

Maundy Thursday – April 2, 2026

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

I have this memory from college. And I always go back and forth between regretting it or accepting that there was more going on in the moment. So, I was a sophomore. I had just changed my major to religion. And I was in a bit of an angsty period in my faith. I had taken this class that really broke down some of the things that had been taught to me in my youth. And began to reshape my faith in ways that would eventually get me to the point I am today... But I wasn't there yet. And I was at this party, and we were sitting out back having way too deep of conversations for a Friday night with libations involved. And this guy asked me since I was a religion major, if I was a Christian.

And I said no.

It wasn't the entire truth, but I was at a point where I did not want to be lumped in with what people thought of as Christians. I wasn't one of "those," you know what I mean? I didn't understand people of faith who claimed to follow Jesus, but then violated Jesus' command that tells us to love each other. I was really at a point where I was struggling to reconcile Jesus with how his followers acted.

Then this morning, as I was getting ready, I usually scroll through TikTok and this guy came up and was saying the same thing here. He didn't like being called a Christian if folks were going to think that he was the same as what the stereotype has become.

And so I was sitting there thinking, what can we do to change the stereotype? How can we let folks know that not all Christians are Sunday only Christians? Not all Christians are keyboard warriors who yell bible verses online and then act differently among people. How can we show the world what it truly means to follow Jesus?

For this guy on TikTok. For college aged me. And for all of those who are disillusioned by the church and in particular, the people who make up the church.

Maundy Thursday is the perfect night to contemplate these thoughts. Jesus' final thoughts and deeds before he is dragged away to his trial and death. And they were instructions, but also means of grace. Love one another as we have been loved by Jesus. Serve one another. Jesus instituted his holy supper as a reminder of the sacrifice he was making. Everyone at the table was fed. Everyone at that table then had their feet washed by Jesus.

And that included Judas himself. One of the biggest villains in scripture still received grace.

Modern Christianity has become known as an institution of exclusion. But that is not how Jesus' table operated. All were welcome, even the one who would ultimately be responsible for handing him over to his death. May this Maundy Thursday be that reminder for us. We don't get a say in who is included or excluded from the church. Jesus included all those who we would likely try to exclude today. By grace that not one of us might deserve. But like it or not, we get it.

If Judas is included. If Peter is included even though he's about to deny Jesus. Then all of us, and all of "them" are included as well.

May we take Jesus' command out of these doors into the world. Love as we have been loved. And show the world just how amazing that love is. Amen.