

HOLY THURSDAY HOMILY 2016

1. The Lord's Supper is a strange occurrence
 - a. ordinary Passover meal
 - b. Jesus and His disciples come together
 - c. They fulfill the command of God to remember an action that happened thousands of years earlier
 - d. They remembered how God told them to butcher a lamb, put its blood on doorposts
 - e. They were to eat this lamb prepared to run
 - f. Because they were in a hurry they did not have time to let bread rise so they ate unleavened bread
 - g. And run they did because the last plague of the Egyptians was the death of the first-born sons in every house not protected by the blood of the lamb on its doorposts
 - h. In the Passover meal the Jews remembered that God had freed them from slavery and formed them into a people
 - i. For the disciples this was likely an annual holiday meal
 - j. In the meal there are four ritual blessings where they drink the wine rejoicing in how God has saved them
2. But in this meal something different happens
 - a. Jesus takes the bread and instead of saying the usual blessing when He breaks it
 - b. He says this is my body which will be given up for you
 - c. Similarly at the end of the meal when they are to drink from the cup for the fourth time
 - d. This is the cup of my blood which will be poured out for you
 - e. Then He tells the disciples to do this in memory of Him
3. Some powerful things are happening
 - a. Jesus is announcing to his disciples that He is acting like God did in the Exodus
 - b. But now He Himself is the lamb whose blood will free them from death and slavery
 - c. So Jesus is preparing them for the devastating event which will happen on Friday
 - d. But it is not just devastating it is also life-giving
 - e. It will not be the end of His action rather the beginning
 - f. He asks them to come together and remember by breaking bread and sharing a cup
 - g. This will not be a nostalgic kind of remembering
4. When they do this Jesus Himself will be present

- a. In this bread which will be broken we will become part of His body which was broken for us
 - b. In the wine poured into the cup we will become part of His blood poured out for us
 - c. Whenever we perform this action, we will become part of the sacrifice of the cross
5. Gospel of John reminds us that it is not enough that we become passive members of his body by eating it
- a. When we eat His Body and Drink His Blood, Jesus reveals his present within us
 - b. If Jesus is within us, we must allow Him to act through us
 - c. So we see Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, doing the work of a slave
 - d. Peter is uncomfortable with this,
 - e. They wore sandals, likely no socks, shared the road with donkeys, Roman horses
 - f. These are going to be very dirty, tired feet
 - g. Jesus washes the feet and tells them they are to do this in remembrance of Him
 - h. They are to humble themselves to the level of slaves for each other
 - i. Do whatever is necessary for the comfort of their friends
 - j. When Jesus talks of loving your neighbor, this is not some kind of vague, have a nice day kind of love
 - k. It is a bend down and wash their feet, kind of love
6. We tend to make faith and religion boring, nice rituals without meaning
- a. But if we pay attention to what happens in Holy week, we realize rituals have powerful meanings
 - b. We are talking about a God who loves us so much He becomes one of us so that He can suffer and die for us
 - c. This man, this God is challenging us to learn to love each other so much that we would be willing to wash each other's feet
 - d. Even feet that are coated with dust and animal droppings