

Maundy Thursday reflection

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Maundy Thursday reflection – Exodus 12, John 13

We're given the story of the Passover as our first reading. It's the Jewish people's formative story about their escape from slavery; about God taking leadership of them. Leading them from being slaves to being a people; a people who would be God's means of blessing all families of the Earth.

Their slavery was one they had gradually fallen into. They'd started living in Egypt as a privileged people, protected by their patron, Joseph's special relationship with the Pharaoh. But once a new Pharaoh came along, things changed, and their status deteriorated. By the time Moses came along, they were a brutalised underclass forced to work under unbearable conditions.

Today's Passover reading sees them just about to escape. Their escape will be associated with death; with a sacrifice that they offer, and a final, terrible curse visited on Egypt. And their escape will entail a journey of forty years, seeing if they will follow God.

This evening's Gospel story is associated with the Passover story because it's also a story about escape from slavery. There's also a feared ruling group – the Roman Empire. But the slavery we escape from is not servitude to a ruling group. Rather, it's a slavery that comes from alienation; a slavery that comes from our alienation from the source of our being – from God. Cut off from God, we are easy prey to any power that seeks to take us over.

Paul says we experience the Source of our being – we are connected to God – principally through the things God has created. We experience God, then, through our connection to

other creatures, and to creation as a whole. We experience God through relationship. And we see Jesus today teaching his friends that this relationship – this healing of alienation and loneliness – is experienced when we enter into a life of voluntary service whose motivation is love. That stops us being the centre of our own lives – which is the heart of alienation – and opens us up to the world of loving service which is our way of being God's blessing to all families of the Earth.

Jesus demonstrated this in his life of self-giving love, and through tonight's simple example of servant leadership – washing his friends' feet. Leadership is service, and we are called to that leadership in a world that is starved of love and starved of real leadership. Amen