

5 Simple Practices for Lent.

Theme: Spiritual Hunger

1. Read the Farewell Discourses of Jesus found in John 13-17 over and over. Study and reflect on what Jesus is telling his disciples and us as the church today
2. Pray through the Prayer of Humble Access (page 30, UM Hymnal). This is the liturgy many grew up saying as they approached Holy Communion. It is a reminder to help us toward humility and being receptive to God's grace.

PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS

We do not presume to come to this thy table,
O merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in thy manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table.
But thou art the same Lord,
whose property is always to have mercy.
Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord,
so to partake of this Sacrament of thy Son Jesus Christ,
that we may walk in newness of life,
may grow into his likeness,
and may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

3. Read, listen to and study Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s sermon, "A Knock at Midnight". This is about the friend who persists in seeking bread. A question is how are we hungering for justice and righteousness. (A link to a Youtube video is on our website.)
4. Pray through the Collection of Hymns for Personal Devotion. Spend some time with the words of each hymn. Each page, each stanza (paragraph) is a prayer and they are powerful prayers. Pray these prayers.
5. Make a financial gift toward our campus ministries for food insecurity among many college students on campuses across our conference. You may make your gift to the church noted for "Campus Ministry." We will distribute to our two local Methodist colleges in the area.
6. Share a meal with a companion or mentor, a missional network or covenant group and reflect on what it means to hunger and thirst for justice and righteousness, and how our churches can meet the spiritual hungers of our own people and those who surround us.



The Gospel of John Chapters 13-17

John 13

Foot washing

Before the Festival of Passover, Jesus knew that his time had come to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them fully.

² Jesus and his disciples were sharing the evening meal. The devil had already provoked Judas, Simon Iscariot's son, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew the Father had given everything into his hands and that he had come from God and was returning to God. ⁴ So he got up from the table and took off his robes. Picking up a linen towel, he tied it around his waist. ⁵ Then he poured water into a washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he was wearing. ⁶ When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷ Jesus replied, "You don't understand what I'm doing now, but you will understand later."

⁸ "No!" Peter said. "You will never wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't have a place with me."

⁹ Simon Peter said, "Lord, not only my feet but also my hands and my head!"

¹⁰ Jesus responded, "Those who have bathed need only to have their feet washed, because they are completely clean. You disciples are clean, but not every one of you." ¹¹ He knew who would betray him. That's why he said, "Not every one of you is clean."

¹² After he washed the disciples' feet, he put on his robes and returned to his place at the table. He said to them, "Do you know what I've done for you?" ¹³ You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you speak correctly, because I am. ¹⁴ If I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you too must wash each other's feet. ¹⁵ I have given you an example: Just as I have done, you also must do. ¹⁶ I assure you, servants aren't greater than their master, nor are those who are sent greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷ Since you know these things, you will be happy if you do them. ¹⁸ I'm not speaking about all of you. I know those whom I've chosen. But this is to fulfill the scripture, The one who eats my bread has turned against me.^[a]

¹⁹ "I'm telling you this now, before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I Am. ²⁰ I assure you that whoever receives someone I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."



Announcement of the betrayal

²¹ After he said these things, Jesus was deeply disturbed and testified, “I assure you, one of you will betray me.”

²² His disciples looked at each other, confused about which of them he was talking about. ²³ One of the disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, was at Jesus’ side. ²⁴ Simon Peter nodded at him to get him to ask Jesus who he was talking about. ²⁵ Leaning back toward Jesus, this disciple asked, “Lord, who is it?”

²⁶ Jesus answered, “It’s the one to whom I will give this piece of bread once I have dipped into the bowl.” Then he dipped the piece of bread and gave it to Judas, Simon Iscariot’s son. ²⁷ After Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus told him, “What you are about to do, do quickly.” ²⁸ No one sitting at the table understood why Jesus said this to him. ²⁹ Some thought that, since Judas kept the money bag, Jesus told him, “Go, buy what we need for the feast,” or that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰ So when Judas took the bread, he left immediately. And it was night.

Love commandment

³¹ When Judas was gone, Jesus said, “Now the Human One^[b] has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³² If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify the Human One^[c] in himself and will glorify him immediately. ³³ Little children, I’m with you for a little while longer. You will look for me—but, just as I told the Jewish leaders, I also tell you now—‘Where I’m going, you can’t come.’

³⁴ “I give you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. ³⁵ This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other.”

Announcement of Peter’s denial

³⁶ Simon Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, where are you going?”

Jesus answered, “Where I am going, you can’t follow me now, but you will follow later.”

³⁷ Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I’ll give up my life for you.”

³⁸ Jesus replied, “Will you give up your life for me? I assure you that you will deny me three times before the rooster crows.

Footnotes

- a. John 13:18 Ps 41:9
- b. John 13:31 Or Son of Man
- c. John 13:32 Or Son of Man



“Don’t be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me. ² My Father’s house has room to spare. If that weren’t the case, would I have told you that I’m going to prepare a place for you? ³ When I go to prepare a place for you, I will return and take you to be with me so that where I am you will be too. ⁴ You know the way to the place I’m going.”

⁵ Thomas asked, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going. How can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you have really known me, you will also know the Father. From now on you know him and have seen him.”

⁸ Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father; that will be enough for us.”

⁹ Jesus replied, “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been with you all this time? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I have spoken to you I don’t speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹ Trust me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or at least believe on account of the works themselves. ¹² I assure you that whoever believes in me will do the works that I do. They will do even greater works than these because I am going to the Father. ¹³ I will do whatever you ask for in my name, so that the Father can be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ When you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it.

I won’t leave you as orphans

¹⁵ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ I will ask the Father, and he will send another Companion,^[a] who will be with you forever. ¹⁷ This Companion is the Spirit of Truth, whom the world can’t receive because it neither sees him nor recognizes him. You know him, because he lives with you and will be with you.

¹⁸ “I won’t leave you as orphans. I will come to you. ¹⁹ Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Because I live, you will live too. ²⁰ On that day you will know that I am in my Father, you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹ Whoever has my commandments and keeps them loves me. Whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

²² Judas (not Judas Iscariot) asked, “Lord, why are you about to reveal yourself to us and not to the world?”

²³ Jesus answered, “Whoever loves me will keep my word. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴ Whoever doesn’t love me doesn’t keep my words. The word that you hear isn’t mine. It is the word of the Father who sent me.

²⁵ “I have spoken these things to you while I am with you. ²⁶ The Companion,^[b] the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I told you.



²⁷ "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. I give to you not as the world gives. Don't be troubled or afraid. ²⁸ You have heard me tell you, 'I'm going away and returning to you.' If you loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than me. ²⁹ I have told you before it happens so that when it happens you will believe. ³⁰ I won't say much more to you because this world's ruler is coming. He has nothing on me. ³¹ Rather, he comes so that the world will know that I love the Father and do just as the Father has commanded me. Get up. We're leaving this place.

Footnotes

- a. John 14:16 Or Advocate
- b. John 14:26 Or Advocate

John 15

I am the true vine

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vineyard keeper. ² He removes any of my branches that don't produce fruit, and he trims any branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit. ³ You are already trimmed because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. A branch can't produce fruit by itself, but must remain in the vine. Likewise, you can't produce fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, then you will produce much fruit. Without me, you can't do anything. ⁶ If you don't remain in me, you will be like a branch that is thrown out and dries up. Those branches are gathered up, thrown into a fire, and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified when you produce much fruit and in this way prove that you are my disciples.

Love each other

⁹ "As the Father loved me, I too have loved you. Remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have said these things to you so that my joy will be in you and your joy will be complete. ¹² This is my commandment: love each other just as I have loved you. ¹³ No one has greater love than to give up one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I don't call you servants any longer, because servants don't know what their master is doing. Instead, I call you friends, because everything I heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You didn't choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you could go and produce fruit and so that your fruit could last. As a result, whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you. ¹⁷ I give you these commandments so that you can love each other.



If the world hates you

¹⁸ “If the world hates you, know that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. However, I have chosen you out of the world, and you don’t belong to the world. This is why the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember what I told you, ‘Servants aren’t greater than their master.’ If the world harassed me, it will harass you too. If it kept my word, it will also keep yours. ²¹ The world will do all these things to you on account of my name, because it doesn’t know the one who sent me.

²² “If I hadn’t come and spoken to the people of this world, they wouldn’t be sinners. But now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ Whoever hates me also hates the Father. ²⁴ If I hadn’t done works among them that no one else had done, they wouldn’t be sinners. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. ²⁵ This fulfills the word written in their Law, They hated me without a reason.^[a]

²⁶ “When the Companion^[b] comes, whom I will send from the Father—the Spirit of Truth who proceeds from the Father—he will testify about me. ²⁷ You will testify too, because you have been with me from the beginning.

Footnotes

c. John 15:25 Pss 35:19; 69:4

d. John 15:26 Or Advocate



John 16

I have said these things to you so that you won't fall away. ² They will expel you from the synagogue. The time is coming when those who kill you will think that they are doing a service to God. ³ They will do these things because they don't know the Father or me. ⁴ But I have said these things to you so that when their time comes, you will remember that I told you about them.

I go away

"I didn't say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. ⁵ But now I go away to the one who sent me. None of you ask me, 'Where are you going?'" ⁶ Yet because I have said these things to you, you are filled with sorrow. ⁷ I assure you that it is better for you that I go away. If I don't go away, the Companion[a] won't come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will show the world it was wrong about sin, righteousness, and judgment. ⁹ He will show the world it was wrong about sin because they don't believe in me. ¹⁰ He will show the world it was wrong about righteousness because I'm going to the Father and you won't see me anymore. ¹¹ He will show the world it was wrong about judgment because this world's ruler stands condemned.

I still have many things to say

¹² "I have much more to say to you, but you can't handle it now. ¹³ However, when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you in all truth. He won't speak on his own, but will say whatever he hears and will proclaim to you what is to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and proclaim it to you. ¹⁵ Everything that the Father has is mine. That's why I said that the Spirit takes what is mine and will proclaim it to you. ¹⁶ Soon you won't be able to see me; soon after that, you will see me."

I will see you again

¹⁷ Some of Jesus' disciples said to each other, "What does he mean: 'Soon you won't see me, and soon after that you will see me' and 'Because I'm going to the Father'?" ¹⁸ What does he mean by 'soon'? We don't understand what he's talking about."

¹⁹ Jesus knew they wanted to ask him, so he said, "Are you trying to find out from each other what I meant when I said, 'Soon you won't see me, and soon after that you will see me'?" ²⁰ I assure you that you will cry and lament, and the world will be happy. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. ²¹ When a woman gives birth, she has pain because her time has come. But when the child is born, she no longer remembers her distress because of her joy that a child has been born into the world. ²² In the same way, you have sorrow now; but I will see you again, and you will be overjoyed. No one takes away your joy. ²³ In that day, you won't ask me anything. I assure you that the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ²⁴ Up to now, you have asked nothing in my name. Ask and you will receive so that your joy will be complete.



I have conquered the world

²⁵ “I’ve been using figures of speech with you. The time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in such analogies. Instead, I will tell you plainly about the Father. ²⁶ In that day you will ask in my name. I’m not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. ²⁷ The Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and believed that I came from God. ²⁸ I left the Father and came into the world. I tell you again: I am leaving the world and returning to the Father.”

²⁹ His disciples said, “See! Now you speak plainly; you aren’t using figures of speech. ³⁰ Now we know that you know everything and you don’t need anyone to ask you. Because of this we believe you have come from God.”

³¹ Jesus replied, “Now you believe? ³² Look! A time is coming—and is here!—when each of you will be scattered to your own homes and you will leave me alone. I’m not really alone, for the Father is with me. ³³ I’ve said these things to you so that you will have peace in me. In the world you have distress. But be encouraged! I have conquered the world.”

Footnotes

a. John 16:7 Or Advocate

John 17

Jesus prays

When Jesus finished saying these things, he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, so that the Son can glorify you. ² You gave him authority over everyone so that he could give eternal life to everyone you gave him. ³ This is eternal life: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you sent. ⁴ I have glorified you on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ Now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I shared with you before the world was created.

⁶ “I have revealed your name to the people you gave me from this world. They were yours and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸ This is because I gave them the words that you gave me, and they received them. They truly understood that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.

⁹ “I’m praying for them. I’m not praying for the world but for those you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰ Everything that is mine is yours and everything that is yours is mine; I have been glorified in them. ¹¹ I’m no longer in the world, but they are in the world, even as I’m coming to you. Holy Father, watch over them in your name, the name you gave me, that they will be one just as we are one. ¹² When I was with them, I watched over them in your name, the name you gave to me, and I kept them safe. None of them were lost, except the one who was destined for destruction, so that scripture would be fulfilled. ¹³ Now I’m coming to you and I say these things while I’m in the world so that they can share completely in my joy. ¹⁴ I gave your word to them and the world hated them, because they don’t belong to this world, just as I



don't belong to this world. ¹⁵ I'm not asking that you take them out of this world but that you keep them safe from the evil one. ¹⁶ They don't belong to this world, just as I don't belong to this world. ¹⁷ Make them holy in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ I made myself holy on their behalf so that they also would be made holy in the truth.

²⁰ "I'm not praying only for them but also for those who believe in me because of their word. ²¹ I pray they will be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. I pray that they also will be in us, so that the world will believe that you sent me. ²² I've given them the glory that you gave me so that they can be one just as we are one. ²³ I'm in them and you are in me so that they will be made perfectly one. Then the world will know that you sent me and that you have loved them just as you loved me.

²⁴ "Father, I want those you gave me to be with me where I am. Then they can see my glory, which you gave me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

²⁵ "Righteous Father, even the world didn't know you, but I've known you, and these believers know that you sent me. ²⁶ I've made your name known to them and will continue to make it known so that your love for me will be in them, and I myself will be in them."



Title: Jesus Washing Peter's Feet

Notes: Ford Madox Brown was a British painter known for his works on historical and moral subjects. In this painting of the events just before the Last Supper scene, Brown depicts the disciples faces with a level of stunning detail. Some appear merely disconcerted while others are absolutely horrified and humiliated at Jesus' act of loving service. Peter sits awkwardly in an embarrassed posture as Jesus kneels before him to wash his feet. The unusually low viewpoint allows spectators to place themselves in a vulnerable position alongside Jesus. Peter had to be taught that the traditional worldly ways of power, violence, and hierarchy needed to be cleansed from his expectations regarding Jesus' mission. Jesus came to wash away this evil disease of humanity and teach us to be truly human—serving one another in acts of compassion and loving kindness. Ridding the world of evil with violence is directly opposed to the gentle sacrifice of Jesus laying down his life to show us a better way.

Attribution: Brown, Ford Madox, 1821-1893. Jesus Washing Peter's Feet, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56655> [retrieved February 7, 2024]. Original source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jesus_washing_Peter%27s_feet.jpg.

San Clemente - "Triumph of the Cross" - mosaics in apse of 12th century church

This extant 12th-16th century church was built upon a 4th century early Christian church which was built upon a 1st century Mithraic temple. The various layers of the centuries-old structures can be visited today. The apse mosaics are rich with iconographic symbolism, some from much older Christian churches in Rome, as the mosaic band of sheep from the 6th century mosaics in Santi Cosma e Damiano

More about the mosaic: <https://thevcs.org/thirsting-god#second-tree-life>

Attribution: San Clemente - "Triumph of the Cross" - mosaics in apse of 12th century church, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=54429> [retrieved February 7, 2024]. Original source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Apsis_mosaic_San_Clemente.jpg.

