

Maundy Thursday

Text: John 13:1-17, 31b-35

When Love is Messy

Maundy Thursday is messy. There is a lot of drama. Jesus lovingly invites his closest friends and disciples to an intimate dinner where he might share the fact that he will soon be leaving them. It's an interesting gathering that reveals a lot of unknown things about their relationship and exposes the fact that although we would like it to be otherwise, often love can be messy.

At this hastily called dinner, the disciples arrive with smelly, dirty feet, deceitful hearts, raging anxiety, and their personal frustrations with unfulfilled aspirations and plans. But Jesus meets them with a love that leads him to take the initiative, humble himself, and do the servant's job of washing their feet. The story is made even more complex by the presence of a friend who will betray, the missed opportunity of the group to love those with whom they have been the closest, and the fact that none of the disciples are willing to offer one another the love that they themselves need. Love is messy.

In many churches it has become customary to reproduce this foot washing scene. But all too often, in our greatest and most intentional efforts to show love – we forget to love those closest us, those who do not always love us the way we deserve to be loved, those who betray us, and those, who in our opinion, may not even deserve a place at the table.

Maundy Thursday reminds us that love is messy. But Jesus teaches us that love is the order of the day- a love that allows us to humble ourselves; take the initiative; and love even when it's messy. The question for all of us on this Maundy Thursday is: *where are the messy places in our lives where love is most needed?*

Prayer: Loving God, may your redeeming love that meets us in the messiness of this life, overflow in our hearts and lead us to love others with the same grace by the power of your Holy Spirit working in us. Amen.

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