



A Living Lord's Supper

A script for a dramatic experience of Communion

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Congregational Hymn 203 "His Name Is Wonderful"

While the congregation sings, Peter and John, with baskets of food, enter and dialogue. Peter and John see the man with the water pitcher, move back across the front, and follow him to the upper room. They ask him if this is the place; the man sets down the pitcher, affirms Peter and John, and leaves. They begin to set the Passover meal in place.

Pastor: Tonight we invite you to the Lord's table. We invite you to imagine what it must have been like on the night that Jesus was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. Let's pray.

Pastoral Prayer

Pastor: Now the day of the Passover arrived when the Passover Lamb was killed and eaten with the unleavened bread. Jesus sent Peter and John ahead to find a place to prepare their meal. They asked Him where to go, and He told them they would see a man carrying a pitcher of water, and they should follow him into the house he entered. Jesus said to ask the man to show them the room where they could eat the Passover meal together. Then they were to prepare for the meal. Peter and John did just as Jesus had instructed them. They entered the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and they made arrangements and prepared the Passover supper.

Congregational Hymn 273 “Freely, Freely”

The disciples and Jesus enter.

Pastor: What were they thinking as they gathered for the meal and the events of the evening unfolded?

The stage lights dim as a light is solely on Peter.

Peter: I get so angry with James and John sometimes. . . . What did they think they were doing? Trying to get the Lord to give them the first two places in the new kingdom! It's not their decision—or their mother's! It's His! *(Pause)* Perhaps the honor will be mine, but if I'm not first, . . . well it's His decision, not mine. Maybe that's what He's been thinking about. He seems to be so preoccupied, as though something of unusual significance is about to take place. Here we are gathering for the most important meal of the year, and there's all this trouble boiling just beneath the surface. Everyone seems to be thinking, “What's in this new kingdom for me?” I must do better.

Peter moves back to the group. The disciples begin to take their place (sit in groups as directed) except for Judas, who remains aloof.

Jesus: Help me be patient, Father. How can they be thinking about such petty issues when the whole world is at stake? I know they cannot see things the way You have revealed them to Me, but . . . I must try—again—to show them what You have sent Me to do. Guide Me, Father.

Jesus turns back to the group. Judas moves away from the disciples as if looking out a window.

Judas: I shouldn't have come tonight. It is time to give up my masquerade. I don't belong with these people. That stupid argument about the new kingdom—don't they realize that we must force His hand if we are ever going to bring that kingdom to reality? We should have done it Sunday—that's when the crowd was with us. But after this week? He's ruined it. All the confrontations with the rulers—they'll never follow Him now.

Peter: Where's the servant? I didn't get anyone to wash our feet. Maybe I should do it.

Peter steps back toward the pitcher, then moves proudly back.

Peter: No, it's too late, and besides, it's not something for a man like me to be doing.

James: I can't believe they didn't complete the plans for tonight down to the very last detail. Someone needs to be rebuked. I thought John was a little more responsible than this.

Jesus looks at Peter briefly, then to Judas, moves to center stage front. Jesus then looks at Peter and then sees the pitcher. He glances down at His feet and realizes what He must do.

Pastor: "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2: 5-11, NIV).

Pastor: So He took off His robe and went to the pitcher of water. He draped a cloth over His shoulder, poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet. One by one they came to Him.

As Jesus washes the feet of the disciples, the worship leader leads the congregation in singing.

Congregational Hymn 210 "My Jesus, I Love Thee"

Judas: What's He doing now? Can't He see that a ruler can't act like a slave! I need to get out of here. He can't do this!

Peter: Lord? How can You do this? It should be one of us. . . . It should be me. I can't let You do this to me. No Lord!

Jesus: If I do not wash you, then you have no part in Me, Simon.

Peter: Then wash all of me, Lord. I want everything I am to be part of You! Oh, Master, I should have volunteered. I should have taken this task upon myself.

Judas turns again from the window to look at the disciples gathered around Jesus. He is both angry and confused.

Judas: Sunday was His day! The prince entering the city in triumph, but look how far He has stooped. How did I ever think that He would be the promised Messiah? Yet there is something so intriguing about Him. The promise in His eyes. . . . I can't look at Him again, or I'll lose my nerve.

Judas and Jesus make eye contact for just a moment.

Jesus: Do you know what I have done? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, but if I—your Teacher and Lord—can take this task upon My own hands, can you not see that there is no duty too lowly for the people whom God has chosen? If I have washed your feet, then you should wash one another's feet. I have given you this example to show you that My kingdom is not a kingdom marked by power and coercion but one of voluntary service and love.

Jesus turns to Judas, calls to him, and beckons to him to join Him at the center of the table.

Jesus: Judas. Judas! Come, join our fellowship.

As Judas arrives, Jesus breaks off a piece of bread, dips it in the sauce, and hands it to him. Judas takes it but will not look at Jesus. He simply holds the bread but turns his back to Jesus.

Jesus: Before this night is over, one of you will betray Me.

The disciples react immediately to this announcement. John stands up.

Pastor: The disciples looked at one another, in part with accusation in their eyes, in part because each felt the possibility that his thoughts, his acts were the betrayal itself.

Spotlight on John and Jesus.

John: He has called me one that He loves. Can it be me?

Peter: I'd never betray Him! Who is it?

John: Who is it, Lord? Is it I?

Pastor: Jesus told John that it was one He had honored by serving him a morsel of bread, for by so doing, Judas would know of Jesus' love for him. It was Jesus' final appeal—not for His life, but for Judas's.

Jesus looks again at Judas, who still will not look at Him.

John: Can it be Judas? The Lord is speaking to him again?

Judas stands angrily and begins to walk away. John stands and follows Judas. John goes only to the corner position on the stage.

Judas moves away. Then he runs down the stairs and down the aisle. By this time the other disciples have recognized that Judas has left them. They are confused and dazed by the events. Jesus and several others have stood with John, and Jesus begins to draw their attention back to the table. He asks them to sit down while He remains standing. They sit in quietness for a moment.

Jesus: Now is the Son of man glorified, and in Him, God is glorified. . . .

Where I am going, you cannot come, but I give you this commandment:
Love one another, even as I have loved you.

Jesus sits down and reaches out with affectionate gestures toward disciples on each side. He bows His head as the lights are dimmed.

Pastor: John the beloved would later pen these words: “Dear friends, I am not writing a new commandment, for it is an old one you have always had, right from the beginning. This commandment—to love one another—is the same message you heard before. Yet it is also new. This commandment is true in Christ and is true among you, because the darkness is disappearing and the true light is already shining. If anyone says, ‘I am living in the light,’ but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is still living in darkness. Anyone who loves other Christians is living in the light and does not cause anyone to stumble. Anyone who hates a Christian brother or sister is living and walking in darkness. Such a person is lost, having been blinded by the darkness.” (1 John 2:7-11, NLT). John learned the greatest commandment of all in that upper room before Jesus encountered the cross: Love one another.

Pastor: And on the night when Jesus was betrayed, He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said,

Jesus: “This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me” (1 Cor. 11:24, NLT).

Six disciples take the Communion trays from the table and serve the congregation. When they return to their places at the table, Jesus holds His bread aloft for a moment and then eats it as a signal to the congregation and disciples to eat their wafers.

Pastor: “In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying . . .”

Jesus: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me. For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor. 11:25-26, NIV).

Six disciples move to the Communion table to take the juice trays and serve the congregation. When they return to their places at the table, Jesus holds the cup aloft for a moment and then drinks it as a signal to the congregation and the disciples to drink theirs.

Instrumentalists begin to play Hymn 249, “Glorify Thy Name.”

Pastor: And singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

The disciples and Jesus stand. He begins to embrace them, and they begin to sing the first verse of the hymn, substituting the word Yahweh for Father. They exit the stage and go out the center aisle. They continue to sing until they have exited the back doors.

Pastor: “When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, no one is likely to die for a good person, though someone might be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God’s judgment. For since we were restored to friendship with God by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be delivered from eternal punishment by his life. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God—all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us in making us friends of God” (Rom. 5:6-11, NLT).

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Hymn numbers are from *The Baptist Hymnal*, 1991.