

Maundy Thursday Reflections

A message by the Rev. Frances Savill

Thursday, April 1, 2021

Reflection 1

The feast of Passover, or the feast of unleavened bread, as it is also called, is about God rescuing his people out of slavery and into new life.

It's about a time when the Hebrew people, were formed as God's chosen people.

Once they were not a people – they became God's people.

On the table at the feast –

Charoseth- which looks like mortar used for making bricks.

Egg and parsley- symbols of new life.

Horseradish – which is a bitter herb – recalling the bitterness of slavery.

Salt Water – recalling the tears the people cried as they called out to God to be delivered from slavery. But also remembrance of the journey through the Red Sea where the people walked through on dry ground, but the Egyptians who followed them were swallowed up by the water and drown. So tears for slavery and tears for the Egyptians.

The bone from a lamb, recalling the blood that was put on the door posts of the homes to save the people.

On the night of the Passover when Jesus and his friends were celebrating God's salvation, God delivering his people, God making a way through the wilderness, providing for his people,

on that night Jesus took the flat, unleavened bread,

and gave them a new covenant,

not about freeing us from Egypt,

but freeing us from sin.

A covenant not sealed with the blood of sheep on the doorposts of homes, but the blood of Jesus as a seal on the door of our hearts.

This new covenant was not just for God's people Israel, but for all who would accept Jesus' gift in faith.

And so the symbols on the table also are given additional meaning – the bitter herbs also become about the bitterness of our slavery to sin.

And the eggs and greens are about the new life we have in Jesus.

The cup that was for Elijah and the coming Kingdom of God, is the sign of Jesus' blood poured out in love for us, as a sign that the kingdom of God has come near to us, until that day when Jesus returns and the kingdom comes in fullness.

Reflection 2

All of God's good gifts can be abused.

We take a skill, a talent, a strength, and we turn it into something to boast about, something to make others feel like less.

God gives us gifts to build up... and sometimes we use them to tear down.

God gives them to us to share and benefit everyone... but sometimes we use our gifts and talents and strengths to hurt and exclude.

God gave communion to bring us together,
that we might find strength in Jesus,
and a community with one another.

But some of God's people used communion to divide rich from poor. Some people feasted while others had nothing. Some of God's people used communion to be seen as important and above others.

So John's gospel remind us that Jesus enacted a parable that night.

*In an upstairs room a parable
Is just about to come alive;
And while they bicker about who's best
With a painful glance He'll silently rise.
Their Saviour-servant must show them how,
Through the will of the water
And the tenderness of a towel.*

Jesus took off his robe and humbled himself and washed his disciple's feet, even the feet of the one who would betray him, even the feet of the one who would deny him three times.

And Jesus' words are: Love One Another
And we dare not ask how, because Jesus gave us an example,
we are to wash each other's feet, and serve one another.

*And the call is to community,
The impoverished power that sets the soul free
In humility to take the vow
That day after day
We must take up the basin and the towel.*

*In any ordinary place, On any ordinary day,
The parable can live again
When one will kneel and one will yield.
Our Saviour-servant must show us how,
Through the will of the water and the tenderness of the towel.
And the tenderness of the towel.*

*And the space between ourselves, sometimes,
Is more than the distance between the stars.
By the fragile bridge of the servant's bow,
We take up the basin and the towel. Michael Card*

Here we have Jesus' example, as he has loved us, so we are to love one another, and love the world he gave his life for.

For a few moments I invite you to ponder the love of Jesus given to you, and the love he invites you to share. **SILENCE**

*Infinite, intimate God;
this night you kneel before your friends and wash our feet.
Bound together in your love, trembling, we drink your cup
and watch. Amen.*

We have gathered together at the foot of the cross as brothers and sisters in Christ.

We wait with one another, as people who are broken and need healing.

We pray together as people who long for peace and healing in our lives and in our world.

We pray together that the outstretched arms of Jesus would encircle us and help us to reach out to those who are hurting around us.