

March 28, 2024

Maundy Thursday

John 13-1:7, 31-35

There are powerful things taking place this evening. Jesus gives His disciples an amazing example of service to others. All by simply washing another's feet. Then we are given the example of how this new community that is gathered around Jesus should look and function.

As Christians, we gather around the Lord's table to remember Him and His ministry amongst us. The Eucharist is that most important element that holds the Christian community together. The simple act of sharing bread and wine defines who we are. Jesus instructed us that when we gather and remember Him we should break bread and share wine.

That where two or more gather there He will be. It is not very complicated.

The words of institution take on a whole new meaning and understanding. This now becomes an invitation to all who believe that Jesus is the Messiah of God, to participate in the meal. It is open and welcoming to all who believe. Our words of institution cut across time to the very first Maundy Thursday in Jerusalem. We remember that Upper room and the things that took place there and how they influenced our expression of Christianity.

The words of institution have a power that we do not fully understand.

The words have a deep spiritual reality to them. A reality and power that can change bread and wine into the very body and blood of Jesus.

The entire words of institution are an Epikleses that calls upon the Holy Spirit to change the bread and wine into His body and blood. As you can imagine, we take this strictly on faith. There is no human way to possibly understand this. Just that we believe it happens at each

Eucharist. Luther instructed and encouraged his communities to practice Eucharist as often as they as can whenever they gather. This is part of the reason why we celebrate Eucharist every Sunday from Easter to Pentecost. It is also a reminder that these were the days that the Risen Lord walk upon the earth with us. It is a way to remember and celebrate that time. So if you were wondering why do we have Eucharist for seven Sundays after Easter, there is part of the answer.

At the Eucharistic celebration we welcome Jesus into our bodies. We become united with Him in a very personal and intimate way. We do not need to be perfect to welcome Him into the temple that is our bodies. Yet when we take the Eucharist we become perfect. The Holy Spirit is certainly at work here. Even when we are imperfect, the Holy Spirit encourages and guides us to become perfect. God does not call the perfect but He perfects those He calls.

This evening and the following Sundays, please reflect upon Who you are taking into your temple that is your body. The bread and wine is

the Son of God and Our Savior. He is the Pre Eternal Son of Man who has existed for all Eternity. He is the One who washes us clean from our sins and makes us perfect. This is all inspired, guided and encouraged by the Holy Spirit. No human being has the power to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus. Only the Holy Spirit can do that as It works and uses the pastor presiding at the Table of the Lord.

The Good Friday sermon is only a commentary on Psalm 22. Short and sweet but powerful. Less is more this day as we reflect upon the events of the day. Pastor D