

Wheatthill Priory Benefice

“Jesus Lives: Follow Him”

Worship for Maundy Thursday 9 April 2020

Please use the service of 'Spiritual reception' included in your envelope

Collect for Maundy Thursday

God our Father,
your Son Jesus Christ was obedient to the end
and drank the cup prepared for him:
may we who share his table
watch with him through the night of suffering
and be faithful.

Old Testament Reading Exodus 12;1-4, 11-14

Gospel, John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Reflection

Eating together is a crucial part of Jewish life and tradition, every Friday night as the Sabbath begins the family (as extended as is possible) sits down for a meal. Similarly at festival times there are meals that are eaten together. The Passover marks the beginning of the Jewish nation, and it begins with a sacrifice and a meal.

One of the many ways that life has been changed at the moment is by removing the possibility for wider families to eat together, and for us as church and Christians to remember this meal together. However there are some things in these passages that I believe we can ponder this Easter.

Firstly, at the heart of the meal is rescue. Namely, God rescues the Israelites from oppression by their Egyptian overlords. This rescue comes at the cost of both the lambs that are sacrificed and the death of many in Egypt. As Jesus sits to eat with his disciples he too is at the climax of his rescue of all peoples, a rescue that once again involves death and the shedding of blood. This time it is not the blood of lambs but his.

Secondly this rescue is at its heart the climax of a ministry of service. As he kneels and washes his disciples' feet, they discover that to be a part of his family is to accept his gift of service. As he washes the disciples feet, he challenges them, and by inference us as those who follow them, to serve and to love one another.

This challenge to serve and to love speaks to us, reminding us that as followers of Jesus we need to love and serve one another. Jesus demonstrated that both by washing feet, and supremely by his death on the cross. So we are called to serve, by caring and loving. It is heartening at this time to see Christians standing alongside others serving those in need, those who cannot go out, and caring for others.

There is another side to this challenge; Peter does not appreciate Jesus' service, his offer to wash his feet. This is because he, rightly, recognises Jesus as his Lord and Master. Some of us now are dependent upon the service of others, and we may not appreciate it, being used to our own independence.

So as we remember, do we need to ask ourselves not only: 'who am I called to serve and to love?' but also 'Who is called to love and to serve me?'

Prayers of Intercession

In the power of the Spirit let us pray to the Father
through Christ the saviour of the world.

Father,
on this, the night he was betrayed,
your Son Jesus Christ washed his disciples' feet.
We commit ourselves to follow his example of love and service.
Lord, hear us
All **and humble us.**

On this night, he prayed for his disciples to be one.
We pray for the unity of your Church.
Lord, hear us
All **and unite us.**

On this night, he prayed for those who were to believe through
his disciples' message. We pray for the mission of your Church.
Lord, hear us
All **and renew our zeal.**

On this night, he commanded his disciples to love,
but suffered rejection himself.
We pray for the rejected and unloved.
Lord, hear us
All **and fill us with your love.**

On this night, he reminded his disciples
that if the world hated them it hated him first.
We pray for those who are persecuted for their faith.
Lord, hear us
All **and give us your peace.**

On this night, he accepted the cup of death
and looked forward to the new wine of the kingdom.
We remember those who have died in the peace of Christ.
Lord, hear us
All **and welcome all your children into paradise.**

Conclusion

When the disciples had sung a hymn they went out to the Mount of Olives.
Jesus prayed to the Father, 'If it is possible, take this cup of suffering from me'.
He said to his disciples,
'How is it that you were not able to keep watch with me for one hour?
The hour has come for the Son of Man to be handed over to the power of sinful men.
Come, let us go.'

Christ was obedient unto death. Go in his peace.