

Scripture:

Exodus 12:1-4

Isaiah 5:4-12

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

“Do as I have done.”

In John chapter 13 verse 15 --- after having bent down and served His disciples by washing their feet ----- Jesus says --- “I have set you an example ---- that you should do as I have done for you.”

And then shortly afterwards in John 13 verses 34 and 35 He says --- “As I have loved you ----- so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another.”

A few moments ago we heard from a number of Jesus followers --- 8 to be precise ---- in our Last Supper reading.

And the truth is we all have aspects of each of these disciples in us.

We all have a bit of James --- and Andrew ---- Thomas ---- Judas --- Matthew --- Peter --- and Mary --- and of course numerous others attributes as well.

And before someone gets all confused by Mary having been included in the reading --- when we say disciple --- we mean follower ---- or small “D” --- disciple.

So we all have a bit of each of the characteristics that define these 8 followers of Christ --- and of course certain characteristics are stronger in some of us and less prominent in others.

Some of us are quick tempered like James and John.

Others of us are more calm and collected like Andrew.

At times some of us are most clearly defined by our doubt ---- our wavering faith ----- wanting more proof ---- like Thomas.

And also like Thomas --- many of us strive for a sincere devotion --- seeking a deep and profound conviction in Christ.

For some of us concerns of this world --- like money --- sometimes lures us into certain choices --- as it did for Judas --- betraying Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

Perhaps like Matthew we do something for a living that people look down upon and frown at ----- he was a tax collector and despised by many.

Maybe we have a little Peter in us --- and we turn away when the going gets tough and we find ourselves in difficult situations.

Perhaps we are most like Mary and are tormented by family --- friends and demons ---- for our faith.

And the possibilities are endless.

Whatever the case ---- whatever characteristics and traits most clearly define us --- they are always secondary because of Christ.

Because of Christ ----- Christ crucified ----- we are defined far less by what we do and who we are ---- and instead are most clearly defined by who He is and what He has done for us.

Jesus has accomplished for us things all the things that truly matter in life --- atonement --- redemption --- reconciliation --- salvation.

He has saved us from our shortcomings ----- and enslavement to sin --- and this is what matters most in life ---- and what most clearly defines who we are.

Tonight Maundy Thursday --- Holy Thursday ---- Jesus' last night with His disciples ----- the night where He is betrayed.

Is a night all about Jesus feeding and serving His disciples.

It's not about what they have done --- or what they haven't done --- what they will do --- or what they won't do.

Instead ----- it's all about what He has done.

“I have set and example” ----- Jesus says to them in John’s gospel this evening.

“I have set and example --- and you should do as I have done.” --- He says.

And the example He set was feeding and serving.

“As I have loved you --- so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples --- if you love one another.” --- Jesus also said on His last night with His disciples.

Flawed as we are.

Sin riddled --- misguided ---- and selfish as we can be ----- Jesus embraces us ---- and serves us ---- and feeds us ----- and cleanses us ---- and saves us.

And he does this precisely because He is the loving --- compassionate --- suffering ----- and saving one.

Jesus’ saving sacrificial actions define who we are and what we are about as followers of Him.

What most clearly defines who we are is **WHOSE** we are

What defines us is that we are His.

And He has plans for us.

In His very last night before crucifixion ----- Jesus leaves His disciples by feeding and serving them.

And then He leaves them with words --- actions first --- feed and serve --- and then ---- and only then words.

These words ---- “I have set and example --- you should do as I have done.” ----- and ----- “As I have loved you --- so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples --- if you love one another.”

Clearly ----- we are to do as He has done ----- feed --- serve --- and love others --- faults --- shortcomings --- warts and all.

We know that His disciples had faults – doubts – shortcomings – and were deeply flawed ----- and yet He serves them and He loves them.

Tomorrow ---- Good Friday ---- the focus in on sacrifice and saving.

On Easter Day the focus is on conquering --- freeing --- atoning ----- reconciling ----- redefining ---- and saving.

And tonight the focus is on feeding --- serving --- loving --- and commissioning.

After having first acted out servanthood and love ---- then and only then does Jesus speak ---- saying -----

“I have set an example --- you should do as I have done.”

---- and -----

“As I have loved you --- so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples --- if you love one another.”

Tonight the focus is on feeding --- serving --- loving --- and commissioning.

As the darkness sets in ---- remember there is a redeemer ---- God’s own son.

As the darkness sets in ---- remember ---- the light shines in the darkness --- Jesus Christ ----- and the darkness does not overcome it.

Amen.