

First Baptist Church in Needham

Maundy Thursday – Jesus' Last Supper A Meal of Remembering

Shelter-in-Place Meditations for Thursday-Saturday, April 9-11, 2020
(or whenever you are so led to pause, reflect, and pray during Holy Week)

What You Need:

- Bread, crackers, a muffin, or cake (a baked good, if possible)
- A drink for each person present & one extra
- Additional food for your meal or a snack

Prepare Your Meal

Tonight, we focus on Jesus' final supper, the model of our Communion service today. Perhaps light a candle and sit near a window where you can look out into the world and where your light may shine as a comfort to others. Gather your household. You may choose to assign sections for each person to read or enact. Prepare your meal, bread, and drink.

Prepare an additional cup or perhaps set an extra place at an empty chair to represent the community of Christ gathered in Spirit. On this night, none of us eat alone. We are all welcome at Christ's table of remembering.



Imagine

The table is set and low. Friends and companions are gathered around it. Light glows from oil lamps. The host of the house and his family are directing food preparation and serving the table. Inhale and enjoy the aroma of the food. You sit at the table with one who will betray Jesus, one who will deny him, ones who argue and compete for his attention, one who loves him dearly. Here are his students, his friends and benefactors, and his family. And you. Tonight, you shelter in place with the one who calls you to life

The Bread

Pick up the bread (in whatever form) and read the following text.

A Reading and Reflection from 1 Corinthians 11:23-24 and John 13:34-35 (NRSV)

One: For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

ALL: **The word of our Lord. Thanks be to God.**

One: Tonight, this bread is bread of remembering. Tonight, we remember the gift of Jesus' life and teachings. We remember how Jesus modeled for us to be in relationship with each other and with our God. Tonight, Jesus calls us to a new commandment, "that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

Break the bread into pieces and share it.

Leave a piece of bread at the empty chair as a sign of the welcome and hospitality of Christ's table to the world.

Silent Reflection

One: Thanks be to God for the broken bread.

ALL: Amen

The Meal

Enjoy your meal or snack. Eat slowly...chew the food and enjoy its flavor...savor the experience....

Reflect on the story so far. What draws your attention? Who are you at this table with Jesus? What question do you have for him? What reassurance do you desire? What do you remember? *Share your thoughts with one another, reflect silently, or write or draw them.*

The Cup

When the meal ends, pick up the drink and read the following text.

A Reading and Reflection from 1 Corinthians 11:25 (NRSV)

One: In the same way Jesus took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

ALL: **The word of our Lord. Thanks be to God.**

One: Tonight, with members of the Body of Christ around the globe, we drink deeply as we hold to the promise that Jesus' life and love flows through us, nourishing us, sustaining us, and comforting us in the face of illness and death. Tonight, we bear witness to God's love poured abundantly into the world through the hands and feet, hearts and minds of each person who claims Christ.

ALL: **We drink this cup of the new covenant and renew our baptismal promise to follow Christ faithfully, compassionately, and with generous love.**

All drink from their cups.

Silent Reflection

One: Thanks be to God for the cup.

ALL: **Thanks be to God for the table of communion. Amen**

You may eat the remaining bread and drink the extra cup or take them outside and reverently return them to the earth as a blessing.

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Good Friday - Tenebrae A Service of Releasing

Shelter-in-Place Meditations for Thursday-Saturday, April 9-11, 2020
(or whenever you are so led to pause, reflect, and pray during Holy Week)



What You Need

- Paper and pen
- Candle or light easily turned on/off
- A cross, if one is easily available, or a simple drawing of one, to focus on.
- **If you are with others**, you may choose to assign sections for each person to read or enact.
- **If you are alone**, you may include an empty chair to represent the community of the faithful around the globe who are moving through the hours of this day alongside you. None of us endure this day by ourselves—we are the Body of Christ.
- Each reading and reflection may be read throughout the hours of the day (instead of in one sitting) as you carry the story throughout the length of Good Friday and into the night.

Prepare Your Heart

Tenebrae is a service of stripping the altar and worship space, a service of removal, emptying, and gathering darkness. While we shelter in place, we cannot remove the symbols of our faith and practice with the familiar rituals of this service. On this Good Friday, we instead tell the story of Jesus' crucifixion and death from the Gospel of John and remove, or release, the death-dealing parts of our individual lives. In these hours, we are invited to acknowledge our failings, our resistance, and our sin and leave them on the cross of Christ.

Light the candle or turn on the designated light.

A Reading from John 18:1-12 (NRSV) – Jesus' Betrayal & Arrest

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground.

Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me."

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?" So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him.

Reflection

- Who have I betrayed?
- When have I withheld my support or heart from one who needed me?
- Who have I hurt with anger, violence, or disregard?
- How may I amend and seek to heal these parts of my life with God's help?

Silence

A Reading from John 18:13-27 (NRSV) – Peter's Denial

First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people. Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in.

The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said." When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"

Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

Reflection

- What do I lie about to others? How do I misrepresent myself?
- What lies do I tell myself? What do I not want to admit to myself?
- How do I fail to live the full life of a Christ-follower today?
- How may I amend and seek to heal these parts of my life with God's help?

Silence

A Reading from John 18:27-40 (NRSV) – Jesus Before Pilate

Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." The Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." (This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here."

Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" They shouted in reply, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a bandit.

Reflection

- When have I benefitted from injustice at the expense of others?
- What hard decisions am I avoiding?
- What responsibilities or obligations do I try to shirk or to make others' problems?
- How may I amend and seek to heal these parts of my life with God's help?

Silence

A Reading from John 19:1-16a (NRSV) – Pilate & the People

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God."

Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."

From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no

friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

Reflection

- When have I tried to do the right, good, or just thing and failed?
- What regrets do I live with?
- When have I carelessly and thoughtlessly spoken in a way that caused another pain?
- How may I amend and seek to heal these parts of my life with God's help?

Hymn 283

Were You There

African-American Spiritual

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
 Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
 Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Silence

A Reading from John 19:16b-30 (NRSV) – The Crucifixion

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Reflection

- How do I go about my day oblivious to the suffering around me?

- Who needs me to risk caring enough to commit to their well-being?
- How may I amend and seek to heal these parts of my life with God's help?

Hymn 283***Were You There***

African-American Spiritual

Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
 Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?
 Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
 Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?

Silence**A Reading from John 19:31-42 (NRSV) – The Burial**

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the Sabbath, especially because that Sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken." And again another passage of scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Reflection

- When have I put my needs or wants before another?
- When do I refrain from revealing I am a Christian because of what others may think or say?
- How may I amend and seek to heal these parts of my life with God's help?

Hymn 283***Were You There***

African-American Spiritual

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
 Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
 Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
 Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

One: And the Light of the World went out.

Extinguish the candle or turn out the designated light.

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Holy Saturday - Vigil Mystery and Silence

Shelter-in-Place Meditations for Thursday-Saturday, April 9-11, 2020
(or whenever you are so led to pause, reflect, and pray during Holy Week)

Prepare Your Heart

In the Christian Calendar, Holy Saturday holds the space of great Mystery between the cross and the empty tomb. On this day, we, too, hold our breath between what is Now and Not Yet. So too, this year we stand in the liminal space of Holy Saturday as we shelter in place awaiting the day when we may emerge on the other side of this pandemic. As you keep vigil throughout this sacred day and await the dawn of an Easter not yet here, consider holding space for intentional silence, reflection, and prayer. Offer to God the longing of your heart.

Vigil

I wait, O God,
Hands washed raw, gloves tight,
Mask formed to the contours of my face.
I wait, O God,
for what, I do not know.
Tomorrow is too much to hold right now.
I cannot lift my eyes to the future.
I have only today, this moment, really, to give.
I have only this breath to breathe—the next
may not come.
Tether me not to tubes but to your heartstrings.
Croon to me in my self-isolation and loneliness
and call me your beloved child.
Ease my aching bones, muscles, and mind
for my grief and fear are embodied, tangible.
Forgive my actions and inactions thoughtlessly
carried out with disregard.
Hold me in this Sacred Silence, this absence.
I need to feel you.

--Holly C. Benzenhafer 4-1-2020



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