



Week of April 1, 2019: Thursday – An Uncomfortably Confusing Day

“When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.” After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. (Luke 22:14-20)

Discussion Questions Set #1

Many of you are likely very familiar with the sacrament of communion or the Lord’s Supper; you’ve likely seen the little cups and crackers distributed in service. Communion can sometimes become an empty ritual – a tack on to the service – if we fail to understand its significance and importance.

1. Prior to this sermon, what was your understanding of the significance and importance of communion to the church? Why do we participate in this strange little ritual?
2. Was there anything new that you learned about the significance or importance of communion through this sermon? Was there anything you found shocking or surprising? Were you aware of communion’s connection to the Thursday seder meal prior to Christ’s crucifixion?
3. In your own words, why is participating in communion on a regular basis a good practice for the follower of Jesus? Why is communion an important practice for the church?

Discussion Questions Set #2

“[Jesus] 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, saying ... those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you ... When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place ... Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.” (John 13:1-17)

Mid-meal, Jesus used a symbolic act to present an incredible truth to His followers. In a moment where one might expect honour and prestige to be received, Jesus chose to humble himself and honour others in a significant way. Washing His disciples’ feet is a poignant moment in Christ’s ministry and set about teaching His followers two realities: 1) serving others is key in the church and 2) we are declared clean and righteous by responding to Christ’s word, not through performing various rites and rituals.

1. We’ve touched on this idea of “serving others/putting others first” before. Discuss the importance of this to Christian community. What barriers still exist to the full expression of this within our churches? What examples are you aware of that show this attitude is not prevalent in the church in 2019? How do you see “serving others” modelled at Hillside? How might your H2H group begin to make this a greater reality at Hillside and in Mount Albert?
2. If we “are already clean because of the word [Jesus has] spoken to [us]” (John 15:3), why do you think rites and rituals remain so prevalent within the modern church? How might rites and rituals help us in our faith? In what ways might they hinder our faith?
3. We did not touch on this in service, but Peter was highly reluctant to allow Jesus to wash his feet, saying “no, you shall never wash my feet” (John 13:8). Would you be open to a footwashing component in a service? Within your H2H group? Why or why not? What might prevent you from washing another’s feet? What might prevent you from permitting your feet to be washed by another? How might pride come into play in all of this?



Discussion Questions Set #3

“I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in My Father’s Kingdom.” (Matthew 26:29)

“Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” (1 Corinthians 11:26)

In sermon, we learned that Jesus fails to close His seder meal as would have been expected by not drinking the fourth cup of wine – the cup of completion. In a way, this helps us to see that the meal of redemption and freedom Jesus celebrated is still incomplete. The book of Revelation informs us of a future meal in God’s coming kingdom where we will eat and drink with Jesus at the “wedding feast of the Lamb”. At this meal, we will drink of the cup of completion together with Jesus. In many ways, communion is an event that looks back – to Christ’s death – and forward – to Christ’s return and eternal reign.

1. In your experience, is communion more an event that looks back or more an event that looks forward? Give a reason for your answer.
2. When you think of partaking in communion to “proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes”, what thoughts come to mind? How is recalling Christ death during communion significant to you?
3. When you think of partaking in communion with an eye to that future cup in Christ’s kingdom, what thoughts come to mind? How does acknowledging this reality change/impact your experience of communion?