

The Lenten Journey

Gathering Music

During the Gathering Music and Prelude, please silently prepare for our Maundy Thursday Service by reflecting on the following meditation.

The Cross in the distance says we near the end of our Lenten Fast. Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday give us opportunities to see and hear Jesus face our trials, judgments, temptations, and evil. What have you learned about yourself this Lent? Who seeks to lord over your life? Whom do you seek to lord over? Name the things your Lenten Journey revealed to you that you do to others that you would NOT have them do unto you.

Participating in daily inward practices like fasting, prayer, divine reading of Scripture, and charity leads us to experience how physical things, traditions, and people's opinions control life. In other words, we confess belief in Jesus, but submit to many lords. This is why Jesus says, "Many have called me Lord, lord...but I never knew you." (Matthew 7:21-23) Even as I write I find it hard to say that Jesus is God in a human body revealing God's will through mercy, grace and love even as he suffers and dies to rise again. I find it hard that using shame, guilt, and blame effectively gains power, control, and wealth.

Every Law, Doctrine, or rule reveals our need for Mercy. Surely, we understand that the Pharisees and Teachers of Law used the Law to judge, condemn, and kill the Son of Man.

The Prophets' call to repent reveals our need for Grace. The word "repent" means that we desire to think with a new mind and feel with a clean heart. This is why the Apostle Paul says there is neither Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female but one in Christ Jesus. The Prophets' call to repent requires us to face suffering and death with the same mind that was in Christ Jesus while on the cross.

Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection reveals our need for love. Jesus Lords over all humanity with love born of Mercy and Grace.

Hear the Good News: Denying Jesus, betraying him, and/or following Jesus does not change what God revealed through Jesus Christ. God's will is that sinners receive mercy. Mercy delivers sinners to live by Grace, through faith Christ. Grace blesses us to live on earth as Kingdom people who do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

Recognizing Human Will

In his book, **Good and Beautiful God**, James Bryan Smith describes three influences that shape human will. The three influences reveal the self Jesus asks we deny. They become the cross we bare to follow Jesus.

1. The Mind
 - "What we think in our minds will in turn create emotions, which leads to decisions or actions."
2. The Body
 - "The body is a complex inner working of impulses that influence the will. Most of the bodily system runs without help." Fear, Stress, and Joy are automatic responses of the neurological system that connects the heart and mind to bodily action.
3. Social Context
 - "We are highly influenced by the people around us. We call this 'peer pressure.'"

Our Maundy Thursday Service is designed to immerse us in Scripture. Through Scripture, we experience God's will revealed through Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection. Along the way, our Mind, Body, and Social Context

The Influence of Social Context on Human Will

Physical Symbol: Cup of Wine

Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you." ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Forgiveness sets us free from our neighbor who seeks to lord over us. Receiving God's forgiveness changes the person who receives it, not their neighbor, enemies, or persecutors. They see the change in us.

Forgiveness prepares us to be reconciled to God. Listen to Jesus' words. ²⁸ "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it with you in my Father's kingdom." Jesus said, "Repent, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." His Kingdom is now. Now is the time the Resurrected Christ drinks this new fruit of the vine with you. This cup is the New Covenant. It fulfills the Old Covenant in every way.

Thankfully, what God has done through Jesus Christ cannot be changed by human will. The Good News is that by faith in God's Grace we can live a life of love and peace beyond human understanding.

Jesus does unto others as he would have them do unto him saying, "All of you Receive the Cup of the New Covenant and drink."

Communion Music: The Broken Who Break the Bread

Human Will Denies Holy Communion

Physical Symbol: The Cross

Human will: "You will all fall away on my account to seek Safety, Security, and Sanctuary.

God's Will: The New Covenant reveals mercy, grace, and love.

³¹ Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: "'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'" ³² But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." ³³ Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." ³⁴ "Truly, I tell you," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." ³⁵ But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.

None of us wants to disown Jesus. I would like to say that before the sunsets tomorrow you and I will not disown his mercy, grace, and love. Experience teaches that shame, guilt, and blame are powerful. We want to belong, fit in, and be valued for contributions. The way of Judas and Peter tempt us daily.

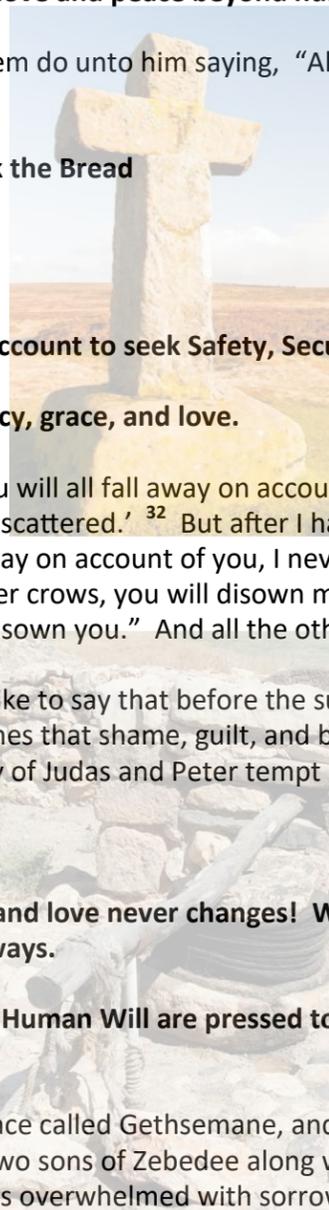
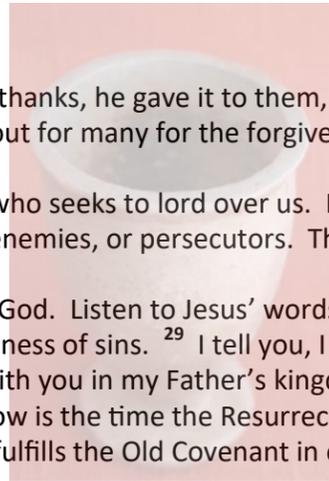
Special Music: Were You There?

Hear the Good News. God's mercy, grace, and love never changes! With practice it does transform our lives. Hereto Jesus shows us he understand our ways.

Prayer is Like a Wine Press: God's Will and Human Will are pressed together into Holy Communion

Physical Symbol: Juice Press

³⁶ Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray," ³⁷ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸ The he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep



watch with me.”³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”⁴⁰ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn’t you men keep watch for me for one hour?” he asked Peter.⁴¹ “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.”⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”⁴³ When he came back, he again found them sleeping because their eyes were heavy.⁴⁴ So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.⁴⁵ Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners.⁴⁶ Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

“Are you still sleeping and resting?”...guilt leads us to blame one another for the shame of our sin.

Hear the Good News! “Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners.” Jesus trusts sinners like you and me. Now, isn’t that a change of mind and heart?

Postlude: (played by David)

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

APRIL 1, 2021

HOLY WEEK CELEBRATION



PASTOR—REV. ROBERT BURLINGHAM

WWW.TRINITYUMC-BSG.NET

OFFICE: (276) 523-0789

we “do not know what we are doing.” Lord of Mercy; have mercy.

Special Music: (played by Calli)

Human Will Builds Bethany: the House of Affliction

Physical Symbol: Perfumed Oil and Silver Coins

Human Will: In one hand, receive the Perfumed Oil. In the other hand, hold the Silver Coin. Experience their power with your mind, body, and social context.

Scripture Reading

⁶ While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper, ⁷ a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

⁸ When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. “Why this waster?” they asked. ⁹ “This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.”

¹⁰ Aware of this, Jesus said to them, “Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me.

¹¹ The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. ¹² When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. ¹³ Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

1. **The Influence of the Body on Human Will:** Take the perfumed oil in your hand. Open it, Smell it, and Anoint yourself. Now, imagine being the one who pours the expensive perfume on Jesus’ head.

- We use anointing oil to touch, pray, and bless those who are suffering. Remember, Jesus teaches us to bless those who curse us. The word “curse” means to harm.
- Why are you anointing Jesus? In verse 2, Jesus says, “He will be handed over to the authorities to be killed. If you were in his situation, imagine doing to Jesus what you would have him do unto you. What emotions stir with the anointing of Jesus: fear, joy, compassion...

2. **The Influence of the Mind of Human Will:** Now, shift roles. You just watched Jesus being anointed with a bottle of perfume worth \$10,000. You are the indignant disciple asking, “Why this waster?”

- Think of times you have been outraged by people’s waste of physical resources.
- How many people could be fed, clothed, or housed by selling this bottle of perfume? Remember what Jesus says, ¹⁰ “...Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ¹¹ The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. ¹² When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.”
- When is the person in our presence of more value than the available resources?

3. **The Influence of our Social Context on Human Will:** You have served in both roles. It is time to judge which person’s actions align with your social conditioning.

- Is it part of your social conditioning to prepare a loved one’s body for burial?
- Are you socially conditioned to feed the hungry and clothe the naked?
- Which one is right and good? What has your social context taught you to be the right thing to do with the perfumed oil?

4. **God’s Will:** Now look at the perfumed oil and silver through Jesus eyes. The woman does a beautiful thing to prepare Jesus for death and a burial. Simon the Leper is Jesus’ friend. Simon is the outcast Leper, shunned, feared, and thought to be cursed by God. Jesus holds the oil and silver together as one blessing.

- One reflects the value of wealth.
- The other reflects the value of social justice.

- Which way do you prefer? Who do you know that values the other way?
- What if we served the Lord together? What if people are always of more value than things? How much of the division in our society is created valuing money and/or social justice more than the people with us?

Jesus challenges our either/or, right or wrong, black and white thinking, emotions, and actions. Jesus redefines what it means to be right with God, self, and neighbor. Repentance means we deny the ways of the human mind, body, and social context. Repentance means we turn from our ways and our neighbors’ ways to live Jesus’ way of mercy, grace, and love.

Thankfully, what God has done through Jesus Christ cannot be changed by human will. The Good News is that by faith in God’s Grace we can live a life of love and peace beyond human understanding.

Human Will as Power, Control, and Wealth

Physical Symbol: Silver Coins

Human Will: Experience the power of faith. By faith, we trust another’s power and authority. By faith, we become one with the person/institution/nation we trust. The one we trust is lord of our mind, body, and social context.

Scripture Reading

¹⁴ The one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?” So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶ From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

Some scholars say that Judas betrayed Jesus to force him to take the throne of King David. (Selfishness)

Other scholars say that Judas did the Devil’s work. (Evil)

Still other scholars insist that Judas was doing God’s will. (Predestination)

1. What do you believe? How have you been trained to judge Judas?
2. Describe the emotion stirred by your belief.
3. What action does your willful judgement lead you to take?
4. Jesus says, with the judgement you judge, you shall be judged.

How many times in a single day do we betray Jesus to follow the lords of control, power, and wealth?

Thankfully, what God has done through Jesus Christ cannot be changed by human will. The Good News is that by faith in God’s Grace we can live a life of love and peace beyond human understanding.

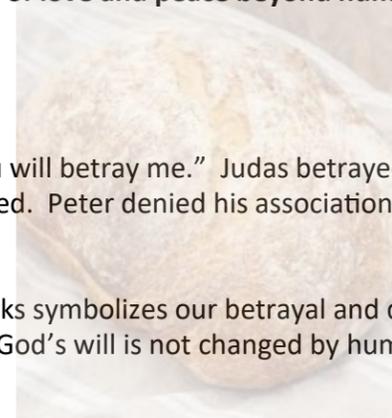
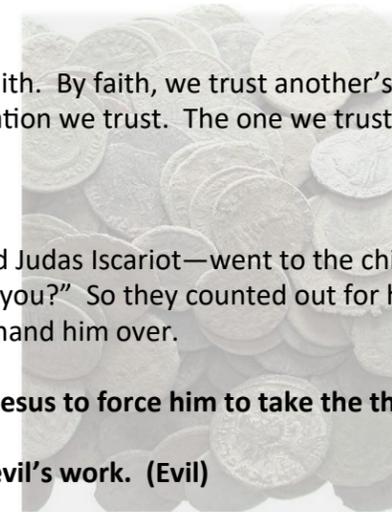
God’s Will: Holy Communion

Physical Symbol: Loaf of Bread

Human Will: “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.” Judas betrayed Jesus. He delivered Jesus to the High Priest to be judged, condemned, and killed. Peter denied his association with Jesus. One is guided by selfishness. The other is guided by social context.

God’s Will: The Loaf of Bread Jesus breaks symbolizes our betrayal and denial. The Cup that Jesus blesses forgives us for betraying and denying him. God’s will is not changed by human will.

Scripture Reading



¹⁷ On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?”

¹⁸ He replied, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’” ¹⁹ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

²⁰ When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. ²¹ And while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.”

²² They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, “Surely you don’t mean me, Lord?”

²³ Jesus replied, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴ The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”

²⁵ Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, “Surely you don’t mean me, Rabbi?” Jesus answered, “You have said so.”

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.”

²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

³⁰ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

The Influence of the Mind on Human Will

- A. Confession means we examine our individual minds and hearts, not our neighbors.
- B. What have you thought, felt, or done today that denied or betrayed Jesus?
- C. He says, “take eat, this is my body.” Jesus’ suffering comes from the sum total of everyones’ betrayal and denial.
- D. Without personal confession, repentance is impossible. Repentance literally means we deny our will to try God’s will. We, therefore, turn our focus from sin to focus on grace. Jesus chose to suffer all our sin to reveal that God’s Grace is full of mercy.
- E. Will you deny his mercy? Has your social context trained you to deny Jesus by seeing yourself as unworthy?

The Influence of the Body on Human Will

The body has a central nervous system that operates automatically. Our hearts and minds respond to fear and joy. Our hearts and minds do not know the difference between a deadly snake and our cultural context that uses guilt, shame, and blame to lord over us.

Taking the cracker in your hands, break it. In the act of breaking the cracker, look at the pieces.

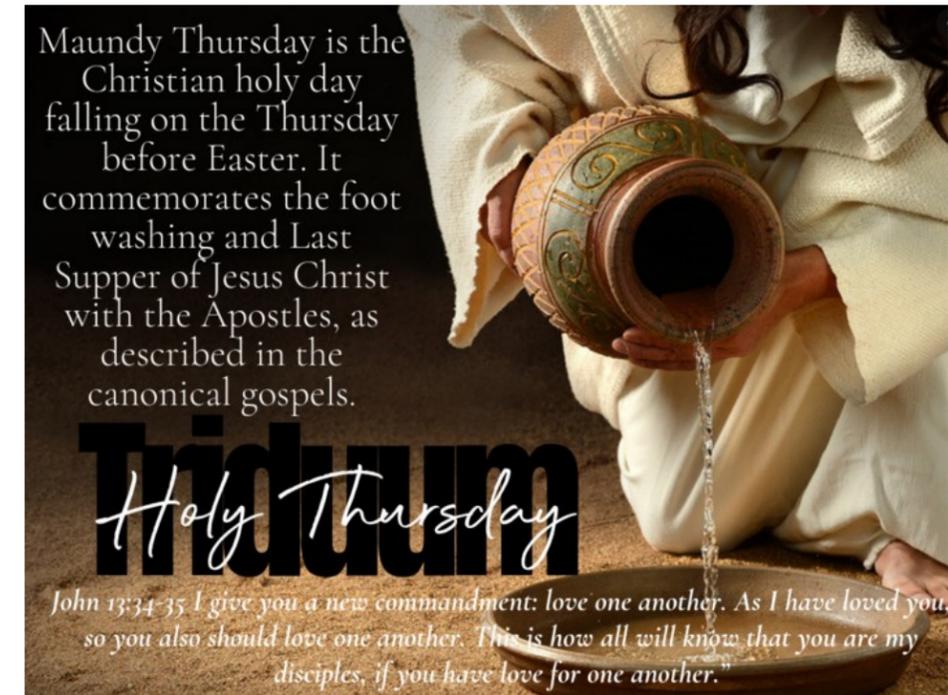
This is Jesus’ body delivered into the hands of sinners! He suffered our shame, guilt, and blame!

Jesus eats with sinners and tax collectors. Receive the Bread of Mercy and eat!

Communion Music: Remember Me

tempt and challenge us. Will we choose to come after Jesus, deny our self, take up our individual cross, and follow Jesus? Will we judge, condemn, and crucify Jesus? Like Peter, will we deny Jesus to save our self when faced with peer pressure? Like Judas, will we betray Jesus to gain wealth, power, and authority? Will we humble ourselves to trust Jesus’ prayer, ‘Father, forgive them, they don’t know what they are doing.’ Will we come to realize we are all of these and Jesus is abundantly far more than we could ask or imagine?

Thankfully, what God has done through Jesus Christ cannot be changed by human will. The Good News is that by faith in God’s Grace we can live a life of love and peace beyond human understanding.



Maundy Thursday Service

Prelude

Lighting the Candles

God’s Will encounters Human Will

Scripture Reading: Matthew 26

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, ² “As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

³ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴ and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. ⁵ “But not during the festival,” they said, “or there may be a riot among the people.”

Prayer of Preparation

The Lord be with you

And also with you

Let us pray

Lord Jesus, teach us to pray, “Not my will, but your will be done. We confess our Lenten Journey proves that