

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, FALLS CHURCH, VA

**MAUNDY THURSDAY
APRIL 1, 2021, 7:30 p.m.**

Safety Guidelines must be observed at all times.



PRELUDE #445 Sts. 1, 3, 4 When You Woke That Thursday Morning Setting: Bernard Wayne Sanders

(Congregants will read and meditate upon the text)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 When You woke that Thursday morning,
Savior, teacher, faithful friend,
Thoughts of self and safety scorning,
Knowing how the day would end;
Lamb of God, foretold for ages,
Now at last the hour had come
When but One could pay sin's wages:
You assumed their dreadful sum.</p> | <p>3 What was there that You could give them
That would never be outspent,
What great gift that would outlive them,
What last will and testament?
"Show Me and the world you love Me,
Know Me as the Lamb of God:
Do this in remembrance of Me,
Eat this body, drink this blood."</p> |
| <p>4 One in faith, in love united,
All one body, You the head,
When we meet, by You invited,
You are with us, as You said.
One with You and one another
In a unity sublime,
See in us Your sister, brother,
One in ev'ry place and time.</p> | |

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.

During this Lenten season we have heard our Lord's call to intensify our struggle against sin, death, and the devil—all that prevents us from trusting in God and loving each other. Since it is our intention to receive the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ on this night when He instituted this blessed meal for our salvation, it is proper that we complete our Lenten discipline by diligently examining ourselves, as St. Paul urges us to do. This holy Sacrament has been instituted for the special comfort of those who are troubled because of their sins, humbly confess them, and hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Let us then consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

(Silence for reflection and self-examination)

Almighty God,

have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

KYRIE

In peace let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For the gift of divine peace and of pardon, with all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For the holy Christian Church here and scattered throughout the world, and for the proclamation of the Gospel and the calling of all to faith, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For those who work to bring peace, justice, health, and protection in this and every place, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort and defend us gracious Lord.

Amen.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. O Lord,

in this wondrous Sacrament You have left us a remembrance of Your passion. Grant that we may so receive the sacred mystery of Your body and blood that the fruits of Your redemption may continually be manifest in us; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING Exodus 24:3-11

Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the just decrees. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do." And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 13th chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

"Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ

SERMON

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen. Dear friends in Christ:

The verses we just read continue the story of Jesus' last days and hours before his death. Last Sunday we heard about how he entered the city of Jerusalem to great acclaim. In today's reading he is about to celebrate the Passover festival with his disciples.

We are reading about these events exclusively from St. John's Gospel this year. John's Gospel, because it was written later, shares some different details than the others. One of these is the new commandment Jesus gives his disciples—the command to love one another as he had loved them. The command is memorialized by us in our name for this day – Maundy Thursday – a name taken from the Latin word for commandment: *maundato*.

If that name works well to highlight Jesus' commandment, Jesus' example works even better. To show us what he means by the command, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. Here Jesus gives an unforgettable image of what it means to love as he does.

The washing of feet before the meal was something that just plain needed to be done. Jesus and his disciples had been on their feet all day and no one wanted to recline for the blessed meal with the stink and grime still present.

But normally that work would be done by a servant. Here Jesus, the leader, gets down on his knees and goes about the unpleasant task.

Peter, as we heard, objected to Jesus doing such a thing. But Jesus insisted. His actions were meant to teach his disciples about love. Love is serving. Love is doing what needs to be done even if it's difficult or undesirable. Love is about humbling oneself.

As he was washing their feet, Jesus said: "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." Jesus, we see, links full understanding of his actions to some future event. The disciples' full understanding will come after this. As those who know the full story, we understand that Jesus is referring here to his death on the cross. Jesus' willing obedience to that death drew out the greater meaning of love to which he was referring. Jesus' love, we see, also involves sacrifice.

And yet, Jesus' death would be more than just an *example* of sacrifice. His death would also accomplish a true and lasting cleansing. We see this as the conversation progresses. Peter, after stating his objection to Jesus washing his feet, next requests that Jesus wash not only his feet but also his entire body. Peter had obviously begun to realize that Jesus' action here was about more than just clean feet.

Jesus respond to Peter by saying: "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean." Jesus' words here refer to the spiritual cleansing that all of us need and that is given by God to "the one who has bathed." These words of Jesus lead us to think about baptism, where sins are washed clean by the baptismal waters and people are connected to Jesus, becoming a part of his family.

This bigger meaning of Jesus' words is also suggested as he says: "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." The words recall the events earlier in the Gospel when the focus was on John and his baptizing. At that time, John pointed to Jesus and proclaimed: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Now, as Jesus is preparing to sacrifice himself on the cross, his status as Lamb of God becomes clear. As does its meaning.

All of this talk about cleansing and sacrifice by Jesus in these verses may be one reason that John does not go on to record in his account Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper. John may feel that the point about our cleansing coming from Jesus' sacrifice has already been made.

Still, it is peculiar that John leaves out something which the three other Gospels so prominently include, and something that is so central to the Christian faith. Ultimately, we don't know why John left it out. But many have put forward possible reasons. In the new systematic theology book by Concordia Publishing House titled *Confessing the Gospel*, a footnote tells how prominent Lutheran theologian Hermann Sasse suggested that John probably withheld an account of the Christian supper from his Gospel to help avoid further persecution of Christians. In those early days of Christianity, when Christians were often blamed for troubles or accused of holding dangerous beliefs, one common accusation was that Christians were cannibals because they claimed to eat Christ's body and blood.

Whether or not this was John's actual reason, it does seem clear that John still wants Christians to remember the Lord's Supper, for he embeds eucharistic language and inferences in other parts of his Gospel. In particular, the sixth chapter, where Jesus feeds the 5000 and identifies himself as the "bread of life" is filled with language that makes one think of the Supper. John's holding back of the account of its institution certainly doesn't imply a downplaying of its importance.

While we can't speak with absolute certainty on this matter of exclusion, nor on why the other Gospels withhold the account of the foot-washing, what we can say is that both events serve as teaching about the service of Jesus to the world. And each include a command for us to follow.

The command regarding the Supper is Jesus' words: "do this in remembrance of me." It's a clear command of his, indicating that we must faithfully follow. The command's inclusion in the majority of Gospels, as well as by Paul, make it clear that this is sacramental action which is to be primary among us.

As for the foot washing, the command is different. We are not commanded to wash feet as a sacramental action. Jesus himself refers to it as simply an example. Rather, the command is to love one another as Jesus loves us. And loving one another, as we see from the scriptures, is carried out in many different ways.

Reading through these portions of John's Gospel, where the events leading up to Jesus' passion are described, Jesus' words about loving one another come into clearer focus. Not only is our love to mirror the love of Jesus – as much as that is humanly possible – but our love is also to be given, with a special priority, to our fellow believers. Jesus said, "love *one another*." By this he means to love our fellow disciples.

As mentioned in the Palm Sunday sermon, just days ago, one of the unique features of John's Gospel is its greater emphasis on Jesus building his followers into a family of faith. Jesus teaches and loves his disciples in each of the Gospel accounts, but the emphasis in John's Gospel is even more pronounced.

Today's text is a part of this emphasis. We note that his new commandment is meant to grow and sustain the family. Jesus doesn't command his disciples to love everyone. They are to love each other.

We don't want to make too much of this priority, of course. We are reminded that Jesus also told us to love our neighbors. And our neighbors are everyone, not just our fellow disciples.

But we don't want to make too little of Jesus' words here either. Jesus does, definitely, prod us to show special attention to our fellow believers.

Jesus himself showed special love and attention to his disciples, even while he made it clear that he did what he did because he loved the whole world. "God so loved the world," we hear in chapter three. And yet our text today begins by explaining that Jesus was "loving his own" and "loving them to the end." At the end of today's text, Jesus says: "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." People are to see the love Christians have for one another. They will be moved by it. One of the earliest Christian theologians, a man from North Africa named Tertullian, commented that it was the love that Christians had for one another that caused people to consider the new faith. "See how they love each other!" he quotes them saying.

Jesus' words should speak loudly to us today. But are they?

Let me ask you: what is your attitude toward your fellow believers? And your fellow church members? Do you see them as family? Or do you see them as just fellow consumers who shop at the same store? Do you see them as brothers and sisters worthy of your special time and attention? Or just people with whom you have a few things in common (but really not all that much).

Sadly, our efforts of love are often directed most toward those people we think will make us popular with the world instead. Or help us become rich. Or directed toward those we find more interesting, knowledgeable and fun. We tend to love those who are attractive in worldly ways, not Godly ways.

But think about it. What's more attractive than people who have a heart for others? And what can make us richer than knowing God's grace? And what could make us feel more alive and purposeful than belonging to a great family of believers?

Love one another, says Jesus. I've sometimes seen those words posted on signs outside churches. The words are placed there as encouragement for all people. That's great. People need that encouragement.

But the words of Jesus are primarily meant for us, his children. We are to love one another.

This won't always be easy. We get tired of one another. And when things go bad, it's easiest to blame those who are closest. They're the easiest target. And they usually get the brunt of our frustrations. But love isn't meant to be easy. It's meant to be good. It's meant to be helpful. Love is commitment and endurance. It's a long road. And it's often hard. But the payoff is great. There's a reason Paul says that the greatest of these is love.

Jesus once modeled his expectation of the disciples loving one another by washing their feet. If we think about it, the Holy Eucharist gives similar messages. Here, all are given their portion. Here, all are treated as equals. Here, all come forward, together, in no particular order but in order nonetheless. Here we experience the great love of God toward us in Jesus, and we receive that love in a way that shows love to one another.

This year, in particular, our reception of Holy Communion has emphasized our love for one another as we commune in the safest way possible, adjusting our norm, taking our time, continually conscious of one another.

Our common life together gives us endless opportunities to love one another. Let us take these seriously, so that we may be children of light (as Jesus called us in last Sunday's reading). And so that we may serve as Jesus did.

In his holy name. Amen.

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

HYMN OF THE DAY #617 O Lord, We Praise Thee Setting: Philip Gehring

(Congregants will read and meditate upon the text)

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|--|--|
| <p>1 O Lord, we praise Thee, bless Thee, and adore Thee,
In thanksgiving bow before Thee.
Thou with Thy body and Thy blood didst nourish
Our weak souls that they may flourish:
O Lord, have mercy!
May Thy body, Lord, born of Mary,
That our sins and sorrows did carry,
And Thy blood for us plead
In all trial, fear, and need:
O Lord, have mercy!</p> | <p>2 Thy holy body into death was given,
Life to win for us in heaven.
No greater love than this to Thee could bind us;
May this feast thereof remind us!
O Lord, have mercy!
Lord, Thy kindness did so constrain Thee
That Thy blood should bless and sustain me.
All our debt Thou hast paid;
Peace with God once more is made:
O Lord, have mercy!</p> |
|--|--|

**3 May God bestow on us His grace and favor
That we follow Christ our Savior
And live together here in love and union
Nor despise this blest Communion!
O Lord, have mercy!
Let not Thy good Spirit forsake us;
Grant that heav'nly-minded He make us;
Give Thy Church, Lord, to see
Days of peace and unity:
O Lord, have mercy!**

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Let us pray for the whole Body of Christ, for all in need, and for our journey of faith in these Three Great Days:

Gracious Father, we remember our Savior's great sacrifice, His anguish in the Garden, His arrest and trial, and we ask that you make us mindful that it was our disobedience that made His journey necessary. Lead us to greater love and service, as we commemorate the institution of our Lord's Holy Supper. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

As we view again our Savior's anguish, may His cry "**Father if it possible to take this cup from me,**" help us to see His self-giving as the way and the truth and the life. And as we journey to the cross, teach us anew to pick up our cross and follow Him. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for fellow Christians of the many denominations, that this time of reflection and repentance may renew us all to greater love and unity and service. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all of the sick and hurting ones, esp. _____ and those who are stricken with covid; we remember all caregivers and ask You to uphold them. Be with the dying and those who mourn and help us all to discover the strength of Jesus Who for us all bore the cross. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

As we feast with Christ on this most holy night, lead us to greater faith, repentance and obedience, and by this heavenly food, equip us for eternal life. Lord in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, You desire not the death of sinners, but rather that we turn from our sins and live. We flee to Your mercy in Christ Jesus, our Lord, who gave His body and His blood for our redemption. Until His return in glory, keep us steadfast in faith, until that day when we receive the crown of life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PREFACE TO HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. Grant us Your Spirit, gracious Father, that we may

give heed to the testament of Your Son in true faith and, above all, firmly take to heart the words with which Christ gives to us His body and blood for our forgiveness. By Your grace, lead us to remember and give thanks for the boundless love which He manifested to us when, by pouring out His precious blood, He saved us from Your righteous wrath and from sin, death, and hell. Grant that we may receive the bread and wine, that is, His body and blood, as a gift, guarantee, and pledge of His salvation. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

In the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, at His command, and with His own words, we receive His testament:

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My \times body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My \times blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PAX DOMINI

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

DISTRIBUTION

The Communion Assistant will come forward to receive first, then those from the pulpit side – by order of pew, front to back. Communicants will come up the center aisle and return via the side aisle. When all from the pulpit side have communed, the baptismal font side will commune in the same manner. Six feet of distancing must be maintained between all communicants. Masks should be kept on except for the moment of consuming the elements. We ask that the wine be consumed away from the tray table. Empty cups should be dropped into the baskets.

*COMMUNION MUSIC #640 Sts. 1, 3, 4 Thee We Adore, O Hidden Savior
(Congregants will read and meditate upon the text)*

**1 Thee we adore, O hidden Savior, Thee,
Who in Thy Sacrament art pleased to be;
Both flesh and spirit in Thy presence fail,
Yet here Thy presence we devoutly hail.**

**3 Thou, like the pelican to feed her brood,
Didst pierce Thyself to give us living food;
Thy blood, O Lord, one drop has pow'r to win
Forgiveness for our world and all its sin.**

**4 Fountain of goodness, Jesus, Lord and God:
Cleanse us, unclean, with Thy most cleansing blood;
Increase our faith and love, that we may know
The hope and peace which from Thy presence flow.**

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

THE STRIPPING OF THE ALTAR Choral Dorian by Jehan Alain

+ We leave in silence +

Those serving:

Greeter: Jim Easterly

Comm. assistant: Judy Koucky

Acknowledgments

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