

THE FIRST 15

Monday, April 29, 2024

Today is Monday, April 29 and we are studying the Gospel of John chapter thirteen.

OPENING PRAYER

Lord God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as I begin a new day, I seek your presence. Before the events of today begin I focus myself completely on you. I invite you into the intimacies of my thoughts and feelings. Examine my intentions, guide my motivations, inspire my plans, and accompany my comings and goings. Remind me that you are close by my side every step of the way. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. 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. John 13:1-5

REFLECTION

This is the third and final Passover Festival mentioned in the Gospel of John (John 2:13, 6:4, 13:1). One Passover for each of the three years of Jesus' earthly ministry. Passover is the sacred remembrance of what God did to bring his people out of slavery in Egypt and into the Promised Land of Canaan. Passed down from generation to generation it is a vivid reminder of God's providential love and care for his people, that he is a keeper of covenants and a God who rescues and redeems.

Jesus knew this was his last Passover. He knew his hour had come. This was his final night with his disciples. What might one do knowing it is their last night? Jesus gathered those who were closest to him. He invited his twelve disciples, his followers, to the Upper Room. He performed two dynamically simple yet deeply profound gestures. Symbolic gestures that would be remembered for millenia. Loving actions that would be told and retold to generations of Christians. Events that would be studied, celebrated and reenacted within Christianity for thousands of years. Jesus did two things - he washed his friends' feet and he shared a meal with them.

Sharing a meal around a table was a daily occurrence. It provided nourishment and rest, fellowship and intimacy. Christ often ate with his disciples. They had sat around tables and enjoyed many meals together, but this meal was different. This was the last one. They shared the same loaf and drank from the same cup. He cleansed them and fed them. All of them. Even Judas Iscariot who he knew was about to betray him.

As Jesus invited his disciples to join him around the table at the Upper Room, Jesus invites me to join him and sup at his table. I am welcomed to a place of nourishment - spiritual sustenance. I am hungry and thirsty. I hunger for truth. I thirst for righteousness. I long for compassion. I am starved for comfort, rest, renewal, encouragement, and love. I am invited to sit for a while with Jesus to be strengthened by his presence and receive the depths of his love.

I am spiritually fed and sent out to feed others. I am loved and sent out to love others. I am served by Christ and sent out to unselfishly and sacrificially serve others. I am comforted by the Spirit and sent out to comfort others. I am blessed by God and sent out to bless others. I am forgiven and sent out to forgive. I am reconciled and sent out to be an agent of reconciliation. I am healed and sent out to be an instrument of healing.

Ask: What nourishment does Christ offer me in my times of spiritual quiet with him? How am I sent out to bless someone else today?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Holy and Loving Lord Jesus, as you shared food and fellowship with your disciples, come and dine with me at the table of my heart. Let me enjoy the depths of your presence, fortify me with the bread of heaven, and strengthen me with the knowledge of your great love. Inspire me to go out into the world and witness to your goodness and grace. Amen.