

MAUNDY THURSDAY

In Service to our Lord | First Presbyterian Church | Arcadia, FL

Scripture: John 13:31-35

When he (Judas) had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once.

Little 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.' I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, in whom there is no partiality, we confess that our love is limited to those with whom we choose to associate. Our faith is restricted to what we can prove and our service is reduced by our greater interest in trappings and success. We have allowed religion to become a compartment in our lives, rather than leaven that influences and transforms the world. O God forgive our unfaithfulness and make today a time of new beginnings even as we strive to follow your commandments. In Jesus name. Amen.

A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE YOU

This Thursday is Holy Thursday. My grandmother called it that because she didn't know what Maundy meant. In her defense, google wasn't available in her day. Maundy derives from the latin word that is eventually translated into the English word Mandate. In this passage we hear the word Commandment. A new mandate I give you - or a new commandment I give you, Jesus says.



When it comes to 'Maundy Thursday' we usually talk about foot washing. That's because Maundy Thursday happens

on the Thursday of Holy Week when Jesus gathered together with his disciples and he washed his disciples' feet. After he does this he stands up and says to his disciples: "Do you know what I have done for you? You call me Teacher and Lord — and you are right for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you." So, Jesus set us an example. Most often we say that the example is that we should wash one another's feet. By keeping it that simple it's pretty easy to go through life as a Christian and never wash anyone else's feet. But, I think, there is a larger point to be made — that He is our Teacher and Lord and yet has done this. In other words, Jesus humbled himself. He did not let his status among them prevent him from being washing their feet. This idea is attested to elsewhere in the Bible as well with Philippians 2:1 being only one, albeit prime, example: . . . **Jesus Christ, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself taking on the form of a slave . . .** So, the first Commandment or Mandate we received from Christ might be said: *Don't get all full of yourself, but all of you, from the highest to the lowest, from the most esteemed to the most despised, every leader and every servant among you must be humble in all circumstances.*

After his demonstration of extreme humility Jesus tells his disciples that he will be betrayed by Judas. His last words to Judas

Coming Soon:



*that one should lay down there
life for another.*

**Go now in peace, and
peace be with you all.
Amen.**

were, “do quickly what you are going to do.” Then Judas left their fellowship. Once he was out the door the stage had been set, the die was cast and there was no turning back. (read first paragraph of scripture in the top left now).

With Judas gone and the die cast Jesus has another mandate for his disciples. He will repeat this one before they ever leave the room (see John 15:12). In 1 John 11 he repeats it again; in 1 John 16a the Bible says that **God is love and those who abide in love abide in God and God in them**. And in Matthew 22:36-40 Jesus will name this commandment the **first and greatest commandment**. (now read the second paragraph of the scripture in upper left corner)

If you’ve been a Christian very long you are probably not surprised to hear that **the first and greatest commandment** is to love one another. **By this**, Jesus says, **everyone will know that you are my disciples — that you have love for one another. Just as I have loved you, love one another**. Well, there is the rub: *just as I have loved you*. This turns out not to be as easy as at first it sounds. When we examine Jesus’ love we discover that he loves unconditionally, sacrificially, and eternally. We could make a long list of what that kind of love would look like: never hold a grudge; forgive easily; help wherever you can; abide those who do not agree with you; do not judge others (even those who do not follow Christ! see John 12:47). This lesson is reinforced by the Apostle Paul in Romans 12:9-21 which begins *Let love be genuine . . .* You should read those verses and meditate on them if you want to know what Christ’s love is like. It’s not easy but it is the will of God.

Finally, there is one more Mandate that is associated with Maundy Thursday. While John is focused on the foot washing and the betrayal of Jesus, Luke, Mark and Matthew take up the Last Supper in more detail. **I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer**, Jesus said, Here is the day that Jesus told us to remember him every time we come together to share this meal. **Do this in remembrance of me**, he said.

So there it is. Three commandments or mandates: Love one another; be humble, remember me when you eat together. If we can do that, I think we’ll be alright. May your Holy Thursday be a blessing to you and all whom you encounter.

Let us Pray: O God, we pray today that you would give us the eyes to see and the ears to hear your message of love, humility and remembrance. We acknowledge that your ways are often beyond our grasp or understanding, yet we pray that you give us the strength to witness to the awesome acts that you have done among us. Grant that today’s storms pass, that the world opens its eyes to you and that peace may be known, through your love and grace. **Amen.**