

MAUNDY THURSDAY '20 A – 9 APRIL 2020 – SEISMIC SHIFTS: LOVE MOVES

JOHN 11:1-44

Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world & return to his Father.

He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, & now he loved them to the very end.

It was time for supper, & the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.

Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything & that he had come from God & would return to God.

It is easy on Maundy Thursday to focus on the...Maundy part of the equation...the "mandate/command." "**Do as I have done to you...Now that you know these things, God will bless you for **doing** them...I'm giving you a new **commandment**: Love each other.**" It's easy to take this night & grab hold of it like it was marching orders from Jesus. Like we're in the footy sheds at half-time getting re-charged for the remainder of the game...hearing again the great coach giving us the specific instructions so we can play our part...carry out our role...& in doing gain the victory.

Now get out there & Love like Jesus loves! Live like Jesus lives! Serve like Jesus serves! Sacrifice like Jesus sacrifices!

But I have to stop...every time I read this passage...before I get out of vs 1: *Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world & return to his Father.* Jesus knew his hour had come. Jesus is fully aware of what is about to happen. Nothing about the ensuing hours is accident, mistake, or happenstance. Everything Jesus goes through, everything he says, everything he does is all part of the Father's plan, & Jesus knows it...*Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world & return to his Father*...From betrayal to brutality to victory...Jesus knows. He goes into the events of this night knowing he is about to eat his final meal with his disciples. He knows he will face betrayal, arrest, mockery, brutality, & death...AND LIFE & return to the Father. A corpse will not return anywhere except to dust. Jesus knows, as he always had, that the final victory...the ultimate triumph was possible **ONLY AFTER** he had suffered death & was buried & raised again on the 3rd day. He knows. He had given his followers advance notice of all that would transpire. Multiple times the gospel-writers record Jesus' predictions of his betrayal, trial, suffering, death & resurrection. He knows.

He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, & now he loved them to the very end. To the very end. You're familiar with the question Paul asks: *Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? To the very end.* It is precisely because of that love that has no end...that love that holds us through every imaginable heartache & hardship...that love that not even death can destroy...that love that endures through eternity...that love that forgives sin & overthrows the gates of hell & routs the devil & blows open the grave that Jesus is facing this hour, not in fear, not in hesitation, not grudgingly...but lovingly, willingly...*for the joy set before him* which is you & me & all who are called by his name...*No, despite all these things, we are more than conquerors/ overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, **who loved us. To the very end**...*to the final fulfilment of the Father's will & purpose...until the last sin erased & last sinner washed in blood...until Satan's head is crushed & Adam's stain made clean...until we are reunited with the Father in love & joy...*brought safely home to God*...

It was time for supper, & the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. John of course is writing after the fact...at the time, he didn't know Judas would betray Jesus...but Jesus did...*vs 11 For Jesus knew who would betray him.* But that does not stop Jesus from loving Judas...from washing his feet...from placing bread & wine in his hands...Jesus knows Judas will walk willingly away from the greatest gift of love humanity will ever experience. Jesus knows Judas will turn to his own ends & serve the Father's purpose.

Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything & that he had come from God & would return to God. So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, & poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him. Jesus demonstrates that he has given himself completely to the greater will of His Father to redeem you & me...to take into the love of the Father a lost & dying human race. Towel, bowl, on his knees, hands wrapped around grubby dirty sinful broken humanity...Jesus gives himself for the sake of God's loved lost sons & daughters. But what does it mean that God stoops down & with sudsy fingers, cleanses us? It means that in Jesus love moves from heaven to earth from earth to cross from cross to grave from grave to the Father's throne for you...for me. It means our salvation has come...our sin is wiped clean. We are laundered with his blood...bathed in his sacrifice...swept into eternity by the tidal wave of his love for us.

Jesus laid aside the garments of his divinity, girded himself with the robe of humanity. He clothed himself in our death that we might forever wear his immortality. He laid aside divine prerogative in obedience to the Father. He laid down his own life to experience the savagery of our death. Jesus comes to be God with us God for us for our life hope & salvation. In towel & basin, bread & wine, Word of promise & assurance: God's love moves for you. Amen