

Jesus Gave Us a Mandate to “Love One Another”

Today is Maundy Thursday on the liturgical calendar—the day Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with His disciples before He went to the cross.

Today, to commemorate Holy Week, we had a short worship service in our office with my staff. I invited several staff, who also serve as pastors, to take part in serving, and we took communion together. We also prayed for the volatile situation in our community following the tragic death of Trayvon Martin, which has created uproar in our country.

Next week, I’ll write more about this situation, which has really hit home for me. The reason: the tragic killing took place 2.9 miles from our offices in Lake Mary, Fla., which abuts Sanford, Fla. As a result we have decided to focus our June issue on *The Church’s Response to Racism*.

Today I attended a meeting with black and white ministers in our city. Tomorrow I’m attending a prayer service on Good Friday. Some very interesting things came out, from a spiritual point of view, which I’ll comment on later.

A member of my staff, David Scammell, also pastors a local church. At my invitation during our communion time, he shared some interesting insights on the meaning of Maundy Thursday, which I asked to be able to share

here. I hope they inspire you as they inspired me. With what is happening in our area, it's a word we must heed.

MAUNDY is a corrupted form of the Latin *mon-dah-tum* (*mandatum*) from which we get our English word "mandate." It means to *hand over ... or to give as an order or command*. Over the years this *mon-dah-tum* or *mon-dah-tus* became corrupted in use and evolved into the word "Maundy" that we utilize today.

In John 15:12, 17, Jesus tells His disciples in the upper room "This is My command: Love one another as I have loved you." He repeats Himself and again says " This is what I command you: Love one another. (HCSB)."

These two statements form the Mandate of Jesus Christ ... *we are to love one another!*

Therefore, Maundy or Mandate Thursday is a solemn time to remember the events of the Lord's last evening with His disciples in the Upper Room and more importantly, Jesus' mandate "*to love one another.*"

To help set the scene we need to remember that on that night the disciples were quite alarmed at what Jesus had told them concerning His arrest and death.

Their dreams and aspirations were seemingly being *dashed upon the rocks*, if Christ were to die. Remember, at this point in time, death had *not* lost its sting ... and they were about to get stung the next day when Jesus would give His life

as payment for
our sins.

Just last week they heard Jesus say “I am
the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me,
even if he dies,
will live. Everyone who lives and believes in Me will never
die-ever”

(John 11:25-26). Then they watched Jesus raise Lazarus from
the dead.

Yet, despite this, they could not see beyond the now.

They forgot that Christ’s kingdom was not of this world.
Jesus came to die. His birth and life all lead up to this
particular point in
history where He would be suspended between heaven and earth.

The Holy Spirit, speaking through the Apostle Paul, reminds us
in Colossians 2:14: “He erased the certificate of debt, with
its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and
has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross.”
Christ took the sins of the whole world upon Himself, so that
we might have forgiveness and eternal life.

The suggested focus of Maundy Thursday is on the *mandate to
love* one another and the tenseness of the situation that
Christ and His disciples faced. By keeping this focus, you’ll
be able to experience similar feelings of despair and
mournfulness today, Maundy Thursday, so as to better
anticipate the joy and gladness felt on Easter Sunday morning.