

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Study Notes for the Christian Layperson

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Collect of the Day:

O Lord, in this wondrous Sacrament You have left us a remembrance of Your passion. Grant that we may so receive the sacred mystery of Your body and blood that the fruits of Your redemption may continually be manifest in us; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Introit:

Psalm 67:1-3, 6b-7 (antiphon: Galatians 6:14b; liturgical text) – *Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Psalm:

Psalm 116:12-19 (antiphon: v. 17) – *I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the Name of the Lord.*

Old Testament

Reading:

Exodus 12:1-14 – *The Passover*

Gradual:

Psalm 111:4-5 – *God has caused His wondrous works to be remembered.*

Epistle:

1 Corinthians 11:23-32 – *The Lord reveals to Paul the institution of His Supper.*

Tract:

Psalm 111:4-5; John 6:55-56 – *Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.*

John 13:1–15 ESV

Author and Date:

The Holy Spirit inspired the apostle and evangelist John to write his Gospel sometime around 90 A.D. This reading takes place on Maundy Thursday, following the institution of the Lord's Supper.

¹ Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father; having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

- “The Lord knew, by virtue of His divine omniscience, that His hour had come, the last great hour of His life, the consummation of His destiny on earth. He must leave this world, in the state of His human nature, in which He had given as a sacrifice. His way of glorification would be through death, but away from this world to the Father, by resurrection and ascension. Love of those that were His own according to the will of His Father, that had been given Him as His peculiar and particular friends, had been the keynote of His entire bearing toward them all His life. And so He wanted to give these men, who were attached to Him as His friends in a most particular sense, evidence of His love to the very end. His love remained steadfast through all His suffering and in spite of their lack of faith. Such is the Savior's love at all times toward His weak and erring children, a seeking, searching,

enduring love” (P.E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible*, New Testament Vol. 1, 483).

² During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,

- The Lord has just instituted His Supper, as noted in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Mark and Luke note that Jesus already knew He would be betrayed. In Matthew, Jesus says Judas will betray Him (26:20-25). “The point that John is making is that Jesus knew full well what Judas was going to do. Jesus was not caught unawares for He had known it long before He became incarnate. And yet, in all kindness, He warns Judas and immediately tells the others not to be offended” (Buls, *Notes on the Gospel of John*; 75).
- It is worth noting this Judas is surnamed Iscariot, meaning “man from Kerioth.” As such, he was the only disciple from Judea, the rest from Galilee. His identification as Simon's son serves to differentiate him from other Judases, including another of Jesus' disciples better known as Thaddaeus or Lebbaeus.

³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God,

- Augustine: “Since [John] was about to relate such a magnificent instance of

our Lord's humility, he first wanted to remind us of His majesty. This is why he says, 'Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands' ...including His betrayer.' Origen: "For Jesus' enemies were also a part of the 'all things'.... The Father has given all things into His hands, that is, into His power. For His hands hold all things" (*Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, NT Vol. IVb, 85).

⁴ rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist.

- Jesus interrupted this Passover meal to serve His disciples. He removed His outer garments, for slaves did not wear them while working. He "emptied Himself [of His glory], made Himself a slave..." (Philippians 2:7a AAT).

⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

- "Even if a guest had bathed just before attending a banquet, his feet would be dirty from dusty roads. The lowest of the slaves—in Jewish households, a Gentile slave—was made to do the menial work of bathing guests' feet. Disciples might do many chores for their rabbi, but foot washing was not one of them" (*The Lutheran Study Bible*, 1808).

⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?"

- "Simon Peter, as might be expected, could not sit still and let his Lord abase Himself so. Incredulous, Peter asked, "Lord, do You wash my feet? (*People's Bible Commentary: John*, 187).

⁷ Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand."

- "Jesus understood Peter's misgivings. How could Peter realize that Jesus' act of humiliation was preparatory to His abject humiliation on the cross? He told Peter that everything would become clear in time—after the events about to pass. Peter should simply trust Jesus" (*People's Bible Commentary: John*, 187).

⁸ Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."

- "Still Peter was not satisfied. He asserts: To all eternity nevermore [shall You] wash my feet! His love for his Master was apt to show itself in peculiar ways. But Jesus sternly rejoins: If I do not wash [you], [you have] no part with Me. ... The act of Jesus was symbolical Only he whom Christ washes and cleanses from sins can have part with Christ" (Kretzmann, 484). Jesus says, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16a).

⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"

- "Peter went to the opposite extreme from v. 8: if foot washing is good, further washing must be better" (*The Lutheran Study Bible*, 1808). "His eagerness for any washing that joins him to Jesus prompts his offer of all the bodily members easily reached..." (Lenski, *The Interpretation of John*, 920).

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you."

- See notes on verse 5 regarding the need to be washed physically. Eleven of the disciples were spiritually clean, for in faith they received Christ's forgiveness.

¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

- Judas was spiritually unclean, for Satan entered him to betray Jesus.

¹² When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you?"

- Jesus taught by example humility and self-sacrifice, shown on a grander scale on the cross the next day.

¹³ "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am."

- As a rabbi, Jesus would often be addressed with these titles.

¹⁴ "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."

- "If He, therefore, did not consider Himself too good or too dignified to perform this humble service for them, they, in turn, should not hesitate about following His example. They are to apply His example to the acts of love and service which they owe to their neighbor. The reference is to all acts of kindness and charity..." (Kretzmann).

¹⁵ "For I have given you an example, that you should do just as I have done to you."

- "Jesus did not institute a new sacrament of foot washing, but rather established a pattern of humility for Christians to follow" (*The Lutheran Study Bible*).

