

# Maundy Thursday

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[ 0 : 00 ] When Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

Worship this evening's holy gospel in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. From the world's perspective, it appears Jesus' death was beyond his control, that he was a victim of circumstance.

This is not so. Everything that happened to Jesus in his passion and death was part of the fulfillment of God's perfect design for man's redemption.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus tells us he knew how his life would end. To Nicodemus he said, As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.

He knew he was born to die as the perfect sacrifice for the world's sins. In St. John 10, verse 11, he declared, I am the good shepherd.

[ 1 : 09 ] The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. Jesus did not die one moment before the Father's appointed time, or by any other means than by the Father's appointed means.

In St. John 10, verse 18, Jesus said, No man takes my life for me, but I lay it down myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.

This commandment have I received from my Father. His final words from the cross were, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

In other words, Father, I willfully surrender my spirit into your care. Only when the scriptures concerning him had been filled and the work of salvation was finished, only then did Jesus willfully dismiss his spirit and trusting it into his Father's hands.

Jesus' life was not stolen from him. At the appointed time, Jesus obediently and freely surrendered it to the Father.

[ 2 : 29 ] What was true in Jesus' life can be true in ours also. We too can commend our lives to the Father and live in confident assurance that nothing that occurs in them is outside of God's will, which is to save us eternally in Christ.

When trials come, trials such as the ones we've been experiencing this past year, we can pray as Jesus did, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me.

Nevertheless, not my will, but your will be done. If we, as Jesus did, submit ourselves to the Father's will, his purpose for us will be fulfilled, just as Jesus' purpose was fulfilled.

We will be confident that we truly are the Father's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 2.10 Our daily lives will become focused upon fulfilling the Father's will to the glory of Jesus and to building up his body, the church.

[ 3 : 45 ] Now for this to take place, a transaction must occur. An act of the will needs to be made. We must take hold of the grace we are given in the sacraments and through the word and prayer and by an act of our will working by faith, surrender our will to the Father in exchange for his will for us.

In Romans 12.1, St. Paul says, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

As Jesus gave himself up to be the once-for-all sacrifice for sin, we must surrender ourselves as living sacrifices to be used as God wills.

With St. Paul in Galatians 2.20, we must strive to be able to say, I am crucified with Christ.

Nevertheless, I live.

Yet not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

[ 5 : 06 ] This is actually the fulfillment of our baptism. For in Romans 6.3 and 4, we are told, do you not know that as many of us, as we're baptized into Jesus Christ, we're baptized into his death.

Therefore, we are buried with him in baptism, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorying of the Father, even so also we should walk in newness of life.

As we walk in this baptismal life, in this crucified life, we will gain assurance that nothing that happens in our life, both good and bad as the world would call it, is beyond the Father's control.

We will live the life Jesus calls us to in St. Matthew 6, verses 25-34, which can be summed up simply as, do not worry, do not be afraid.

We'll have confidence that all things are truly working together for good, because we love God, we are called according to his purpose. We'll be able to say, Father, into thy hands, I commend my life.

[ 6 : 26 ] This transaction of the will is beautifully exemplified by St. Peter. In the garden, Jesus told Peter to watch and pray so he would not fall into temptation. Instead, Peter slept.

Hours later, he denied Jesus three times. But Peter repented, surrendered his own will for the Father's will, and from that day forward, lived a life that was crucified with Christ.

After the resurrection along the Sea of Tiberias, Jesus told Peter, Most assuredly I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished.

But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish. This Jesus spoke, signifying by what death Peter would glorify God.

Years later, Jesus' words to Peter were fulfilled when he was placed on a literal cross in Rome. Peter was not crucified for sins, his own or anyone else's.

[ 7 : 36 ] He was crucified as a testimony of a man doing the Father's will for the glory of Jesus Christ. And when it happened, he too was not a victim of circumstance.

He was an obedient servant of Jesus, submitted to the Father's will. He was a man that completely fulfilled his baptism.

Jesus lived his entire life in accord with the Father's will. He knew his suffering was the Father's will, and that he would not die until the Father had been glorified in and through his life.

You and I can have that same type of assurance, but we must first take part in that transaction.

We must take hold of the grace we are being given, including tonight. Submit our will to the Father's will. Take up our cross and be crucified with Christ.

[ 8 : 45 ] My brothers and sisters, may this transaction begin to take place in our lives this evening. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Amen.