

WELCOME 29 March 2018 – Maundy Thursday

Good evening and welcome to worship on this Maundy Thursday.

Smell, Taste, Sound, Sight, and Touch. You use at least one of your senses every moment of every day. The senses powerfully work together to help you make sense of what is happening around you.

The Bible tells us that in Jesus, God took on human flesh & took on our senses to redeem them & use them so that in every fibre of our being we would know his love – experience his grace – delight in his saving presence. That is our experience in this season as our senses help tell the greatest story ever told...the story of God's Son given in love for our redemption – salvation – reunion with the Father.

The season of Lent began on Ash Wednesday with God's declaration, *"You are dust & to dust you shall return."* A sinful humanity stands before a holy God, guilty as charged & justly condemned. Tonight, Maundy Thursday, we hear a striking contrast *"Take it, for this is my body...This is my blood, which confirms the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice for many."*

Tonight is not an anniversary celebration of the Lord's Supper: It is an affirmation of Paul's ringing declaration: *For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. – Rom. 3:23-25*

Jesus assures us that his life is given to redeem us from the powers of sin/death/evil and because Jesus is true to his Word we can,

"Taste and see that the Lord is good! – Ps 34:8

What joy for those who take refuge in him!

Everything you need for worship is right @ your fingertips...

Note tomorrow's Good Friday worship begins at 9:00 & Easter Sunday celebrations begin at 8:30 with BBQ breakfast following

We'll begin...singing O Breath of Life & Before the Throne of God...let's stand...

MAUNDY THURSDAY '18 B - MAKING SENSE OF EASTER: THE TASTE OF EASTER
MARK 14:12-24 & PSALM 22

My grandmother's youngest brother...great-uncle Sonny...was the king of smokehouse barbecue. He built his own smoker out of an old fridge & could get the heat, smoke & airflow just right so that any large portions of meat that went in always came out juicy & tender & delicious. He didn't use fancy sauces or rubs. For him it's simple: salt & pepper, the right kind of wood (pecan, oak or mesquite) & fire, smoke, airflow. His smoked bbq was the signature dish of all our country-cousins' family gatherings. Not that unusual...

When we lived in Nth Texas, Leonie & I were known at church meals for a certain shareable dish...Folks would belly up to the table & ask if we brought it. We can't get the main ingredient here...sorry. Some of you are equally known for your culinary capabilities...don't get all modest...you know who you are. We have all eaten enough of each other's food to simply know one another lovingly by our signature dish. And I can assure you that if you do some online searching you'll find all the famous chefs have a dish or few that they call their very own...their trademark.

No surprise really that the Bible tells us that God too is a master provider of food. From the first garden where fruit from "every tree," save one, is to be freely eaten - to the night of their freedom from slavery in Egypt where in the Passover meal each element of the meal pointed to the suffering of captivity & the joy of freedom as God's people - to the years when God's people wandered in the wilderness & woke every morning to find manna surrounding their camp & went out every evening to gather quail flocked in by the thousands...to the promise of the final fulfilled kingdom where "On this mountain the Lord of hosts shall make for all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." And my uncle is one of the cooks...I just know...

To tonight...where Jesus gathers his closest friends for the last time & what they believe is a simple Passover remembrance becomes something so much more. Twelve men & who knows how many women gathered in that upper room to do what we do around a meal... to fill their hungry bellies - to reaffirm their friendship & fellowship over against the loneliness/antagonism of the world - to remember/renew their spiritual heritage...But on that night, Jesus fully aware that their fellowship was about to be destroyed (scattered to the winds) - Jesus knowing full well that the others would hunger for his presence & he would be absent - Jesus knowing that their faith was going to fail them & their spiritual heritage would no longer hold the same meaning for them...On that night Jesus took the bread & wine & said, "*Take it, for this is my body...This is my blood, which confirms the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice for many.*"

Into the emptiness of a broken world his body would be cast out broken...but broken 'for you,' he said. "This," he said, "is how I live in you & you live in me. This is how our fellowship/joy is complete. This is how you live from my strength...protected & nourished by my powerful love. Eat & remember me." Then he took wine, said it was "a new promise signed sealed & delivered - written in his blood." Into the rivers of this world's shed blood & spilled tears his too would be poured out...but poured out 'as a sacrifice for many - for you for the forgiveness of sin.' Here was a cup of eternal life, a river of hope & a stream of cleansing. "Drink & remember me."

Whenever we eat/whenever we drink...whether we know it or not...whether we are conscious of it or not...we admit our need...we acknowledge hunger & longing...we conceded to some sort of emptiness...and we seek to fill it. With food & drink we search for satisfaction & wholeness & contentment... But to eat/drink here - To eat/drink of this meal is to receive new life. To eat/drink of this meal is to receive real fulfillment for your longings/wantings. To eat/drink of this meal is to receive satisfaction for your hungerings/desirings. To eat/drink of this meal is to find a refuge/haven for **ALL** in the presence...no at the very bosom of God, "*Like a child at its mother's breast is my soul quieted,*" says the psalm writer. Any other meal has the real possibility that I will simply feed my self-indulgence, nourish my self-satisfaction, nurture my self-centeredness.

But to eat/drink here - To eat/drink of this meal nourishes my dependence on Jesus - feeds me with love unsurpassed - fills me with life unending - strengthens me for a life given to others. Jesus sets the table here with his body & blood and in this feast we receive peace with God & strength for each day...forgiveness, life, salvation.

In this meal is the promise the assurance that my sin is never bigger than Christ's forgiveness...and my guilt & shame fade in the bright light of his love. In this meal Christ gives the assurance that his life in me will fill even the greatest longing & deepest hunger.

"Taste and see that the Lord is good! - Ps 34:8

What joy for those who take refuge in him!

Amen.