

The Thursday of JESUS' PASSION WEEK, April 9, 2020

Turn off the outside "noise" for a couple of minutes and consider this message from God's Word.
I am praying that it calms your spirit and encourages your heart.



On the Thursday before Easter, Christians observe MAUNDY THURSDAY, which commemorates the Last Supper, Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, his praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, and his betrayal by Judas and subsequent arrest. Maundy is derived from the Latin word for "command," and refers to Jesus' commandment to the disciples to "Love one another as I have loved you." *So you and I today might call it "NEW COMMANDMENT THURSDAY"!*

ADAPTED FROM GREG GARRISON, "Five things to know about Maundy Thursday: What does 'Maundy' mean?"
www.al.com/living/2015/04/five_things_to_know_about_maun.html

JOHN 13:34-35 (NIV)

- ³⁴ "A new command I give you: **LOVE ONE ANOTHER.**
As I have loved you, so you must love one another.
- ³⁵ **By this everyone will know that you are my disciples,**
if you love one another."

NEW COMMANDMENT THURSDAY doesn't end on NEW COMMANDMENT THURSDAY. This New Commandment and the Lord's Supper are instituted this night...but not completed. **Jesus was shaping his disciples (his family, his body, "the Beloved Community") around SERVANTHOOD and COMMUNITY** (the Greek word *koinonia* means *fellowship, partnership, participation together, interdependent and inextricably connected*). **SERVING** one another, serving the least and the lowly, the outsider and the marginalized, and seeing ourselves not as masters, but as those who serve. And this servanthood is grounded on **SHARING**, on holy fellowship — fellowship with God and with our brothers and sisters at the table.

So NEW COMMANDMENT THURSDAY was only the beginning! **We are called to be NEW COMMANDMENT CHRISTIANS every day.** SERVANTS and SHARERS who follow Jesus' example and mandate to "love one another."

ADAPTED FROM <https://www.winchester.anglican.org/maundy-thursday/>

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So let's *all* give praise and thanks to God for NEW COMMANDMENT THURSDAY:

Thank you, FATHER, for the MEAL that binds us together as a family. Thank you that "God places the lonely in families" (PSALM 68:6, NLT)! Thank you for the **Bethany** family...and for placing **me** here! **"COME, ABBA FATHER!"**

Thank you, JESUS, for the selfless love that you demonstrated for us at the meal ("My body, for you" ... "My blood, for you"). As we often sing at Christmas, "Truly He taught us to love one another, His law is love, & His gospel is peace." "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (MARK 10:45). **"COME, ANOINTED KING!"**

Thank you, HOLY SPIRIT — the LIFE AND BREATH OF GOD himself! — living in and working through every Christ-follower because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. "This is the NEW COVENANT in My blood!" *Fill us again with your Holy Spirit.* **"COME, HOLY SPIRIT!"**

GENESIS 2:7 (NIV)

Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground
and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,
and the man became a living being.

EZEKIEL 37:9-10 (NIV)

'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, BREATH, from the four winds
and breathe into these slain, that they may live.' "
...and BREATH entered them;
they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

Thank you, JESUS, for showing us the value of *community* in the Garden. "My soul is overwhelmed with grief, to the point of death. *Stay here and keep watch with Me*" (MATTHEW 26:38, THE VOICE). Help us all sustain our *spiritual connection* during this isolating season of "social distancing"!

Thank you, JESUS, for obeying the Father's will over your own. "Father, *this is the last thing I want. If there is any way, please take this bitter cup from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done*" (MATTHEW 26:39, THE VOICE). MSG: "Yet what I want is not important, for I only desire to fulfill your plan for me."

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May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the selfless love of God, and the beautiful companionship of the Holy Spirit bring peace and serenity to your heart today,

Pastor Doug

P.S. Please be praying for God to pour out His kindness and grace on our guests and visitors this Sunday — our first “distance learning” **EASTER CELEBRATION *online!***

We would love to hear from you! How are you doing right now? And we would love to pray for you! Email us at info@bethanyonline.net

P.P.S. Keep checking our “ENCOURAGEMENT FOR TODAY” at www.bethanyonline.net — we will try to post fresh encouragement **every day** during this crisis!

P.P.P.S. And watch our **LIVE-STREAM Worship Service** this coming Sunday at 10:30 A.M. for more encouragement.