helpful in my own reflection is a workbook by Rev. Dr. Maxie Dunnam called, With Jesus In the Upper Room. Some of the structure for this reflection is from the first week of readings in this book. I recommend it as a good 7 week study of walking with Jesus during his final days. It is available at Seedbed.com. For this reflection, I encourage you to have with you a pen or pencil and something to write on so that you can record your thoughts or feelings. I pray this reflection is meaningful for you and that Jesus speaks powerfully during your time.

Opening Prayer

Come Holy Spirit, come. Fill our hearts with your presence and speak your word of truth to us in this time. Turn our hearts toward you and make us holy. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray. Amen.

Scripture Reading John 13:1

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.

Have you ever given much thought to what it means for Jesus to love his own in the world to the very end? We speak often of Jesus' love for us, of Jesus' love for all people. But do we think about the extent of that love - that he loved his own to the end. Maxie Dunnam points out that different translations translate that phrase differently. Some say, "to the end" as we see in the NIV and others says "unto the uttermost." Dr. Dunnam points out that one scholar translates it as, "and now he showed how utterly he loved them." Any way you look at it, Dunnam says, "We cannot plumb the depth of Christ's love." And even knowing that he was headed to the cross did not stop him from loving to the end.¹

¹ Dunnam, Maxie. *With Jesus In The Upper Room*. Seedbed, 2017, pp. 3-4.

Reflect

Write down and/or share some of your thoughts about Jesus loving you “to the end.” What kind of response does being loved to the end ask of us?

Scripture Reading Matthew 26:26-30

26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.”

27 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

30 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

What does it look like to love you own to the very end? I would argue that this is a picture of that kind of love. It’s a love that is shared with others. Jesus doesn’t simply tell his friends that the bread is his body and that the cup is his blood. He shares both with them. He is willing to offer his own body and blood as the perfect and holy sacrifice for our brokenness *AND* he is willing to let us share in the benefits of that sacrifice without having to bear the consequences ourselves. *“Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.”*

Reflect

Write down and/or share what you think when you read Matthew 26:26-30. How does your life now, reflect that you have been loved to the end?

Scripture Reading Exodus 12:1-14

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, 2 “This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. 3 Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. 4 If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they

must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. ⁵ The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats.⁶ Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the members of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. ⁷ Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. ⁸ That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. ⁹ Do not eat the meat raw or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire—with the head, legs and internal organs. ¹⁰ Do not leave any of it till morning; if some is left till morning, you must burn it. ¹¹ This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the Lord's Passover.

¹² "On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. ¹³ The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

¹⁴ "This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord—a lasting ordinance.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

¹⁶ Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.

The Jewish Passover began following the Israelites release from Egypt. God instructed that the people were to celebrate the Passover to remember God's delivering them out of slavery in Egypt. Over the years of their existence the people would continue to need delivering and God would be faithful. Thus, the Passover took on much deeper meaning as the people of God continued their life with God. As Jesus met and celebrated his final Passover with his disciples, it marked the beginning of new

Passover - the Passover of Christ. Through his coming death, Jesus takes on the consequences of humanity's brokenness and we are passed over by the grace of God give to us in Jesus. Dr. Dunnam says, "In the first days of the church, following Jesus' resurrection and ascension, Christians made this 'new Passover' a central act of worship....[The Apostle Paul] says to them: 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is on bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread' (1 Cor. 10:16-17 RSV)."²

Reflect

Write down and/or share what you think or feel about Jesus being the new Passover lamb for you. What do you think it means to "participate" as Paul puts it, in the broken body and shed blood of Jesus?

Maundy Thursday is a day to remember the beginning of the end. It was the beginning of the end of the earthly life and ministry of Jesus. It was the beginning of the end of sin's grip on humanity, and it was the beginning of the end of human brokenness with no hope. Jesus, our pure and perfect Passover lamb, invites us to participate in his sacrifice and the benefits found therein - forgiveness, new life, eternal life.

"O Lord, let my soul rise up to meet you as the day rises to meet the sun. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever."³

AMEN.

² Ibid. pp. 9-10.

³ Claiborne, Shane, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, and Enuma Okoro. *Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals*. Zondervan, 2010, pp. 224.