

LENTEN STUDY 5

2021

WESTERN HEIGHTS UNITING CHURCH

THE LAST WEEK



I RECOMMEND THAT EACH STUDY IS COMMENCED WITH A TIME OF PRAYER, SPOKEN OR QUIET, ASKING FOR THE SPIRIT OF GOD TO HELP US UNDERSTAND THROUGH OUR DISCUSSION, THINKING, READING.

Read Mark 14:12-72 Study 5 Maundy Thursday

Maundy Thursday derives its name from the Latin word for Mandate, that is, Jesus words in John's Gospel, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, so you should love one another."

But nothing of that is in Mark's Gospel.

- While John tells of the story of the washing of the disciples' feet, Mark tells of the last supper.
- Mark devotes only a few verses to that last meal with his disciples. John devotes five chapters to it.
- In Mark's gospel, this is the Passover meal that Jesus shares with his disciples. In John's gospel, Jesus is crucified on the day of preparation for the Passover. (John 19:31&42)

THE LAST SUPPER: Vv17-25:

For Discussion: The Passover meal is particularly poignant.

- The Passover Lamb was slain on the night before the Exodus from Egypt, not as a payment for forgiveness, but as a means of nourishment for the journey that freedom required. It was the last meal eaten in slavery.
- The blood of the lamb was put on the doorway, signifying that these are the people of God, and the angel of death 'passed over' that house. So it's death was the means of life in two senses.
- The Passover is the beginning of the formation of the people of Israel.

In all three synoptic gospels, the order of how the supper happened, have variations, as do the words.

Matthew 26:26-30	Mark 14:22-26	Luke 22:14-23
Betrayer announced	Betrayer announced	The cup & thanksgiving
Loaf & blessing	Loaf and blessing	The loaf & thanksgiving
Cup & thanksgiving	Cup and thanksgiving	Cup poured out
		Betrayer announced.

John's gospel has no record of the cup and loaf, but instead the washing of feet.

Mark's gospel also has a 'Servant' theme, but in Mark, it comes in 10:45, and here, as in John's gospel, the idea of service is linked to a violent death.

In Jesus' day, if a person died a gentle death, it was common to speak of the separation of body and soul.

If a person died a violent death, it was common to speak of the separation of body and blood.

Jesus doesn't just say, this is my 'body and blood'. He separates the two.

For Discussion:

Remember Jesus challenge to his disciples in 8:34-35 and how The Twelve wanted no part of it. For Mark, it is participation *with* and *in* Jesus that is the means of passing from death to life. All the twelve (including Judas) are invited to participate in the bread-as-body and blood-as-wine. Jesus is bread for the world, the new Passover from bondage to liberation and participation in the path that leads from death to life.

GETHSEMANE 14:26-52

This is a terrible time for Jesus. Mark's description reeks of intimate memory. Jesus throws himself on the ground in anguish at what is coming.

Even though he is writing in Greek, Mark records Jesus' addressing God in the Aramaic: "Abba", the intimate address of a child to their father. It's the equivalent of our word "Dad". It speaks of Jesus' sense of intimacy with God.

FOR DISCUSSION: What does "Not my will but yours be done" mean? Borg and Crossan ("The Last Week"), suggest it is not a fatalistic resignation to doing what God wants, or that God wants Jesus to die in such a terrible way; rather it is about trusting in God even in the most dire circumstances, and a commitment to living God's way even if that way incurs those most dire circumstances.

14:47: One of those who stood near drew his sword and cut off the ear of one of the High Priest's servants. ***Still the disciples don't get it. One of them has come armed, still wanting to play by the values of empire. Matthew, Luke and John expand Mark's account. Look at: Matthew 26:52, Luke 22:51, John 18:10***

JESUS' PAIN:

14:35: Jesus threw himself on the ground and prayed

14:36: "Abba, all things are possible for you, remove this cup from me, yet, not what I want, but what you want.

14:50: All of them deserted him and fled

The disciples disappear from the story of Holy Week, except for Peter who fulfils Jesus' prediction that he will not only flee, but also deny him.

In Mark's gospel, it is the women who are still there at the cross, and it is the women who follow to see where the body is laid; it is the women who are the first receivers of the announcement "He has been raised. He is not here!"

CONCLUSION

As you conclude this study, and move into Holy Week, (services on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday nights at 7.30pm) you might like to spend some time, as a group with these words (*Words from the Iona community*)

Lord, where have we left you — somewhere far away,
remote and in the manger, a stranger still in hay?

Lord, where have we left you — somewhere lost to light,
submerged in doubt or dreaming and seeming out of sight?

Lord, where have we left you — somewhere all can view,
well-polished and presented, undented and untrue?

Lord, where have we left you — somewhere out of range,
divorced from thoughts that matter, that shatter, cheat, or change?

Lord, you never leave us, though you're left behind.

To where you call and need us now lead us and our kind.

Lord, you never leave us.