

Mark 14:12-26

Maunday Thursday

March 31, 1988

We are going to have two offerings tonight. I was talking with a group of pastors and one of them explained that one offering is not nearly as effective as two. People hold back, I do, I assume you do too.

Just do you do not get the idea that this second offering is not for you, I am going to ask ^{to be of show able} you to bring it forward. Up front where everyone can see. Now I know that that will be ^{unavoidable} ~~difficult~~ for some of you, but this offering is very important. Not that our regular, passing the plate down the rows offering is not important also, but this second offering is more important still. You see, that first offering is what you can spare, what you can give up without affecting your life all that much. O, it costs you, but you are very much the same person whether you give it or whether you keep it.

But this second offering tonight, I want that to be different. I want you to dig deep, I want you to offer all you can give up, even more than you think you can. You won't be the same if you do.

Now if you looked in your bulletin this evening, maybe you are wondering where this second offering is going to take place. It's not listed. Maybe I'm just joking. I'm not. I want you all to bring it.

Did I tell you? the second offering is not a money offering. Here is what I want you to bring.

Bring here, to the altar everything you want Jesus to take with him to the cross. Bring everything that you want to be crucified with Jesus. When you come to the altar and hold out your hand, give to Christ your offering, let him take it upon himself ^{even} ~~just as surely~~ as you receive the body and blood of your Lord in return.

Bring your fears. Your fears for yourself, and for tomorrow. Bring your fears for those you love, those fears that can keep your eyes from closing when all you want is sleep. Bring your fears of the darkness, and

of robbers and violence. Fears of failure, of being laughed at, Search deeply, offer all your fears to Christ, that he may bear them on the cross.

Bring your loneliness. Make of it an offering. All the unkind words that have hurt you, the deeds that others have done to gain power an advantage over you, all that has wounded you, bring here to this altar.

Bring your guilt, your disappointment. Every ~~sin~~ unmet dream.
Bring your sin, great and small. Bring the thoughts you've never told anyone about, the deeds done when no one was looking. Bring those words that slipped out without a thought, bring bitterness ~~and~~ and pettiness and jealousy, bring guilt. Let go of them, offer them to your Lord who will silence them with death.

Bring your pride. And vanity. Bring those secret trophies for which you honor yourself. Bring everything that makes you think you stand above another, especially your good deeds. Bring them, hand them over, be done with them.

Most of all, bring what pride becomes when it turns sour. Bring despair. Christ can bear it, but you can't.

Offer all of these to Christ. He will take them and in return, give you his body and his blood, his own life given to free you from ~~in~~ all of these. He will give you a new beginning, a fresh start, life. Faith.

Yes bring your second offering, this evening, every time you come to this altar, let Christ take it, bear it, and make you free! *For this is why God has given his son, he wants you free forever, and unafraid. How low God's disciples, that Christ has died!*
Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, upon him was the chastisement that made us whole and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.