

**Thursday, March 29, 2018 – Maundy Thursday**  
**“Heading Home – And Loving All the Way”**

1 Peter 4: 7-11

Rev. Derek S. Klemm, Mountain View Lutheran Church, Las Vegas, NV  
Text/Application Structure

Adapted from CSL “Calling Us Home” Series

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

A bit ago you heard Mark’s account of the first Maundy Thursday. John gives us some other details that Mark doesn’t tell us. He says, “When Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.” (John 13:1) He had come into the world to go to the cross and His hour had come. Jesus knew that He was heading home to His Father and He headed home loving his disciples. You and I are heading home, too. St. Peter paints a glorious picture of the glorious inheritance Jesus won for us Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.” (1 Peter 1:3–4)

Tonight let’s look at Jesus heading home and loving his disciples to the end. Let’s look at ourselves, ourselves as members of this congregation, believers heading home and loving all the way.

Heading home means keeping your head focused. In tonight’s text Peter says, “The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.” Keep your head focused on the goal; don’t let emotions get the best of you. Emotions are often a good thing, you can’t escape them, and there is much to be passionate about. But the Bible teaches that we should always be in control of our feelings. Keep your head focused, Peter says, “for the sake of your prayers.” Look how Jesus kept His focus on His mission. In Gethsemane’s garden He prayed earnestly, even pouring forth drops of blood. Jesus experienced the great emotion of fear and so He prayed, “Father, if it be Your will take this cup

from Me.” Although He knew that great pain was coming, although He knew he was about to give His life as a ransom for all, and although a lesser person would have fled, Jesus kept His head focused. “Not My will but Thine be done. “Be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.”

Peter goes on and tells us, “Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.” “Love covers a multitude of sins.” Maundy Thursday night our Savior instituted the Lord’s Supper. “Given and shed for the remission of sins.” Have you ever heard of church people sinning? Have you ever been hurt by church people? Let’s turn that around. Have you ever hurt someone else in church? Have you ever sinned against a fellow church member in thought, word or deed? We have a “multitude of sins” that need to be covered. Now you can do two things about sin. You can carry it around in your feelings. Either you carry a grudge, anger or bitterness that someone else has hurt you or you can carry guilt about what you’ve done wrong. Most of us probably do both, carry grudges and carry guilt.

Grudges and guilt weigh us down. We trudge around with grudges and guilt; trudge around with grudges and guilt. And let’s not forget our fears weighing us down. Oh, so often we are weary and heavy laden! Would that someone would cover our sins with love! Would that someone would take away the sins of the world! Our church is the place where we hear the forgiving love of God and we share His love with one another. “This is my body, this is my blood shed for the remission of sins.” Jesus was headed home, loving us all the way. You and I are part of His Body, the multitude of our sin is covered, and so we are heading home and loving all the way.

“Heading Home . . . and Loving All the Way.” St. Paul puts it this way, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). On Maundy Thursday Jesus not only instituted the sacrament of His forgiveness, He also demonstrated His love in another way. Jesus, knowing... “that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from

supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” (John 13:3–5, 15–17)

What a wonderful congregation it is where everyone forgives as we have been forgiven and we all serve one another. Instead of trudging around, preoccupied with our own problems, we can be “Heading Home . . . and Loving All the Way.” All the way” means in every place and at every time. If that doesn't sound specific enough, Peter names specific ways we can show love to one another, “Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever.”

Jesus's love is spoken in our congregation through our service to one another. Jesus's love is shared as our family gathers at His table for forgiveness. Let us continue to be faithful to this wonderful Maundy Thursday inheritance. When we speak to one another, let us speak as God would have us speak. When we serve, let us do it wherever there is a need and according to whatever abilities God has given us. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 encourages us, “Do not grow weary in doing good.” People today are very critical of the institutional church. They're not going to come to this church if they see us as unforgiving, uncaring and unloving to one another. As congregational members, as members of the Body of Christ, we not only sound out the pure teaching of God but also show it by forgiving one another, caring for one another, and loving all

the way. Remember; don't tell me what a friend I have in Jesus until I see what a friend I have in you.

Motivating this kind of congregational life is the truth that we're getting very close to our true home, the inheritance laid up for us in heaven. "The end of all things is at hand." Dr. Thomas Troeger of Yale Divinity School tells a personal story and it's a great story to bring this sermon to a conclusion. Dr. Troeger had open-heart surgery. The next morning he started to wake up in intensive care. He was waking up slowly; you know how that is! As he was slowly waking up, he heard a loud pounding, "bam, bam, bam, bam, bam." Oh, no, he thought, hospital construction. I don't need that! "Bam, bam, bam, bam, bam." So he prayed. "Dear God, stop that pounding!" How was his prayer answered? It was answered the same way our prayers are often answered. "Bam, bam, bam, bam, bam!" Remember, he was groggy after the surgery. As he became more awake, he remembered what the surgeon had told him. "We're going to give you a new artificial valve. It will make a loud pounding noise for some time but will eventually quiet down." "Dear God, forget that prayer!" Call the email back! It's OK! "Bam, bam, bam, bam, bam!" And then Dr. Troeger brought his story home. Every beat of your heart is a gift from God. Every beat of your heart is a grace from your Creator. Every beat of your heart is an occasion to stop trudging around with grudges and guilt and fear and instead thank God and love one another. Every beat of our heart reminds us that Jesus loves us all the way. Every beat heart inspires us to love one another as we head home. Why? "In order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."