



Maundy Thursday | 2nd April 2026

Jesus said *"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you"*

## *Christ's Example to Follow*

Greetings my brothers and sisters in Christ, a great joy to be here. We gather together, this evening to remember the last night of Jesus before his death, a day the church calls Maundy Thursday. I pray, that tonight's message will continue to lift all our spirits, as we journey together, and encourage us, as we live out our lives as Christians, servants of Christ our Lord, committed to lives of service, in His Kingdom!

Let us pray.

*Heavenly Father, as we gather together as living stones, part of your Church, we ask the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts, kindling in them the fire of your love.*

*Almighty God, speak to us through your Holy Spirit, and as we walk in the light of your Spirit may we grow in wisdom, always rejoicing in the comfort He brings, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

This is an evening filled with great significance. Jesus certainly seemed to know his time was drawing to a close, and perhaps, the disciples were beginning to get a sense of that too. At this last meal with them, Jesus gives to his disciples and that includes us, things of the utmost importance, they are

- an act to remember him by,
- an example to follow,
- and a command to live by.

Jesus breaks bread; he shares wine, and he says "Do this in remembrance of me". These words are so well known by us. They are the words that are spoken every week in church: *"This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me... This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."* As we share the bread and wine this evening, as we share it every time we take it, we are not performing some religious duty, we are engaging in an act of remembering. Remembering what Christ has done.

This is Jesus's gift to us – an act so simple that no-one need be excluded: so profound that none of us can ever exhaust its meaning, so holy it touches our souls as well as our minds with its mystery.

For in this act we are taken back to the Last Supper. We find ourselves sitting around the table, looking into the eyes of Jesus, as he speaks to us of his love and his sacrifice. We find ourselves knowing of our own unworthiness to receive such love, and our wonder at his willingness to give it. We find ourselves holding tokens of his body, battered, bruised on the cross, and tasting reminders of his blood, shed for us from hands and side. This is the gift he has given us, so that we may not forget his love and sacrifice. An act to remember him by. On this last night, before his death, Jesus also gives his disciples, and that's us too, an example to follow.

John's gospel paints for us this extraordinary picture of Jesus stooping down, kneeling on the ground, with a towel wrapped round his feet, washing the grubby, smelly feet of his followers. This was an act only the lowest of the low – Gentile slaves – could be compelled to perform. Even Jewish slaves were exempt. Physically unpleasant – sandalled feet through the streets of a city filled with thousands of animals and lacking in adequate sewage systems would not have been exactly clean – but also socially humiliating, this was an act that all would avoid. But on his last night, when maybe Jesus was inwardly crying out for some tender love and care, he bends down and washes the feet of those he knows will deny him and betray him in the next few hours. Here is true humility, true loving service.

Jesus is clear as to who he is and the full extent of his power and authority – John tells us that "*Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power*" – and this is how he expresses it. When you have total power and total love this is how it is expressed – in loving service. In our workplaces, in our communities, in our families, we may see power and authority exercised too in ways which are about ambition and advancement of self. Christ gives us a different example – power, influence, authority is exercised through humble service.

An act to remember him by; an example of service to follow; Jesus also gives us a command to live by. We get the name Maundy Thursday from the word for command, "mandatum". Indeed, in some ways it would be more accurate to call today "New Commandment Thursday". It would certainly help us to put at the very heart of what this day is about Jesus' command: "Love one another".

For it is love that takes Christ to the cross in the act we remember in bread and wine; and it is love that prompts him to wash his disciples' feet. Generous, overflowing, freely given, love. I don't imagine that Jesus thought "*what would be a good way of giving my disciples an example to imitate when I am gone – I know what, I'll wash their feet.*" I think instead, Jesus simply saw their need and delighted in expressing his love in this way, shocking though it may have seemed. And it is love that takes him to the cross, not duty.

Such an overwhelming, personal, passionate love for each one of us that he would do whatever it needed to bring us back into relationship with God, to overcome death, to bring the offer of forgiveness and healing into our world. Such love does not count the cost; it instead focuses on the need of those one loves. And so it should be with us. "*By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*"

When we begin to love each other like that – with a warmth, a joy, a natural affection, an impulsive generosity, a delight in enabling the best for others, a forgetfulness about our own needs as we look to the needs of others – then people will know who we follow, Christ, the King of love.

This evening we will once again remember Christ through His gift of bread and wine; and we will have the opportunity to reflect once more on his example of humble service in the washing of hands and feet. In both those acts, we experience again the overwhelming love of God, a love we are to have for one another. In response to His incredible love for us, may we come to love Him and one another too. AMEN