

Maundy Thursday
St. John 13:1-15
March 28th, 2024
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

He Loved Them unto the End

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Sermon Text:

“Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto His Father, having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end.”

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

We thank Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of all men, that Thou hast given Thyself into death for us to make atonement for our sins, and hast also left us an example of mutual service by humbly washing Thy disciples' feet; we heartily beseech Thee, govern and direct our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit that we may in true faith firmly cling to Thee as our Savior, faithfully serve our neighbor with works of love, and obtain eternal salvation through Thy merit, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dearly beloved, the Apostle and Evangelist St. John tells us that our Lord + Jesus loved His own that were in the world. He loved them unto the end. When St. John began his Gospel, he wrote in the first chapter that our Lord + Jesus came to His own. His own did not receive Him, however. Our Lord came to His own because He loved them. He loved them fully and completely. Even though His own did reject Him. Even though His own did mock Him, spit upon Him, beat Him, and crucify Him, He still loved them. He loved them enough to humble Himself in order to redeem and save them.

He humbled Himself first of all by laying aside His divine power. He came down from Heaven to take upon Himself our flesh. He left His throne in Heaven to be born to a lowly handmaiden, a virgin betrothed to a poor husband who was a carpenter. Our Lord humbled Himself to be born in Bethlehem of Judah, and wrapped up in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. He Who created the Heavens and the Earth humbled Himself to be born as a man in very humble means. This is how much He loved His own. Who are His own? All of mankind. For He created all of mankind. All of mankind is His own, and it is for mankind that our Lord humbles Himself to put on our flesh and suffer and die to make atonement for our sins.

But His own received Him not. The world, all of mankind, rejected Him. The Jews also rejected Him. He came to be their Savior, to be their Messiah, the Anointed One of the Lord God, the Christ, and the Jews received Him not. Instead, they crucified Him on a tree. He came to bring the light of salvation to mankind. He came to bring this light to the Jews, who were the custodians of the promise of a Messiah. This promise of a Savior was given to them to hold and savor. But when He came, they received Him not. They, like the rest of the unbelieving world, chose to remain in darkness—the darkness of sin and death. They were offended by such a humble Messiah. They desired a Messiah

that was like unto them lofty and full of pride. So, they remained in the darkness of their sins, as did the rest of the unbelieving world.

But our Lord + Jesus still loved His own. He loved them unto the end. He loved them without ceasing. For if He did not love His own creation, how could He suffer and die for those who rejected Him; who nailed Him to a tree? He came down from Heaven and took upon Himself our flesh to redeem and save us. He came down from Heaven and was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary and wrapped up in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Now here on the night of His arrest and trial, our Lord still loves His own. He is among those who love Him also. Although there is one who would betray Him, Judas Iscariot. He, therefore, knowing that His hour to redeem mankind had come, sets an example of His humility before His Apostles. He gives them one last lesson in humility.

And in this lesson, He gives a sign of His work of redemption. For St. John writes that He “layeth aside His garments.” Just like He had laid aside His divine power and authority, He now lays aside His garments. And He performs the act, the work, of a servant, of a slave. This is why St. Peter is so offended that the Lord + Jesus would wash his feet. What our Lord was doing was the work of the servants. St. Peter did not want His Lord to take the role of a servant. But our Lord + Jesus must take upon Himself the humble role of a servant if we are to be clean. For if He does not humble Himself even to the point of death, even the death of the cross, we can have no part in Him.

We must be washed by Him in His death. In Holy Baptism, we are washed in the Blood of our Lord + Jesus. We are buried with Him in His death. He washes and renews us through the gracious water of life that gives us the Holy Ghost and cleanses us from all sin and error. By this washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost, we are washed clean and free from all sins and transgressions. We are made into a new creation. For He who is in the Christ, the Christ is also in him. And he in whom the Christ dwells has life and immortality through the Lord + Jesus, the Christ.

This is also a sign of our Lord’s love for us. For we have the gift of Holy Baptism because our Lord humbled Himself to endure the agonies of the tree of the holy cross. He won for us the victory over sin and death, and bestows those rewards upon us through Holy Baptism. We have forgiveness, life, and salvation because our Lord has loved us as His own. We have His gifts because He has laid aside His divinity so that He might bring us into the eternal marvelous light of His saving grace.

Having been washed in the waters of Holy Baptism, we have placed upon us His holy Name. We are called by His Name. We are now His own beloved. We are the ones to Him He has come to claim as His own. We are the ones whom He comes to redeem and save, and He grants us faith to believe on Him and rejoice that we are His people, and He is our Lord and Savior.

Those who are His own, those who have His Name placed upon them in Holy Baptism, also receive from Him the gift of His very own Body and Blood given in bread and wine. In this our Lord also shows His love for us. For we cannot have this meal of the remission of our sins if our Lord and Savior + Jesus, the Christ, does not offer up His life as a ransom for ours on the tree of the holy cross. As He laid aside His garments on this night in the Upper Room with His Apostles, and even as He laid aside His divinity to take upon Himself our flesh and be born as one of us, He is also stripped of His garments so that He might hang naked on the tree of the cross.

We lost our garment of the image of the Lord God when our first parents, Adam and Eve, sinned in the Garden of Eden. Even though we wear earthly clothes, we are spiritually naked and bear our shame for all to see, especially when our sins are on full display. Our Lord + Jesus also bore our naked us from sin, and bore our shame on the tree of the holy cross. He endures the mockery and shame that we deserve on account of our manifold sins and trespasses. Having borne our sins and shame in His Body on the tree of the cross, He gives up His spirit and dies. He is placed into the tomb. The place

where all those who have sinned deserve to be. He goes to the place where we deserve to be on account of our manifold sins and trespasses. He rests in the grave, dead, having borne our sins and iniquities.

By this death, by this ultimate act of humility, He shows that He indeed loves His own. He loves those to whom He came to save and redeem. He loves His own unto the end. And He now clothes us with His righteousness. We are no longer naked and full of shame. For He has clothed us with the white robe of His very own righteousness. We bear His righteousness so that the heavenly Father cannot see the sin with which we were born underneath the garment of our Lord's righteousness. Our Lord + Jesus having clothed us in His righteousness, now invites us to partake of the meal which He has prepared for us poor sinners. We receive the meal of His very Body and very Blood given to us in bread and wine.

Through this meal He confirms that we are indeed His own. We are the ones to whom He has come. Through this meal He confirms His love for us. For in this meal, we remember His sacrifice for us. We remember and proclaim our Lord's death until He comes again on the Last Day. Our Lord's suffering and death shows us how much He loves us. For He has suffered and died so that we might be saved from the same fate. He has saved us that we might have the remission of our sins.

Therefore, my dearly beloved, let us receive our Lord + Jesus and all His gifts with thanksgiving and praise. For He has come to us, He has come to His own, to love us unto the end. In this act of our Lord's love for us, He has given us an example of how to love one another. Let us also set aside the garment of our own selfish pride, and put on the love of the Christ, so that we might love Him as our only Lord and Savior, and might also love one another with a fervent love. For we have been washed and cleansed by Him, and bear His righteousness through the waters of Holy Baptism. We have been gifted faith to come to this altar and receive from our Lord His very Body and Blood in bread and wine, so that we might receive from Him forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!