

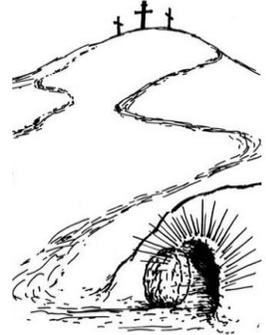


Daily notes for reflections and prayer
Maundy Thursday to Easter Day
Prepared by Heather Adams and David Brewster



Maundy Thursday

Jesus said, *'I give you 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.'* **John 13**:³⁴⁻³⁵



Read **John 13, verses 1-17 and 31-35**

David writes:

'How loving are you?' I'm not asking how many warm fuzzy feelings you have towards others. That is often just a matter of temperament and compatibility. The actual question I'm asking is, *'how willing are you to give of yourself to and in the service of others?'* When Jesus wanted to teach his friends about love he took the place of the lowest servant in the household. Without any self-consciousness, he took off his outer robes, placed a towel around his waist, and washed his disciples' feet (v4,5).

In our culture, we recoil at the idea - it all seems far too intimate. In Jesus day, if there were servants in the house, it was just part of normal life. The way to clean the dirt and grime of the road from the feet. The servant undertaking his role wouldn't even warrant a second glance – they would go almost unseen and probably unacknowledged. This lowest servant is the one whom Jesus is calling us to imitate (v14).

People have sometimes mistakenly believed that Jesus is calling us to be doormats. That without opening our mouths in protest we should do whatever others demand of us. But love is always in

the gift of the lover, it can't be demanded.

In a world where being an individual (finding myself) is the ultimate goal in life - *'because I'm worth it'*, this is a challenge for us Christians who live by kingdom rules, to think about what love looks like in practice.

In what ways have I shown love in the last 24 hours? With God's help do I need to act differently from now on?



Good Friday

Now Judas, who betrayed Jesus... 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. John 18:^{2,3}

Read John 18 and 19

David writes: When reflecting on bible stories, it is often a useful technique to ask *'who am I in the story?'* If we asked that question about our reading today, I suspect not many of us would say Judas. We can imagine ourselves as one of the other characters (Peter or one of the other disciples) but not Judas... *surely not I.*

I often ask myself what motivated Judas to act as he did. We get possible hints in the gospels – he was greedy for money, he was a sneak and deceiver. But I wonder if high up there in the list of his motivations would be that he was disappointed with Jesus.

Their relationship at the start had promised so much. He thought he would be a key figure at the heart of a freedom movement. As with others of the twelve he imagined power, position, prestige with all the accompanying accoutrements. But now the whole enterprise seemed to be crashing down in ignominious failure. If it was all going bad, then maybe at least he could salvage some financial gain from the debacle.

Do you ever find yourself disappointed with Jesus? Can you remember some of the enthusiasm with which you started out upon this journey of faith? Has it turned out how you expected? Disappointment is often a step on the journey. It can lead us to discard what has gone before, regarding it as rubbish. Or it can lead us from the youthful enthusiasm of whatever age we started the journey, into a mature faith where we accept that although we don't always understand why things go wrong, our Father can be trusted to walk with us through all that life throws at us. **Have things turned out how I'd hoped or expected? Let's spend a little while bringing those musings into prayer.**

Holy Saturday

*Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD. Lord, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!*

*If you, O LORD should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.*

*I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;
my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for
the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.*

*O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the LORD there is
steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem.*

It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities. **Psalm 130**

Heather A. writes

I have chosen this psalm as one appropriate for this waiting time between Good Friday and Easter Sunday, when we reflect on Jesus lying in the tomb, and the disciples with their hope taken away. I have also chosen it for one appropriate for this terrible time of suffering and grief for our country and our world. It was my school psalm so I know it inside out - in Latin it is called *De Profundis*.

It has been translated in many ways, drawing out different shades of meaning “Out of deep darkness I cry to you Lord, Lord can you hear me?” - is perhaps the one that speaks to me most. We are like children, frightened in the dark, with only enough faith to cry out, wondering if anyone can hear.

The Psalm however has a tone of hope, of waiting with hope. It is an intense waiting- more than those who watch for the morning. Are those who wait watchmen on the city walls? Are they people who can't sleep? Are they the night shift on a hospital ward? We wait for the Lord, more than those who watch for the morning.

The Psalm ends in faith. With the Lord there is steadfast love and great power to redeem. God, we wait for you.



Easter Day

When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: “Death has been swallowed up in victory?

*Where, O death is your sting?” **1 Corinthians 15: 54-55***

Read **1 Corinthians 15: 50- 58** (or maybe even whole chapter)

Heather A. writes: I don't know what to do about Easter this year. It seems wrong to celebrate amidst so much suffering and death, it seems wrong not to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul says our faith is meaningless without the resurrection. First and foremost is the resurrection of Jesus. Also central to our faith also is our hope of resurrection to eternal life with Jesus. Death and grief are real and painful, our faith recognizes this. But Paul says something else, he says that death does not win. Jesus has overcome, and He, not death, has the last word.

Praise God that Jesus, not death, has the last word.