

Maundy Thursday Traditions

Traditions within our families.

Certain weird things like passwords 'Chickeny-pockins' in my house! Tooth fairy – my family under pillow. Late husband's family in a glass buy the bed. Yellow car game. Car snooker. Pub cricket.

Fish Pie on Good Friday?

Grace? Prayer before bed? Same one with kids.

Jewish faith and culture is full of traditions. Torah – Orthodox Jews having prayers for so many things in their lives.

Here tonight we celebrate our greatest tradition, the sharing of Bread and Wine. It is something all Christians do – at different frequencies and with different names, but nevertheless the gift and the tradition remains.

We hear the words 'Do this in remembrance of me.' We come close to Jesus in this deep gift of himself. We are fed by him so that as we live in him, he lives in us. It's a precious time – coming to communion. Every Sunday here we share that wonderful moment together and how much more precious it is now having not been able to be together over the last year.

As we take communion in remembrance of the Maundy Thursday meal, and, just as the Jews celebrate the Passover and freedom from slavery, we too are now free because of Christ.

But, I want to ask, what else do we do 'in remembrance of Him' in our daily lives? Where are our traditions?

I wonder, when are the times we really remember Jesus' presence. What are the structures and customs in your life which help you do everything in remembrance of the great gift of Jesus? He gave his body and blood and we so often forget him and remember things which don't really matter. As we emerge from Coronavirus we have an opportunity to reshape our lives.

Perhaps we need to think about our personal and family traditions. We need to think about what is most important to us and put Jesus right at the centre. Our priorities and the things we remember should be in response to Jesus – because we want to give thanks for the greatest gift of Himself that he gave us.

Day to day, what do you need to make your own tradition, so to speak. Will you always slowly and thoughtfully say the Lord's prayer each morning. Will you read a chapter of the bible. Will you make sure you come to church on a Sunday no matter what? Could being in a home group become part of your weekly routine? Could you write letter to one person each week and say you've been praying for them? Or maybe there's someone who doesn't know Jesus you could pray for each day?

I spoke to someone on Maundy Thursday two years ago who is in his 80's. He'd been offered a wonderful opportunity the next day to see a very special Cricket match, to be in a VIP area and to be wined and dined all day in gratitude for his contribution to the sport. He declined. Why? Because it is Good Friday and it is the day he goes to church to remember Jesus' death. There we find someone who has made a tradition over the course of his life – not just because it is a tradition, but because he is, in every way, living his life in remembrance of Jesus.

Tonight we have remembered the traditions of the Jewish faith and the church as we share this Holy Sacrament in remembrance of Jesus. I ask you again, as you leave tonight; to reflect on how you remember Jesus each moment of your life and I encourage you to begin a new tradition in response to His great love for you.