

Holy Thursday - April 18

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives

Matthew 26:26-30

"Of all the people I had to forgive...I have been the hardest." This is a quote that I found on the Internet when I searched the topic of forgiveness of oneself. Don't we all know it? Don't we all experience that? From small things, like forgetting to send an email to really big things, like saying some very painful words to a loved one, it can be very hard to forgive oneself. We keep looking back in the past and trying to change what we did or did not do, what we said or did not say. We keep going back trying to change the outcome of what we are blaming ourselves for. We experience that feeling of burning and heaviness in our chest, shame and guilt for what we have done. Sometimes it seems like that will never end and we find ourselves in a dark place.

What we know and believe is that God offers us forgiveness in Jesus Christ and as soon as we repent to God, we are granted a gift of forgiveness. Forgiveness is a gift of God's grace that liberates us from the feelings of shame and guilt, grants us peace and courage to move on in life trying not to make this mistake again. I remember when I first became a Christian and would talk to my mom about how hard it is to forgive myself, she would always tell me, "If God himself forgave you, who are you to not offer that to yourself?" These words stuck with me and I remember them when I am in the cycle of not forgiving myself.

On this Maundy Thursday, churches around the world hold a tradition of remembering and celebrating the Last Supper. The time when Jesus gathered with his disciples last time to be together and reveal what would happen to him. He broke the bread with them pointing to his own body that would be broken for the world and lifted up a cup saying that his blood would be poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. One of the things that happens spiritually with us when we take communion is God's healing and making us whole again and that includes forgiveness. If God offers this grace of forgiveness to us, then we can offer that grace to ourselves. Holy Communion is a place where we are accepted as we are, a place where we are healed, a place where we are being forgiven and restored to wholeness. If we attend church today, or during next time we will take communion, let's accept God's forgiveness to us and let's forgive ourselves letting God heal us from the wounds of the past and making us whole again.

Pastor Katya Brodbeck

Prayer: Gracious and Eternal God, on this Maundy Thursday, help us receive your grace, your healing, and your love. Forgive us for our sins and help us forgive ourselves for the sake of your Son, Christ Jesus. Amen.