

Maundy Thursday - Service of Shadows

April 6th, 2023

(All readings from Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 26:1-56, service prepared by Cheryl Williams)

Call to Worship

The darkness deepens, and the Lord grows troubled.

Can we watch with Him?

Can we be the friends at His table who share His bread and wine?

Can we be the companions who journey with Him to the end?

Come, let us worship, let us watch, and let us give thanks for such great love.

Amen.

(from Sacredise 2008 by John van de Laar)

The Shadow of Death – Plotting, Anointing & Predictions

26 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, **2** 'You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.'

3 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, **4** and they conspired to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. **5** But they said, 'Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.'

6 Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, **7** a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. **8** But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said, 'Why this waste? **9** For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor.' **10** But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, 'Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me. **11** For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. **12** By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial. **13** Truly I tell you, wherever this good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.'

Prayer

Most Generous God,

Thank you for Jesus who lived a life of love,

Love that challenged and brought freedom,

Love that blessed and healed,

Love that fed hearts and bodies,

Love that offered refreshing water,

Love that bowed and washed the feet of others,

Love that invited all and dared to hope,

Love that answered deeply held questions,

Love that willed fullness of life for all,

Love that forgave.

Love shown by an un-named woman who lavishly anointed you for your future and gave you dignity.

We will remember.

(Prayer by Cheryl Williams, April 2023)

The Shadow of Betrayal

¹⁴ Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵ and said, 'What will you give me if I betray him to you?' They paid him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶ And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

¹⁷ On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' ¹⁸ He said, 'Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, "The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples."' ¹⁹ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

²⁰ When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; ²¹ and while they were eating, he said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.' ²² And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, 'Surely not I, Lord?' ²³ He answered, 'The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴ The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.' ²⁵ Judas, who betrayed him, said, 'Surely not I, Rabbi?' He replied, 'You have said so.'

Prayer of Confession

Jesus our Lord,

In our fickleness and changing of minds

When we betray another

When we deny the dignity of another

When we put expediency before compassion

When we are indifferent to another's need

When we find it hard to forgive others

Forgive us

Forgive us

Forgive us

Forgive us

Forgive us

Forgive us

(Prayer by Cheryl Williams, April 2023)

The Institution of the Lord's Supper

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' ²⁷ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; ²⁸ for this is my blood of the^d covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'

³⁰ When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Prayer

Jesus our Lord, your humility confounds the proud;

your poverty teaches us of true wealth;

your preaching brings good news to the poor and sets people free.

Jesus our Lord, friend of all, even though they betray and deny you;

bread for the hungry;

life giving water for the thirsty;

healer for the sick

and agent of forgiveness for those seeking it.

Jesus our Lord, saviour and friend; inspiration for us all.

Tonight we remember your last meal with your friends and in so doing honour you. Amen.

(Based on prayer 'Jesus our Lord' in BOFL p 318/9)

Sharing the bread & wine

Jesus our Lord, in the breaking and sharing the bread, come to us.

Jesus our Lord, in the drinking of the cup, renew us.

Amen.

The Shadow of Denial

³¹ Then Jesus said to them, 'You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered."

³² But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.' ³³ Peter said to him, 'Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you.' ³⁴ Jesus said to him, 'Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.' ³⁵ Peter said to him, 'Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.' And so said all the disciples.

Prayer

O God,

How often we deny you:

We stay silent in the face of injustice,

We allow force or conflict rather than love,

We conspire with others rather than collaborate with you,

We sell you out for a few pieces of silver or a moment of fame

We desert you when the going gets tough,

Yet you never leave us. Amen.

(Prayer by Cheryl Williams, April 2023)

Praying in the Shadows

³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' ³⁷ He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. ³⁸ Then he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.' ³⁹ And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.' ⁴⁰ Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? ⁴¹ Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' ⁴² Again he went away for the second time and prayed, 'My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.' ⁴³ Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴ So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵ Then he came to the disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶ Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.'

Song: Stay with Me [Stay With Me \(Taizé\) \[with lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube](#)

Prayers for the World and Each Other

Let us name places, people and situations which need God's loving presence

Silence

For those who hunger and thirst – give them food.

For those who experience violence, war and injustice – give them peace.

For those in Iran, Myanmar and other places of conflict – give them freedom.

For those who are afraid, anxious and confused – give them solace.

For those who betray and deny you – give them forgiveness.

For those who are in pain, sorrow or dying – give them comfort.

For those who are disillusioned – given them hope.

Finally, we pray for ourselves – give us courage.

In the name of Jesus, we offer these our prayers. Amen

(Prayer by Cheryl Williams, April 2023)

The Shadow of Death or Desertion

⁴⁷ While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸ Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.' ⁴⁹ At once he came up to Jesus and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed him. ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, 'Friend, do what you are here to do.' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. ⁵¹ Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. ⁵² Then Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³ Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?' ⁵⁵ At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶ But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.' Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Parting Words as you go out into the night:

We believe

the time is now

to go into the world and face the darkness.

We believe

the moment is right

to face the powers of the world with the love of heaven.

We believe

the place is here

to endure the suffering love calls us to.

We believe

the path is before us

to side with truth in a deafened world.

We believe

the hour is come

to conspire with Christ and move against injustice.

We believe

the gospel is this

love is betrayed but death shall not have the final word.

(Adapted from a prayer written by Roddy Hamilton, and posted on **Mucky**

Paws. <http://www.nkchurch.org.uk/index.php/mucky-paws>)

Song: Stay With Me [Stay With Me \(Taizé\) \[with lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube](#)