

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Maundy Thursday – April 2, 2026

"{Jesus said,} ³⁴'A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'"

- John 13:34-35 -

Maundy comes from the Latin ‘mandatum’, from where we get the English word *mandate* or *command*. Jesus gives us clear instruction when it comes to our call as disciples. He commands us to love one another. At first glance, it’s easy to think that Jesus is stating the obvious. But Jesus is pushing us. Love shows respect and affection, sure, but Jesus teaches that we are to love others the same way that he loves. That’s much deeper than affection and respect. How does Jesus love us? He loves us in the most sacrificial way, and he calls us to act the same.

Prior to Jesus’ words in these verses from 34 and 35, we hear how Jesus took a towel, bent down at the feet of each of his disciples, and then proceeded to wash each of their feet. In a culture where the people wore sandals and the desert climate resulted in sand and dust, feet were often filthy after walking around. Much like we’re accustomed to taking off our shoes before walking through someone’s home, Middle Eastern people had servants to wash the feet of both homeowners and guests alike. For Jesus to stoop down and take on such a posture was not what any of his disciples expected. But Jesus was leading by example. He calls his followers to wash the feet of others. He calls his followers to take on humility and serve his/her neighbor. Jesus doesn’t call us to boost ourselves and expect words of praise and adoration. No, because we are no better than the next guy. We are all guilty of sin, and we all need Jesus’ washing poured out upon us. We need his grace and mercy, and so Jesus calls us to pour out that same grace and mercy upon our fellow man.

The fourth verse of the hymn “My Hope is Built on Nothing Less,” says, “When he shall come with trumpet sound, oh, may I then in him be found, clothed in his righteousness alone, redeemed to stand before the throne!” We are clothed in Jesus’ righteousness, and we seek to do his will here on earth. On the night before he died on the cross for us, Jesus gave us that law of love. It is not a commandment that we must obey to earn God’s favor—we already enjoy that favor through the gift and sacrifice of his Son. It’s a new commandment that the Holy Spirit has written on our hearts, to live and love in the self-sacrificing way of Christ Jesus.