

Maundy Thursday 2020
Devotion

Mark 14:22-42

22 While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body."

23 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. 24 He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. 25 Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

26 When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

27 And Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' 28 But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." 29 Peter said to him, "Even though all become deserters, I will not." 30 Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." 31 But he said vehemently, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And all of them said the same.

32 They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I

pray." 33 He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. 34 And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake." 35 And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want."

37 He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? 38 Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." 39 And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. 40 And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. 41 He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

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Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Let us pray:

Holy Jesus, the bread and wine of your last supper have become your body and blood given for us. Transform us with your holy presence. Cleanse us, forgive us and renew us in your word. Amen.

On Holy Thursday, it has been our tradition at Good Shepherd Lutheran to reenact this last Passover meal that Jesus shared with his disciples with actors (volunteers from our congregation) taking on the roles of either the disciples of old or of modern day disciples. Since I have been your pastor, we have been using the modern day disciples, who introduce themselves, tell us about the work that they do, and then share their inner most fears about how they may falter as Jesus' faithful disciples. We hear them ask themselves: will I be the one who betrays him, will I be the one who falls asleep, will I be the one who walks the other way, will I be the one who denies him, and/or will I be the one who lets him down in his hour of need. Those very questions that the first disciples must have been wrestling with as they shared the Passover meal.

At the end of the meal with all those doubts swarming around in the disciples' heads *they had sung the hymn*, [and then] *they went out to the Mount of Olives. (Mark 14:26)*

They had sung THE hymn.

THE Hymn - Since this would have been a traditional Jewish Passover meal, which begins with the singing of Psalms 113, 114 and ends with singing Psalms 115, 116, 117 and 118. Biblical scholars are confident that *THE hymn* that the gospel writer Mark is referring to was Psalm 118, which would have been the last hymn that Jesus sang as a "free" man. And I am wondering if it was like that last hymn that you hear on a Sunday morning that often plays over and over again in you head for hours if not days.

Below is the text of Psalm 118 and a link to a contemporary rendition of the text.



[Psalm118](#)

Click on the above title to play.

It may take a few minutes to load and you may want to skip the ads

- 1 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.
- 2 Let Israel say:
“His love endures forever.”
- 3 Let the house of Aaron say:
“His love endures forever.”
- 4 Let those who fear the Lord say:
“His love endures forever.”
- 5 When hard pressed, I cried to the Lord;
he brought me into a spacious place.
- 6 The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?
- 7 The Lord is with me; he is my helper.
I look in triumph on my enemies.
- 8 It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in humans.
- 9 It is better to take refuge in the Lord
than to trust in princes.
- 10 All the nations surrounded me,
but in the name of the Lord I cut them down.
- 11 They surrounded me on every side,
but in the name of the Lord I cut them down.
- 12 They swarmed around me like bees,
but they were consumed as quickly as burning
thorns;
- in the name of the Lord I cut them down.
- 13 I was pushed back and about to fall,
but the Lord helped me.
- 14 The Lord is my strength and my defense[a];
he has become my salvation.
- 15 Shouts of joy and victory
resound in the tents of the righteous:
“The Lord’s right hand has done mighty things!
- 16 The Lord’s right hand is lifted high;
the Lord’s right hand has done mighty things!”
- 17 I will not die but live,
and will proclaim what the Lord has done.
- 18 The Lord has chastened me severely,
but he has not given me over to death.
- 19 Open for me the gates of the righteous;
I will enter and give thanks to the Lord.
- 20 This is the gate of the Lord
through which the righteous may enter.
- 21 I will give you thanks, for you answered me;
you have become my salvation.
- 22 The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;

23 the Lord has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes.
24 The Lord has done it this very day;
let us rejoice today and be glad.
25 Lord, save us!
Lord, grant us success!
26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
From the house of the Lord we bless you.

27 The Lord is God,
and he has made his light shine on us.
With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession
up to the horns of the altar.
28 You are my God, and I will praise you;
you are my God, and I will exalt you.
29 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. (Mark 14:26)

This is one of those lines in a text that seems like it serves no other purpose than transitioning the reader from one event to the next. In this case it was preceded by Jesus' last supper and his institution of the Lord's Supper and it is followed by the betrayal of one his disciples and the desertion of the rest.

And what did they do in between – they sang *THE Hymn*.

In the midst of the tension and anxiety of what was about to happen – unsure of whether they (the disciples) really had what it took to be faithful to Jesus in these upcoming days – they sang this song and perhaps these words played over and over in their heads as they headed to the Garden of Gethsemane:

God is good and his steadfast love endures forever
Our God, the God of Israel is about to open the gates of righteousness in a new way
God is going to take evil and corruption and use it for good – this is the Lord's doing.
This is the day that the Lord has made let us rejoice and be glad in it.
The Lord has made his light to shine on us
God is good and his steadfast love endures forever.

So, let us remember in times of uncertainty, in times of crisis, in times of great loss, in times of great sacrifice that God is good, God is with us and his steadfast love endure forever

And as we walk to and through the cross this week with the one who will give up his life for us – take a moment to revisit *THE Hymn* – and give thanks to Lord for he is good and his love endures forever.

And after they sang, Jesus entered the garden of Gethsemane fell down on his knees and prayed, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want." (Mark 14:36) *To be continued on Friday*