

Rev. Dan Welch Maundy Thursday 4-14-22 Text: Matthew 26: 17-29 Title: The Upper Room

Have you ever been in a discussion when a person says something and you think to yourself, “If you only knew!” They mention something about their childhood and suddenly our childhood nightmares return, and we say to ourselves, “If you only knew.” They mention something about their job, their marriage, their pain—and we think, “If you only knew!” Our back tenses up, a polite smile masks our face, all the while we are thinking, “If you only knew what I said, what I did, you wouldn’t even be talking to me. If you only knew!”

We probably don’t have a tattoo to mark our past, but we all carry scars. What is it for you? A failed friendship? A failed marriage? A battle with the bottle? A meltdown at work? Maybe you haven’t talked to a certain family member in years. Maybe you’ve fought with your spouse for so long that you don’t know how to begin again.

Still, for others, relationships have changed, children have grown, jobs have been lost, and those who were once close have now died. And in the midst of all our pain, we get that sinking feeling, that fear in the pit of our stomach, wondering, “How will I survive?” “How will I manage?” We’re all hiding some kind of pain. “If you only knew!”

We’re in a series called Places of the Passion. Today, on Maundy Thursday, we walk with Jesus to the Upper Room. Coming to the Upper Room we come into the presence of Jesus.

I’ve got bad news and good news for you. The bad news? Jesus knows. Jesus knows everything. Jesus knows everything about everybody. Look at what Matthew says about Jesus. Matthew 9:4, “Knowing their thoughts.” Matthew 12:25, “Knowing their thoughts.” Matthew 22:18, “Knowing their thoughts.”

If that’s not enough, consider these words of David in Psalm 139. “You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.” (vv. 1-2) “You are acquainted with all my ways.” (v. 3) “Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.” (v.4)

What’s the good news? In his account of the Last Supper, Matthew wants us to know that Jesus knows—Jesus knows everything—and still prepares a place for us at the table. How amazing is that?

Jesus certainly knew about Judas. Passover was all about deliverance from enemies out there—from Pharaoh and all the hardships they faced under him. But at the Last Supper Jesus reveals that the enemy isn't only out there. No. The enemy is also right here.

“As they were eating, He said, ‘Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.’ And they were very sorrowful and began to say to Him one after another, ‘Is it I, Lord?’ He answered, ‘He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of Him.’” (Matthew 26:21–24) Where it is written that Judas will betray Jesus? Zechariah 11:12, “And they weighed out as my wages thirty pieces of silver.” Jesus knew! Jesus knew all about Judas yet Judas still has a place at the table!

Jesus knew about the other eleven disciples as well. “Then Jesus said to them, ‘You will all fall away because of Me this night. For it is written, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’” (Matthew 26:31) Where it is written that the disciples will be scattered? Zechariah 13:7, “Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.” Jesus knew that Peter, James, and John would fall asleep in Gethsemane. Jesus knew about Peter's denial. Jesus knew that they would all abandon Him. Yet the disciples still have a place at the table!

This is what is so amazing about the Last Supper! Yes, one will betray Jesus with a kiss; another will deny Him three times; and they all will fall away. But in the midst of all that is wrong and weak and evil and duplicitous and ugly and pompous and selfish about these people, there remains this truth. They all had a place at the table.

Why is it so important to have a place at the table? What happens at this table? As they were eating, “Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’” (Matthew 26:26–28)

A middle-aged and slightly overweight Scottish woman walked out from behind a theater curtain. Her hair was going in a hundred different directions and she was wearing a gold-laced dress that wasn't very

flattering. People in the audience rolled their eyes and let out a collective sigh of disappointment. No one expected anything from this woman. That was the way it was on April 11, 2009, when Susan Boyle began to sing. After her song, though, people exploded with applause! The video clip of Susan Boyle became the most-watched YouTube video at the time. Her first recording broke all sales records. Susan Boyle wasn't what people expected. Susan Boyle was much more!

Here's my point. What may look ordinary can be completely extraordinary. The Lord's Supper is like that. When Christ's words—"Take eat, this is My body, take drink, this is My blood"—are spoken over the bread and wine, it's not what we expect. It's so much more! What may look ordinary can be completely extraordinary!

What is so extraordinary? At this table Jesus delivers His body and blood for forgiveness—for you, for all your sin, for all your sin for all time. Jesus continues with these words. "I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matthew 26:29) We celebrate Holy Communion until Christ comes again and makes all things new in His Father's kingdom. Then we will celebrate in the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom that will have no end!

Until then, though, we have a place at the communion table because all things are not yet new. Memories still haunt us. People still hurt us. Parents still disappoint us. Sin still clings to us. And Satan still harasses us. If you only knew!

Jesus invites us to His table with wounded hands. With His wounds, He reminds us that He knows. Christ's scars are the marks of a God who truly knows us—our suffering, our sin, and our deep pain. But these scars are on the hands of our risen Savior. He not only knows, He conquers, He triumphs. Jesus is victor over every enemy!

Jesus knows us. But Jesus knows us in love. How can we be sure? "This is the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:28) There is a place for you at this table all the days of your life! Amen.

