

## **Sermon for Maundy Thursday, 2 April 2026**

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***Exodus 12.1-4,11-14; 1 Corinthians 11.23-26; John 13.1-17,31b-35***

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen. Please be seated.

Tonight's theme is 'Remember Me Through Love and Service'. Tonight we step into a sacred moment. Maundy Thursday invites us into an upper room, into a meal, into a commandment, and into an act of love that turns the world upside down. Each of our readings from the Old Testament, Epistle, and Gospel, we have heard three powerful messages. They're powerful developments in what is about to change the world.

We heard the importance of Passover in Exodus, the importance of the Lord's Supper in Corinthians, the life of serving others and the foot washing in John's Gospel. At a first glance they seem different, but together, they tell one story; 'God saves, God gives, and God serves'. And God calls each of us to do the same.

In Exodus, it was a meal that means freedom. The people of Israel are still in slavery. But God tells them, 'Prepare a meal, not after freedom comes, but before.' They eat in haste, cloaks tucked in, sandals on, staff in hand, because God is about to act. This meal, the Passover, is not just about remembering the past. It is about trusting that God delivers. And God says, 'This is a day you are to remember for generations to come.' Faith is not just a belief; it is remembrance shaped into practice.

Yesterday, on the 1st of April, last night was the beginning of the Passover, for Jews all over the world. They celebrated with their Seder evening meal, remembering the deliverance from Egypt. And in our epistle reading, we enter into a time when Jesus would for the last time remember the Passover meal with his disciples. A meal that becomes a presence. And we move into that presence of the Upper Room. Jesus takes bread and he takes the cup and he says something astonishing: 'This is my body, this is my blood. Do this in remembrance of me.'

This is not just another meal. This is the Passover fulfilled. Where once there was a lamb, now he becomes the Lamb. Where once there was deliverance from Egypt, now there is deliverance from sin and death. And we can notice this — do this in remembrance — just like in Exodus. But now remembrance is deeper. It is not just recalling an event. It is participating in Christ's life, death, and love. Every time we gather at this table, we are not just looking back. We are being drawn into God's saving work right now.

The Lord who kneels. Because in John's Gospel it surprises us, because it takes us further on. No words of bread and wine. Instead, something shocking. Jesus gets up, takes a towel, and washes his disciples' feet. The job of a servant, the worker, the lowest. And when he comes to Peter, Peter resists because it's not how power works. But Jesus says, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with me,' because this is who God is — not distant, not proud, but kneeling, washing, loving. And then comes the command. The mandatum where Maundy Thursday gets its name: 'Love one another as I have loved you'. Not as comfortable, not as convenient, but as I have loved you.

Our Archbishop of Canterbury, Sarah Mullally, quoted this particular act in her enthronement. The acts of love that serves, love that humbles itself, and love that gives everything. Our service to others is so important.

The table and the towel — here is the heart of tonight. We cannot separate a communion table from the towel. We cannot receive the bread and cup and refuse to love like Jesus. We cannot remember his sacrifice and ignore the needs of others. The Eucharist is not just something we take. It is something that transforms us every time. It sends us out to feed the hungry, forgive the broken, serve the overlooked, and love the unlovable. It is a new commandment for a broken world. And Jesus says, by this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. Not by buildings, not by programmes, not even by words, but by love. And not just any love. Cruciform love. Self-giving love. Foot-washing love. In a world marked by division, fear, and power struggles, this kind of love is not weak. It is revolutionary.

Tonight we are invited to three things. Remember, like Israel at Passover, trust that God still saves. Receive, like the disciples, accept the grace of Christ given for you. And respond, like Jesus, go and love and serve and humble yourself.

As we come to the table tonight, remember the same hands that break the bread are the hands that wash the feet. The same love that saves us is the love we are called to live. So come, receive, and then go, not just remembering Christ but revealing him through lives of love. Amen.