

Pastor Colleen's Maundy Thursday Sermon of April 9, 2009

Grace, Peace and Mercy be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

Preparation....

Jesus has been trying to prepare his disciples and all his followers ...
For what is to happen tomorrow
For his arrest,
His trial
His crucifixion and his death

It's part of what he has been doing his entire ministry

The miracles, the healings, the preaching, the teaching....
It has all contained elements of preparation....

And on this holiest of nights the preparations continue...

On this evening, in the upper room, Jesus was at supper with his friends.
The room was tense with emotion.
Jesus sensing all that was and all that was to come,
removes his robe, pours water into a basin, and begins to wash the disciples' feet.

It was the night before he was to die.
and Jesus is using his last evening to get across his most important lessons one more time.
He is using his last evening to prepare them once more
In case they missed the significance of his washing their feet, Jesus points out that he has done this to give them an example to follow, saying,
"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."

These famous last words set side by side with his washing of his disciples feet tell us what to do as his followers.

Remember this, he tells us.

Remember me in front of you, serving you, and do the same for others.

Then he continues to serve his disciples by feeding them.

This is my body... given for you
This is my blood... shed for you...

On the eve of his death, Jesus did not focus on his need but on the needs of others.

The one who was the leader—
the focus of all attention, the master—
became like a slave to those who by all logic should have served him.
In taking the towel and basin himself,
Jesus turned the realities of the world upside down...

He transformed the traditional understanding of power and he gave it a new meaning.
 He showed his followers that true power came in serving and loving one another.
 Jesus called those who would follow him to love as he had loved,
 with more concern for the other person than for ones' self.

Jesus has gathered together those he called to walk this journey with him.
 Those who he has been closest to and he has washed their feet....
 He has shown them exactly what it means to serve.

Then he feeds them...
 Blesses the food...
 Forgives them
 Shares his very body and blood with them...
 Nourishes their souls...

Gives them one last instruction...
 Love one another as they have been loved...

Serve,
 Feed,
 Love!

The preparation is over... the teaching ends... no more miracles... no more preaching
 Now he asks them to journey just a little bit further...

He asks them to follow him to the Garden at Gethsemane
 To pray...

Our gospel reading for this evening stops before Jesus and the disciples travel out to the Garden
 But I think it is so important to acknowledge that this is where we are this evening.

This night... the preparation is over...
 We have witnessed the miracles,
 Heard the preaching,
 Been recipients of the healings

We have been served, fed, nourished, loved...

Now we too are in the garden....
 With our Savior...

And our savior is struggling
 He knows what is in store and I imagine he is scared and confused
 We know that he pleads with God to remove this cup from him.
 He comes back to the disciples several times and asks them to stay awake with him, to pray
 He wants to know he's not alone

I cannot imagine the anguish and sorrow he is feeling this night
 I cannot imagine how alone, cold, tired, and grief stricken he must have been...
 If we were in the Garden with him that night...
 Would we have been able to stay awake?
 Would we have heard his cries and prayers?
 And if so, perhaps this is what we may have heard...

{PLAY GETHSEMANE You Tube Video/SONG}
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFPRoawlSC8>

“But I choose to die
 For the ones that you have given me...
 So not my will but thine be done...”

That is why we are gathered this night.
 The preparation is over
 Jesus has taught his final lesson
 Now on his last night he has prayed and turned his life over to God
 He has said yes to God’s plan
 He will die for the ones who have been given into his care...

For you and I...
 What Jesus is about to do ...
 It’s a gift for us...
 For our forgiveness
 For our salvation...
 And it’s offered to us all...

And all we are asked...
 Is to acknowledge the gift with our very lives...
 Serve...Feed...love...

May we on this holy night ...
 In the holy meal we are about to participate in...
 As we take into our bodies the very life of Christ
 may we become the love that Jesus was and is...

Not our will...but thine be done...
 Amen

May the peace of God which passes all human understanding, keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen