

**Thought for Maundy Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021**

**Pastor Gordon Hamilton**

**Please have a drink and a piece of bread or similar ready as we will be sharing in the Lord's supper a bit later.**

**Read Matthew 26:17-56**

today we are remembering the last day that Jesus spent with his disciples. It must have been a difficult day for Jesus, he knew the time of his death was near. How it would pan out would have been less clear to him. Verse 29 says; *'I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'* Jesus also knew that one of his disciples was going to betray him, and that his dear friend Peter, the one on who he was going to build his church, was going to deny that he was one of his followers. The Passover supper is a very special time, a time of celebration, a time of thanksgiving, a time when they look back on the way the Lord provided for them, in bringing them out of captivity in Egypt. The song; *Give thanks with a grateful heart* comes to mind, *give thanks to the Holy one*. Of course being a Christian song it goes on to say *give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, His son*. That is what we should be doing today, not only today but every day. As the Jesus and the disciples reclined at the table, Jesus says to them, *'one of you is going to betray me.'* Jesus doesn't say which one, and even when he does say to Judas (v25), the other eleven don't realise what Jesus is talking about to Judas, so for the rest of the meal each one of them could have been thinking, I'm not going to betray him, how could I betray Jesus? Maybe we all have thoughts like that. Jesus does say to Peter (v34) *'you will disown me.'* I am sure you're aware the words of Jesus came true (69-75). John 13:4-11 tells of how Jesus washed his disciple's feet, a sign of his servant hood. Sadly I have met some ministers who wouldn't do the washing up, that was a woman's work. I am sure that in cathedrals up and down the country, people will wash other people's feet, including bishops and arch bishops; I can remember doing it myself in St Mark's church, Waterloo, Sierra Leone. It wasn't the washing of people feet that was important, it was the 'doing' for other people that was important. That was why at the beginning of Lent I said it wasn't about giving up chocolate or alcohol that was important, it was more about giving up some of your time that was important, giving more of your time to other people. To put it into context, God gave up his one and only son for us, for you, and for me, so in the light of that, we should be prepared to give up some of our time, something that we can give to others.

**Read Matthew 26:26** and eat your piece of bread, then read verses 27-28 and drink your drink, as we share together in the Lord's supper, giving thanks for Christ's sacrifice.

Verse 30 tells us; *'When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.'* And so the next part of the story begins. Jesus knew the end of his life on earth was near. He took his disciples to a place called Gethesmane, and asked them to keep watch with him and for him, while he went a little further on and prayed to his father; *'My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.'* Jesus knew he had to suffer and die, that meant having separation from his Father. He knew that after a period of time he would be reunited with his father in heaven, but he had never known separation from his father. He had seen men and women suffer, but Jesus didn't know what it was to suffer the pain of being whipped, of having a crown of thorns placed on his head and then being struck on the head. These were unknowns to Jesus, which is why he prayed; *'if it is possible, may*

*this cup be taken from me.*' Three times he prayed that prayer, and between each time he went back to his disciples to find them sleeping. 'Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?' I guess that begs the question of each one of us, how long do you think prayer should go on for? I remember attending a night of prayer in Sierra Leone, where people prayed earnestly, all night. I wonder what response we give when the Lord says; 'stay here and watch with me.' When the soldiers came to arrest Jesus, John 18:10 tells us that 'Peter struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his ear.' The other gospel writers don't mention Peter by name, they just say 'one of Jesus' companions...' Jesus didn't need that sort of help then and I don't believe he needs that sort of help now. Jesus came and taught us to love one another. We are tasked with showing that love to everyone we come into contact with. Jesus taught us to turn the other cheek, and he showed it in what he did this night. Verse 30 says; 'when they had sung a hymn, they went out on to the Mount of Olives.' This would most probably have been a psalm, so a good way to close our time together is to do the same. Amen.

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.  
He makes me lie in pastures green.  
He leads me by the still, still waters,  
His goodness restores my soul.

*And I will trust in You alone.  
And I will trust in You alone,  
For Your endless mercy follows me,  
Your goodness will lead me home.*

He guides my ways in righteousness,  
And He anoints my head with oil,  
And my cup, it overflows with joy,

I feast on His pure delights.

*And I will trust in You alone...*

And though I walk the darkest path,  
I will not fear the evil one,  
For You are with me, and Your rod and staff  
Are the comfort I need to know.

*And I will trust in You alone...*

*Stuart Townend.  
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