|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The Lessons Appointed for Use on** | **http://www.lectionarypage.net/Art/Newshield.gif** |
| Maundy Thursday |
| All YearsRCL |

Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Psalm 116:1, 10-17

**The Collect**

Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

**Old Testament**

**Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14**

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell 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. If 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. [Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn.] This 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. For 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.

**The Response**

**Psalm 116:1, 10-17**

***Dilexi, quoniam***

1 I love the Lord, because he has heard the voice of my supplication, \*
because he has inclined his ear to me whenever I called upon him.

10 How shall I repay the Lord \*
for all the good things he has done for me?

11 I will lift up the cup of salvation \*
and call upon the Name of the Lord.

12 I will fulfill my vows to the Lord \*
in the presence of all his people.

13 Precious in the sight of the Lord \*
is the death of his servants.

14 O Lord, I am your servant; \*
I am your servant and the child of your handmaid;
you have freed me from my bonds.

15 I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving \*
and call upon the Name of the Lord.

16 I will fulfill my vows to the Lord \*
in the presence of all his people,

17 In the courts of the Lord’s house, \*
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.
Hallelujah!

**The Epistle**

**1 Corinthians 11:23-26**

I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**The Gospel**

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

Now 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. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then 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. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I 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, "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." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

After 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? 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. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

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. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Tonight is different.

People in church either love Maundy Thursday or they don’t come, and have never come. There are few people who are coming for the first time tonight.

The 1979 prayer book re-introduced the liturgies of Holy Week. Some individual churches would have some sort of liturgy that was local, but there was not a liturgy that you could turn to and find, “this is how to celebrate Maundy Thursday” in the prayer book. These liturgies are ancient, from around the 4th century, for we have a least one account of a woman who visited Jerusalem and wrote down how the services of Holy week were done. At the time, they were one continuous long service, with like breaks to go get a little food, or tend to yourself or the older people who needed more care.

The services were done over the course three days, called Triduum, to include Holy Thursday, or as Anglicans call it Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil, beginning Saturday at sundown, (so now you know you have nothing to complain about). You could think of these three days as like two peaks with a valley between them. Maundy Thursday is a transition from life to death, on Good Friday we mark the death of Jesus, and the Easter Vigil (or for us now Easter Sunday) marks the celebration form death to life, the empty tomb. Still in all these services we are not “play acting”, but instead in all of these services we also celebrate the life of Jesus, his death and his resurrection. At no time are we pretending that we don’t know the outcome.

The Forward Movement Lenten services which some of us followed this Lent, had the overarching theme of Loving with all your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind. One of the particular weeks posed the statement to ask for God’s love to act in you. This particular phrasing was fresh on my ears. We are used to the concept of looking for Christ and loving the Christ in the other. We are used to opening ourselves to God’s love, almost as passive recipients, but asking for God’s love to act in us is not a usual turn of phrase….

And yet this, God’s love acting in us has always been a key ingredient in many ways…

The Old Testament reading tonight gives us the Passover—-the ritual meal enacted by Jews throughout the centuries remember God’s saving power which brought the Israelites out of Egypt. It is the love God has for God’s people that is at the root of this and all salvation. This favor which they have found, the cry which was known to God, which saves God’s people.

It is entirely understandable why Jesus became known as the Passover lamb. He provides salvation for all as the blood of the lamb does for the Israelites. He is God’s love acting in the world. In Hebrew, Passover is pesach, פֶּסַח. It is where we get the Latin word that becomes passion. The innocent lamb was slain to enable a people to live…. it is pretty easy to see the pattern. Yet, it is not just a pattern.

The ritual meal of the Passover is in many ways mirrored by the ritual meal of the Eucharist, though they are in no way identical. The Eucharist is a new thing. It is a meal in which we meet the One who was crucified but is risen, whose Love went all the way to the grave for us. This is God’s love acting through the Eucharist, the love that saves us daily.

*“This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

We have been saved, we continue to be saved. It is gift from God, God’s love acting in the world, then and now. It is this love that draws us to God.

You have often heard me talk about how we act or be Christ in the world. It is not just an ethics, a way of being, it is by knowing God’s love acting in Christ that we are also to act, to consent to having God’s love act through us.

Which is why I want to suggest that the Gospel today should challenge us more. Because we have been welcomed at the table, at the Eucharist, we have been saved by the death and resurrection of Christ, we can actually say to ourselves and anyone else: “Washing feet, seems a little odd at first, but if it is a way to show God’s love through our actions, and this is the commandment, the Mandate, the Maundy of Maundy Thursday, then this is… with just a little water… a way of welcoming, a way of being like Jesus, of saying ‘yeah, your feet are okay… no different than mine’.”

It may be something more, but it is at least that. It is at least letting God’s love work through us. Sometimes the discomfort is taking off our shoes and socks, sometimes the discomfort is allowing God’s love to work through us when we are reluctant.

Still the more often we are able to do just that, allow God’s love to work through us, then God gets closer to bringing in the kingdom. Remember, it is God’s kingdom that is coming through Christ, not us doing our will to bring it. We don’t do it, we don’t deliver, we allow God to work through us, God to love through us.