

This is My Body
Mark 14:22-25, 26-42

Westminster Presbyterian Church
Pastor Doug Browne
April 9, 2020 (Maundy Thursday)

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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." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. 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."

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

But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.' Peter said to him, 'Even though all become deserters, I will not.' Jesus said to him, 'Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.' But he said vehemently, 'Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.' And all of them said the same.

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.' And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, 'Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.' He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' And again, he went away and prayed, saying the same words. 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. 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. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.'

If you read the Gospel honestly, every follower of Jesus fails Him.

Jesus knows that his disciples rarely get what he's saying at the time. They insist on looking at the world in their own status-obsessed, power-obsessed way, rather than the way he's showing them.

Jesus knows that Judas will betray him.

Jesus knows that Peter will deny him.

Jesus knows that the rest of his apostles will run away.

Jesus knows that I will sin, even knowing about the resurrection and everything associated with that.

Jesus knows that you will sin, knowing those same things.

Jesus is God. Jesus could make any response to us that He chose.

He could have picked different people as his core disciples, people who were made of sterner, more righteous, stuff. God could have made him some people like that, if necessary.

But Jesus doesn't do that. He picks ordinary people, and he makes them extraordinary.

He could have kicked the dust of this world off his feet and gone back to the Father and said, "Nope. Those people are not worth it."

But Jesus doesn't do that. He didn't come into this world to condemn the world, and he doesn't do it.

He could have sent an army of angels to wipe out all the people and start over.

But Jesus doesn't do that. He lets human beings nail him to a cross and kill him. But, before he does that, he hosts his followers for the Passover meal, a family dinner.

He picks up a loaf of ordinary bread off the table. Not special magic bread, just what they had. He breaks it, and gives it to them, saying, "This is my body."

He picks up a cup of wine. Not special magic wine, ordinary wine. What they were drinking with dinner. He gives it to them and says, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.”

This is Jesus’ response to our failing Him. He still loves us. He knows that we mess up. Every one of us. And He still reaches out and says, “This is my body, broken for you.”

After this Last Supper, Jesus’ followers still fail him. Judas, who is sitting right next to Jesus, still betrays him. Peter still denies him. The other disciples still run away. But they come back. Something in Jesus’ love brings them back, even when they have messed up. He still reaches out and says, “This is my body, broken for you.”

He says, “Go and sin no more,” but first, he says, “This is my body, broken for you.”

We don’t deserve that kind of love. I’m not here to tell you that you deserve it. I don’t, either. We don’t deserve that kind of amazing love, but we have it.

Every good thing that we do in this world, and we should do good things in this world, is a response to God’s amazing undeserved love for us. This love that is so powerful that we cannot get away from it – God’s amazing love goes with us wherever we are, and nothing can separate us from it.

Thanks be to God.