

WELCOME 14th April 2022 – Maundy Thursday '22 C

Luke 22:1-27

Welcome to the start of history's great "3 days" (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday & Easter) where the axis of the universe shifts away from bondage to freedom, from despair to hope & from death to life. That shift is a war fought on many fronts, for many reasons & w/ varying degrees of intensity. Many of us fight that war daily in our lives...we engage that battle every day...emotionally, spiritually, physically, mentally...

US Army General George Patton is reported to have said, "No one ever won a war by giving their life for their country. They won the war by making the other guy give his life for his country."

God never read Patton's book...*"Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."* – Jn 3:14-17

There was no other plan...no other strategy...no other way but the UnConventional Plan of Self-Giving...the very life of God the Son given for the life of the world.

God made Christ, who never sinned, to be sin for us, so that in Christ we could be made right with God." And for the battles that remain tonight...tomorrow & tomorrow after that...Christ himself comes to fight from within

"This is my body which is given for you...This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you..."

So that he who lives in you can prove himself again & again greater than the one who lives in the world...

Let's continue the battle by singing...Change My Heart O God

MAUNDY THURSDAY '22 C – UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE: PLAN OF SELF-GIVING

Burning the candle at both ends...However you picture it...maybe this or even this...Whether you call it burnout, reaching the end of your tether, running out of steam, exhaustion, bugged, flat knackered or long-covid...somewhere each of us gets to a place where we simply can't anymore...we're done...finished...So we file for divorce...stop treatment...hand in our resignation...take medical leave... There comes a point...a line in the sand...thus far & no farther...Which is why when I feel that point drawing closer...I turn to John 13...

Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew 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. (he showed them the full extent of his love) the OG Gk "full extent" After 3 years or so...when it looks for all the world like the 12 are never going to get their act together...never going to understand...never going to live fully into the life Jesus is offering them...Jesus opens his heart wider...

He reveals the *full extent of his love*...He lives beyond the end of human capacity in the unlimited abundance the Father has for us through him...He washes their feet & then promises his unending presence & power w/in all who believe. *I am among you as one who serves* whose giving knows no ending...who will give & give again...who will give pouring out one gracious blessing after another...whose very purpose is to bless you from his own abundance w/ every spiritual blessing in heaven...

How different from the world in which we live...Our world is built around...for the last 50 years every area of life has been engineered to address the simple question: "What's in it for me?" Marketers, product designers, media & entertainment gurus, education specialists, military recruitment offices, even church growth & development experts create what they "sell" intentionally trying to scratch a particular market itch. It's all about what you can get in **this** place over against **that** place...**this** product vs **that** one...**this** service not **that** one...**this** specialized ministry not **that** generic one...It's all about me...what I get...

Jesus steps into our world not to be served but to serve & give his life as a ransom. Jesus steps into our world w/ his own life on offer as a gift...as a downpayment on our eternal future in the Father's presence. *Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. – 1 Pt 3:18* Against the enemy who would destroy us forever...doom us to an eternity of empty self-seeking - of grief w/o end - pain w/o relief – striving w/o contentment...there was no other plan...no other strategy...no other way but the very life of God the Son given for the life of the world. *God made Christ, who never sinned, to be sin for us, so that in Christ we could be made right with God."*

And because you & I will wrestle against that enemy throughout our lives...because we will strive against the world's "craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, & pride in our achievements & possessions" ...because we will burnout be ready to hand in our resignation...reach our end...Jesus comes here now to *show us the full extent of his love*. Jesus comes to offers his life as often as we will receive it to sustain & strengthen us in every battle we face. For the battles that remain tonight...tomorrow & tomorrow after that...Christ himself comes to fight from within...*"This is my body which is given for you...This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you..."* So that he who lives in you can prove himself again & again greater than the one who lives in the world...So that now & every day you can see in Christ his plan for you is from bondage to freedom, from despair to hope & from death to life...forever...Amen