

## MAUNDY THURSDAY: HE WAS . . . A SLAVE (John 13:3-5, 12-15; Luke 22:42; John 18:3, 12)

4.18.19

### INTRODUCTION

We often think of Jesus in terms of some of the big, amazing moments in His earthly ministry: the feeding of the 5,000 (plus women and children), making the winds and the waves obey Him — things like that. And those things are amazing — can you imagine how much fun it could be to go back in history and see all those things actually happen in real time. Wow!

Or, especially at this time of year, we may think about Easter and all this season means, and some pretty big, incredible moments are there too: the triumphal entry, the cleansing of the temple, or the biggest deal of them all — Christ being raised from the dead and shredding the governor's seal designed to keep Him in as He walked triumphantly out of the tomb. What an unbelievable sight to see!

But there are some quiet things, some very small things, that show the incredible depth of that plan of God's we call "salvation" and the indescribable, infinite love that went behind it. We're going to talk about three of them now.

### TEXTS: QUIET THING #1: SERVICE

*Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power, and that He had come from God and was returning to God; so He got up from the meal, took off His outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around His waist. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around Him. . . . 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. "You call Me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" — John 13:3-5, 13-15.*

After all the power of His miracles and the power of His words that His disciples had seen over the three-plus years which they had spent at His side, what most lasting impression did He want to leave with them? A rousing speech of victory over an enemy? The fierce some self-proclaiming of the greatness of His leadership to inspire undying allegiance? No. Instead, a final word that neatly summed up all He had tried to show them and the world during His time on earth: *"A new command I give you: Love one another. 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 Christ, John 13:34-35.* That is thought to be the actual genesis of the phrase, "Maundy Thursday." While this day commemorates the Last Supper, the institution of the ordinance of communion, and the foot-washing, the word "maundy" is thought to have come from an Anglo-French word derived from the Latin word "man datum," which means "commandment," referring to the commandment that Jesus gave to love as He loved. And what does that love look like? The example Jesus gave them, with the purpose that the example He showed was one that they should be continually showing to one another. Why? Christ's words in Mark maybe say it best: *"[E]ven the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" — Jesus Christ, Mark 10:45.* Moments like this served to remind us all that Christ is not an earthly king of armies or political power, flexing His muscle and influence at every

possible opportunity. That was never His intention. He desires to be the king of our hearts. One sign that He rules: that we serve as He served, that we love as He loved.

### **QUIET THING #2: SUBMISSION**

In the Garden of Gethsemane, while His disciples fought a losing battle against sleep, Jesus wrestled with the torment of knowing what lay ahead for Him in the coming hours. And it was at that moment that Jesus prayed to His Father, both as a son, and as a slave committed to His Master's will: ***“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done” — Jesus Christ, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Luke 22:42.*** Christ's whole earthly ministry had been expressed in that way; in fact, as He had once said: ***“I have come down from heaven not to do My will but to do the will of Him who sent Me” — Jesus Christ, John 6:38.***

### **QUIET THING #3: SURRENDER**

After Jesus had showed service to His disciples, after He showed submission to His Father's will, Jesus quietly showed the final quietly astounding piece of love and grace that would carry Him through accomplishing His Father's plan of salvation for mankind: surrender. This is what Jesus' surrender looked like: ***Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. . . . Then the detachment of soldiers with its command and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound Him — John 18:3, 12.***

Think about this: Jesus was not only fully man but fully God. These statements from the Bible affirm that reality:

***In the beginning was the Word (God's full disclosure of Himself: in the OT, God revealing Himself through creation, through His Scriptures, and through His plan of salvation; in the NT, God revealing Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made — John 1:1-3.***

***The Son is the image of the invisible God . . . For God was pleased to have all His (God's) fullness dwell in Him (Jesus) — Paul, Colossians 1:15a, 19.*** In other words, Jesus was a perfect display of all of God's Spirit, word, wisdom, power, glory, and love. That's how and why Jesus Himself could tell the disciples: ***“Anyone who had seen Me has seen the Father” — John 14:9b.***

And yet it is this Jesus, according to Scripture creator of heaven and earth, according to Scripture the one who ***in Him all things hold together — Paul, Colossians 1:17b,*** submitted Himself to the momentary power of finite human beings. He allowed Himself to be arrested; He allowed Himself to be bound. What an amazing miracle of love and grace, that the literal power of the entire universe submitted Himself to that extent. Why? His Father's will, His Father's plan. And us. He did it for us.

No one could have arrested Him without His submission. No one could have bound Him without His submission. No one could have touched Him without His express submission. As He had reminded His disciples literally moments before: ***“Do you think I cannot call on My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions (72,000) of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?” — Jesus Christ, Matthew 26:53-54.*** That was all that mattered to Him, even beyond His own life, that the Scriptures be fulfilled, that His Father's plan of salvation be accomplished, and that we would

have the opportunity, through His blood, to be washed of all our sins. That's how He could say: ***“No one takes [My life] from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord” — Jesus Christ, John 10:18a.*** In fact, later on, when Jesus was being interrogated by the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, we would have this exchange: ***“Do You refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?” Jesus answered, “You would have no power over Me if it were not given to you from above” — John 19:10-11a.***

“Given to you from above. My Father's allowance to you. From Him. All about Him. You hold nothing over Me — no power, no ability, no influence, nothing — unless I have surrendered to My Father's will for Me. Whether I am freed or crucified has absolutely nothing to do with you.”

Jesus Christ surrendered all He had to provide all we needed. That was His Father's will, and He was committed to serve that will, submit to that will, and to surrender to that will — regardless of what that would mean for Him personally. Praise God for Jesus Christ! Praise God for His Son's love for us! Praise God for His love for us! We have access to salvation because Jesus was a slave to His Father's will!