

Maundy Thursday Small Group Guide

Welcome to our Maundy Thursday time of reflection together. Below you will find an outline to follow with your small group or family at-home to read scripture, ask questions, and also say a blessing upon a time of fellowship together. If you have food or drink to bless it is welcome but not required.

Gathering and Welcome

Introduce yourselves (if necessary). Have someone lead the group in this opening prayer: *God of grace, come to bless us as we gather to remember how Jesus sat at the table with friends. Let us open our hearts and minds to find you here at our tables even today. Amen.*

Scripture Reading: John 13:1-30

Read aloud the scripture below. You may want to have several people read different sections.

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to God. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that God had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Jesus Predicts His Betrayal

"I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has turned against me.'

"I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am. Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."

After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me."

His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means."

Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"

Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

So Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do quickly." But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor. As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

Questions for Reflection

Take time to answer these questions together. Make sure each person has a chance to respond if they'd like.

1. The story of Jesus washing his disciples feet is a story of service and compassion. How have you seen service and compassion demonstrated this year?
2. What does it mean that Judas is welcomed at the table alongside the other disciples?
3. This scripture says, "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." Another scripture, Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Our faith often holds these tensions of being in the world and loving it while still also moving toward transformation. How might our tangible rituals of this world like foot washing and communion might help us move toward a transformation of the world?

Prayer of Blessing

Travel with us God through this Holy Week. Keep us mindful of those we are called to serve and how we are to follow you. Grant us wisdom and courage, we pray. Amen.