**SERMON – MAUNDY THURSDAY**

FIRST, IT IS GOOD TO BE HERE WITH YOU THIS EVENING. BACK IN MY YOUTH, WHEN I WAS RAISED IN THE AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, FOLKS WOULD SAY, “IT’S GOOD TO BE HERE AGAIN IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.” AND THAT IS PART OF MY SENTIMENT, YES INDEED. BUT, I AM SOOO GRATEFUL TO BE WITH ALL OF YOU IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD. I AM GRATEFUL FOR ALL YOUR PRAYERS AND EMAILS AND HEART-FELT CONCERN. IT IS A GREAT EASTER GIFT TO BE HERE WITH YOU IN ST. DAVID’S. AND, IT IS A MIGHTY BLESSING TO BE A PART OF THIS FAMILY. THANK YOU.

OF COURSE, TODAY IS MAUNDY THURSDAY, THE DAY WE COMMEMORATE, AS A UNIVERSAL CHRISTIAN BODY, THE TIME WHEN JESUS WRAPPED HIMSELF IN A CLOTHE, GOT DOWN ON THE FLOOR, AND WASHED THE FEET OF EACH OF HIS DISCIPLES. EVEN JUDAS, HIS BETRAYER.

THE TIMING OF THIS ACT, RIGHT BEFORE JESUS GOES TO THE CROSS, IS EPIC. NOW, OVER THE COURSE OF OUR CHRISTIAN WALK, WE HAVE SEEN JESUS DO AMAZING THINGS. TURN WATER INTO WINE, STILL THE GREAT STORM, FEED THE FIVE THOUSAND WITH MERE LOAFS OF BREAD AND A FEW FISH, AND EVEN RAISE THE DEAD. AND, OVER THE COURSE OF THEIR TIME TOGETHER, THE APOSTLES SHOWED A CONTINUOUS INABILITY TO GRASP THE COSMIC LESSONS OF LOVE THAT JESUS WAS SHARING WITH THEM. JESUS HIMSELF EXPRESSES HIS OWN HUMAN FRUSTRATIONS. “OH, MY CHILDREN, WHEN WILL YOU BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND? DO YOU NOT YET KNOW WHO I AM?”

AND, NOW, RIGHT BEFORE HE GOES TO GOLGATHA, JESUS SEEMS TO MAKE A DECISION THAT HE’S GOING TO REDUCE HIS GREAT LESSONS TO JUST A FEW SIMPLE ACTS. IN MY MIND, IT’S AS IF JESUS SAYS, “MIRACLES ARE IN YOUR FUTURE. **IF** YOU ARE TO BE ONE OF MY APOSTLES, MIRACLES WILL NEED TO BE PART OF WHO YOU ARE.” BUT LET’S GO BACK TO BASICS. TO KINGDOM KINDERGARTEN, IF YOU WILL. LET’S START WITH SIMPLE WAYS TO REMEMBER ME AND OUR TIME TOGETHER. THESE ACTS WILL HELP YOU TO REMEMBER HOW YOU AND I ARE CONNECTED.

YOU DON’T HAVE TO STILL STORMS OR HEAL THE SICK OR RAISE THE DEAD. BUT, YOU DO HAVE TO WASH THE FEET OF ALL WHO COME BEFORE YOU. YOUR FRIENDS, YOUR BROTHERS, YOUR SISTERS, **AND** YOUR BETRAYERS. THIS IS WHO WE ARE AND THIS IS WHO I AM. NEVER FORGET. THIS IS WHO I AM.

AND, I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER ME IN THE BREAD AND THE WINE. EACH TIME YOU TAKE THIS BREAD AND DRINK THIS WINE, DO IT IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME. FOR WAS OFTEN AS WE EAT THIS BREAD AND WE DRINK THIS CUP WE PROCLAIM THE LORD’S DEATH UNTIL HE COMES BACK FOR US….AND NOT JUST FOR **US**, BUT FOR OUR FAMILIES, OUR FRIENDS, OUR NEIGHBORS ….AND…. OUR ENEMIES. LET US NEVER FORGET THAT JESUS HAS A PLAN FOR REDEMPTION FOR ALL THOSE WHO MAY RAISE OUR IRE OR EARN OUR WRATH. ALL OF US ARE LOVED BY GOD. ALL OF US.

SO, I WILL KEEP THIS SHORT. I AM FULL OF THANKS TO JESUS FOR WASHING MY FEET AND SHOWING ME THAT I AM LOVED. AND THANKFUL THAT JESUS HAS WASHED YOUR FEET TOO. THE PSALMIST GIVES US A SENTIMENT THAT I ASK EACH OF US TO PLACE ON OUR HEARTS

“O LORD, I AM YOUR SERVANT AND THE CHILD OF YOUR HANDMAID, YOU HAVE FREED ME FROM MY BOND. HOW CAN I REPAY YOU FOR ALL THE GOOD THINGS YOU HAVE DONE FOE ME? LORD, I LIFT UP THE CUP OF SALVATION AND OFFER YOU THE SACRIFICE OF THANKSSIVING, FOREVER THANKING YOU, UPON THE NAME OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR. JESUS CHRIST. AMEN.