

## E-Series

### Thursday



**12** When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. **13** "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. **14** Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. **15** I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. **16** I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. **17** Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. **18** "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the scripture: 'He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me.' **19** "I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am He. **20** I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me." **21** After he

had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me." **22** His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. **23** One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. **24** Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means." **25** Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" **26** Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. **27** As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. "What you are about to do, do quickly," Jesus told him, **28** but no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. **29** Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something to the poor. **30** As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night. **—John 13:12-30**

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Once again, I will turn my keyboard over to my friend, The Reverend Dr. James Howell, pastor of Myers Park UMC for his reflections on each day of this holiest of weeks.

*Thursday at sundown was the beginning of [Passover](#), when Jews like Jesus and his disciples commemorated God's salvation of Israel from Egypt. To celebrate their God-given freedom, and to yearn for a future restoration of freedom, they ate lamb, unleavened bread, and drank wine.*

*Jesus set a somber tone, first by [washing his disciples' feet](#), and then by talking gloomily about his own suffering. As he broke a piece of bread, he saw in it a palpable symbol of what would happen to his own body soon; staring into the cup of red wine, he caught a glimpse of his own blood being shed. We still use the words Jesus spoke on that Thursday when we celebrate the [Lord's Supper](#) now.*

*At that meal, Jesus said "Do this in remembrance of me." The word "Maundy" derives from the same ancient root as the word "mandate." Jesus gave us a mandate: "Do this," and today we do. Of all our celebrations of the Lord's Supper, none is more poignant than on this evening. Like the disciples, we come to the Lord's table, offering up our fears and griefs, hoping for redemption and ultimate freedom.*

*After an admittedly awkward conversation with his closest friends over the supper, Jesus walked out of the walled city to the [Mount of Olives](#) to pray in the garden called [Gethsemane](#). Kneeling in anguish, Jesus prayed "Not my will, but Your will be done." Was he being fatalistic? Don't we in resignation believe our fate is something we must just bear? But Jesus' mood was*

not resignation. He actively sought and embraced [God's will](#), which isn't some dark luck, but is when we with trusting faith go where God leads us, no matter the cost.

Jesus was arrested, the charges were trumped up, witnesses were compelled to lie, the proceedings were highly irregular... Who was responsible for Jesus' death? The Jews? The Romans? You and me? The Jews handed him over to the Romans, the Romans handed him back to the Jews, the disciples handed him over. No one wanted to be responsible, and so they (and we!) are all guilty.

Through that dark Thursday night in detention, Jesus was abused, mistreated, his fate sealed; think of this when you climb into bed tonight. Holy Thursday waited all night for the dawn of the day with the paradoxical name: Good Friday.

James

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Check out this fascinating [bird's eye view of the area around Jerusalem](#) and where Jesus was each day (take from the New International Version Study Bible).

Trying to Walk with Jesus this Holy Week,

*Pastor Michael*