

JESUS IS A SERVING FRIEND
MAUNDY THURSDAY

MATT 20:28
MAR 24, 2016

“the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

During midweek Lent worship we have been noticing
sets of friends in the passion story
and comparing them to our truest friend, Jesus.
Last week we thought about compassionate friends
because sometimes there is not much you can do
beside just being there with a friend who is suffering.
But sometimes there is much you can do
and it is good to have a friend who not only
talks and listens but who knows how to serve.
For example, when friends bring food to a friend
who has had a death in the family
or a family member in the hospital.
Sometimes the best serving, like the best comfort,
comes from those who have experienced
the same kind of need themselves.
Those are the kind who bring paper products.
Who else knows that in family emergencies
you go through so many tissues, paper towels,
toilet paper, cups and plates!
Jesus is a friend who is ready and able to serve
and he knows what we need most
is not just hot dish and handy wipes.
it is the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation
that come only from his body & blood given for us.

A FRIEND IS READY TO SERVE
WE NEED A FRIEND'S SERVICE
JESUS SERVES THE BANQUET OF SALVATION

A FRIEND IS READY TO SERVE

The friend I am thinking of in story of the Last Supper
may not have been in the room at the time
but is the one who provided the room.
Gospel of Mark tells us when it was time for Passover meal,
Jesus told disciples when they entered Jerusalem
they would meet a man carrying a jar of water.

and they were to follow him to a house
where they would eat the Passover.
How did Jesus know this would happen this way?
It was rare for a man to carry a water jar.
Usually it was women who did this.
This was a man who was ready to serve.
He did not say carrying water is not my job.
It needed to be done and so he did it.
He was not like disciples at the supper that evening
who all knew they had dirty feet but also knew
it was job of lowest servant to wash feet
so all of them sat on their hands and did nothing.
I think Jesus knew this particular man.
because he was a friend of his, and Jesus knew
he not only carried his own water but had offered
the use of his own house to Jesus when in town.
Not only that, but when disciples got there,
his upper room was already furnished and ready.
Now that is service.
Jesus also was ready to serve when the time came.
He knew why he had come into the world
and he knew that now his hour had come
for him to carry water for us, so to speak,
to obey & suffer in way that is rightfully our job, not his,
so that when the time comes for us
there is a friend who has a room all ready for us
in the mansions of heaven.
This is good because...

WE NEED A FRIEND'S SERVICE

I remember when my family first moved to Mankato
and had only a few hours between when
those we bought our house from moved out
and the truck arrived with our things to move in.
I remember the new friends from Good Shepherd
who came and pitched in to help us clean.
We needed that help of cleaning.
Jesus saw that his friends needed his help in cleaning.
They were about to eat a banquet at which
they reclined with their feet up,
but they weren't ready. They were too dirty.

Jesus points out to disciples that they were to do
what he had done for them.

Some still today respond to this by an annual
foot washing ceremony on Maundy Thursday.

This is an impressively humble thing to do
but I think it misses the whole point.

Why did Jesus wash feet? Because that is what they needed.

Having feet washed is not what most need today
but maybe having toenails trimmed is,
or having diapers changed
or cleaning up a mess after an accident.

A good way for us to respond to this instruction
may be to think about what needs to be done
that friend might not be able to do for self or even ask for
because it may seem lowly or unpleasant to do.

That is the kind of friend people need.

This is kind of friend Jesus is for us.

We are not ready for the great banquet of heaven
because we are still dirty.

And cleaning ourselves up is not something we can do.

It is less like washing our feet than middle of back.

First it is hard for us to see our own sins
even when God's word is pointing them out to us
but the problem is the filth of sin in our hearts
and cleaning our own hearts is as impossible
as doing our own heart surgery.

We need a friend who can do it for us.

JESUS SERVES THE BANQUET OF SALVATION

“the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life
as a ransom for many.”

In this verse, Jesus points to the ultimate way he will serve us,
by dying to pay for our sins.

Jesus greatest service in the upper room
was not washing feet before the meal
but the meal itself in which he serves them himself.

When Jesus washes the disciples' feet he comments
that they may not understand now what he is doing.

What he goes on to feed them is even harder to understand.

First they did not yet understand that he was actually
going to suffer and die on the cross.

Even after he died, they did not yet understand
that he had to do this in our place
to pay for all our sins and give us forgiveness.
It wasn't until after he explained it again
after his resurrection.

Another thing hard to understand would have been
how, even before his death, he could give them already
his body and the blood he was to shed for them.

But because he is true God as well as true man,
he is not limited by time so that he can give them
the results of his death beforehand
just as he gives us the same body and blood
now long afterward

and just as the forgiveness and freedom from sin
that comes from one death on the cross
apply to all who sin from Adam to the last day

It is also hard to understand how his body and blood
could be joined with bread & wine in such a way
that all who eat & drink are also eating & drinking
his body & blood and receiving them by mouth also.

But it is true because it is Jesus himself who serves this food
and causes it to be true by his own words
which are just as true today as when he first spoke them.

When he says, "keep doing this,"
that is, eating his body and drinking his blood
this is far more important instruction than keep washing feet
because this command is connected with the promise
that it is for the forgiveness of sins,
which is also true because his word says it.

Jesus is the only friend who can serve us in this way,
preparing and feeding us the banquet of salvation
which cleanses us on the inside for sin and shame
as he continues to do here and forever in heaven.

In Jesus we have...

A FRIEND IS READY TO SERVE

to do a lowly job that needs to be done

WE NEED A FRIEND'S SERVICE

because we need a washing we cannot do for ourselves.

JESUS SERVES THE BANQUET OF SALVATION

by giving himself as a ransom for sin

and as the meal which sustains our life forever.