



# Church in a Bag

## Maundy Thursday

Dubbo Uniting Church



### A Gathering

As darkness falls, we gather at this time to remember the events of the evening when Jesus shared his last supper with his friends.

What then, shall we render to the Lord for all his bounty to us?

We will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.  
(*Psalm 116 v.13 NRSV*).



### Prayer of Confession

God's love for the world has been revealed in Jesus Christ, who certainly loves us to the uttermost; Jesus, Saviour and Lord, who at his last meal with his disciples gave them and us that new commandment - "... love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another". *John 13:34,35*

Merciful God, we confess that so often our discipleship has been weak: when we have failed to serve as Jesus served; forgive us. When we have failed to love one another as Jesus loves us; forgive us. When we have been happy to proclaim our devotion to Jesus with our lips and then denied him by our actions; forgive us. Merciful God, empower us by your Spirit to be steady and true to you in every time of trial. **Amen**

### Assurance of Forgiveness and Blessing

Jesus said: "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" and "having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end". The good news therefore is this: In Jesus Christ, we are loved and we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!

Reading: John 13:1-17, 31b-35

## Reflection

Jesus is reminding the disciples and His friends of God's abundance, of the freedom of the exodus, that comes from abundance. The Passover meal is truly a sign of that abundance and generosity. In Exodus, God's people leave slavery to walk in freedom. If they could have done it on their own, they would not have been enslaved for so long. All parts of their lives were controlled, where they lay their heads, all the food they were allowed, where they worked, if they lived or died, who they could marry, whether or not they could keep their children. Pharaoh created a universe for the slaves of scarcity, but the Passover releases them from scarcity to go forward to the land of milk and honey.

Passing over from scarcity to abundance with God. God sets us a table in the wilderness of abundance. Occasionally the freed people didn't trust that abundance would come in the wilderness. Some wanted to go back, back to the man-made scarcity, but God did provide and manna even came from heaven and remember the water comes from the rock in God's wonderful abundance.

In the same way Jesus is saying at Passover in our Holy Week, this is the passing over from slavery to freedom. Jesus is saying, this is the truth, this is the Passover you have been waiting for, from slavery to freedom, from sinfulness to grace, to forgiveness, to freedom, to openness, to life, so that you can receive love and give love, so that you will live in abundance.

It's about not being stuck at the bottom of a pyramid but being around a table. It's about not being a slave but in freedom being a servant. Jesus is opening their imaginations (and ours) to a world where there is no pyramid of hierarchy. Jesus wants them to be free and see that there is no first and last; there is however, a table to come too. It is a table of abundance, not the myth of scarcity.

Jesus makes it perfectly clear; it's about washing each other's feet. It's not about who is the greatest disciple, sitting at the head of the table; it is about being a family around a table, and the bread and the wine will sustain us in our journeys of compassion, love, grace, forgiveness, of salvation - the gifts of God for the people of God. Do these things in remembrance of me. Who needs a mansion when you are sitting at God's table with our friends, and we are going to be fed in abundance with God's good gifts?



Let us use our imagination and pull up more and more chairs to the table, inviting people to come.

Today we look at the story of the Last Supper, it was the end to a world of oppression, of violence, and control, but it's also the first feast of the world God had always dreamed of for us. It is a powerful table to sit at and a blessing to all. In God abundance is a reality.

## A song to sing or to read: An upper room did our Lord prepare

An upper room did our Lord prepare  
for those he loved until the end  
and his disciples still gather there  
to celebrate their risen friend.

A lasting gift Jesus gave his own  
to share his bread, his loving cup.  
Whatever burdens may bow us down  
He by his cross shall lift us up.

And after supper he washed their feet  
for service, too, is sacrament.  
In Christ our joy shall be made  
complete  
sent out to serve, as He was sent.

No end there is! We depart in peace  
he loves beyond the uttermost  
in every room in our Father's house  
Christ will be there, as Lord and Host.

*Lyrics Frederick Pratt Green by permission Stainer and Bell London  
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## Closing Peace

After Jesus had shared the meal with his disciples and washed their feet, he said to them, "I have set you an example that you also should do as I have done to you...Love one another, as I have loved you". He also said "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you".  
The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. **Amen**

**With thanks to Rev Mel Graham for preparing today's reflection**



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