

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Maundy comes from a Latin word "*mandatum*" where we get our word mandate. So, what is the mandate in the Last supper? There are three significant things that could point to a mandate. The first is obvious.

When Jesus shared the bread and the wine symbolising his Body and Blood, he said, "Do this in remembrance of me". John does not mention these symbols; it is in Luke. But John is the only one to mention Jesus' washing the disciple's feet. He says, "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you", and then Jesus, when doing this, calls himself a servant.

The next thing Jesus said is "A new commandment I give unto you, love one another; as I have loved you".

In the Last Supper story in the Gospels, we are given three mandates. Instead of each of these mandates being separate actions, they are strongly intertwined as a three-corded rope. To remember the cross is not simply an act of recalling an incident. Jesus is referring to the custom of ancient Israel. God had redeemed them from slavery in Egypt. To remember was to acknowledge that once they were in slavery and now, they are free and are given the Promised Land. He gave them a commandment to be a blessing to all nations.

The cross, the bread and the wine remind us that all humanity is in slavery to sin and death. Because of the Cross, we are redeemed and can enter God's kingdom. To put that simply, God's plan for humanity was to give us a new way of living, by breaking the curse of evil. When we eat the bread and wine, we must remember that God has paid an incredible price for our freedom. To make this realisation so much stronger, he ties it up with two magnificent things: to love as he loves, and to be as a servant to others, in short to be a blessing to all. This is so important, and Jesus says it is a new commandment. What is significant in these things is that both are sacrificial, laying our own wants aside to provide for the needs of others. That is exactly what Jesus did for us when he was nailed to the cross. "Father", he prayed, "not my will but your will be done." We can now choose to walk away from the corruption of the world that is so full of death and enter into this resurrected way of living.

Dn. Pete.