

ADDRESS 2 April 2015 Maundy Thursday

Exodus 12. 1-4, 11-14	The Passover
Psalms 116. 1-2, 8, 12-18	Dedication
I Corinthians 11. 23-26	The holy communion
John 13.1-17, 31b-35	Jesus washes the disciples' feet

Gratitude and commitment

The Psalmist has a question for each of us tonight, and every day of our lives, *What shall I return to the Lord, for all his bounty to me?*

That's the question that demands a response especially at this time, as we recall both the sorrow and the joy of Easter – tonight we remember the last supper Jesus shared with his disciples, probably the Passover meal, the meal that celebrated an event in the distant past, when God protected his slave people against sorrow and death. Tomorrow we remember the death of God on Calvary, the shameful death which was also a victory over all evil, on Sunday we celebrate the Resurrection, which is our guarantee that death is not the end, for Jesus or for us.

Calvary today is marked by two chapels in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre– one is dark and sombre, with a single lamp shining on the face of the Mother of Sorrows, as she mourns the grisly death of her son. Beside it is the Greek chapel, ablaze with lights, celebrating Jesus' victory over death. We cannot separate death and life, we cannot separate sorrow and joy. In his life or in ours.

The Psalmist answers his own question -- *What shall I return to the Lord, for all his bounty to me?*

He responds, *I will call on him as long as I live; I will lift up the cup of salvation; I will pay my vows in the presence of all his people; I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice.* This psalm is not just a hymn for public worship, it is a deeply-felt, personal song of gratitude and commitment.

The Psalmist's response to God's limitless giving is to be faithful and diligent in worshipping God as revealed in his own tradition – he worships a God who not only hears his prayers, but makes a point of listening; he worships a God who delivers his soul from death, and his eyes from tears and his feet from stumbling . This is the God whom we worship, not with the flesh and blood of birds and animals, but with the sacrifice of our self, the part of us which has not yet been conformed to the image of God, in which we were created.

People who know German know from my name that my ancestry is German, German Jewish. *Gold-dinge* means 'gold objects', so at least some of my ancestors must have been jewellers, men

who fashioned gold objects. So, as we see how the Jewish festival of the Passover was given new meaning by the events of Easter, let us sing a joyful song that Jewish people have sung at their Passover meal for at least a thousand years, it is printed in your service sheet.

The Hebrew title is *Illo hotzi anu mitzrayim, da-yei-nu*; which means, *If he had brought us out of Egypt, that would be enough*; enough to praise and adore him for ever.

But wait, there is more! That one salvation was not enough for God, God continued faithful -- the ancient song has 15 verses . . . five verses give thanks to God for setting the people of Israel free from slavery, five verses give thanks to God for saving miracles, five verses give thanks to God for staying with them through all their trials. For example,

Verse 2 says *If He had executed justice upon the Egyptians, da-yei-nu*, that would be enough, but there is more.

Verse 6 says *If He had split the sea for us, da-yei-nu*

Verse 14 says *If He had brought us into the Land of Israel, da-yei-nu*

But there is more, much more. Each of us could add more verses from our own experience of the God who has brought us out of our slavery to self, the God who is always with us, in sickness and in health, in joy and in sadness, in life and in death. The more we do that, the more we realise how much we have to be grateful for.

I have written two extra verses which remind us of what God has done for us all, in the death and resurrection of Jesus:

If He saved us from our sin, da-yei-nu. That would be enough, but there is more.

If he gave us eternal life, da-yei-nu. That would be enough, but there is more, still more

After each verse, we sing a chorus – in the first two choruses the music goes down at the end, like this **(play)** in the third chorus, the music goes up at the end, like this **(play)**

Ann will play one verse and two choruses, then we will sing three verses. The song is fast and joyous, it's the song of people saved by God against all odds, people like us.

(sing)

Each of us has more than enough to thank God for, to praise and adore him for ever.

Tonight's psalm begins with the words – *I love the Lord*, but the Hebrew word translated as 'love' (*'āhab*) is not about love as we understand it, in the light of Christ, but, in this context, about

loyalty, about being faithful to God as God continues to be faithful to us. Easter reminds us that, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, we now understand that God's love for us and our love for God is more than loyalty, it is an extravagant love; the kind of love that led Jesus to do the work of a household slave and wash his disciples' feet, the kind of love that leads Christians today to give time and money, often time and money common-sense would say they can't afford, to bring life and hope to others.

For most people, Easter means nothing more than a long weekend and chocolate eggs and Easter bunnies and the Easter Show. But for us, Easter is so much more. Easter is a memorial of what God had done for us, in Jesus' death and resurrection. So what shall we return to Lord, for all his bounty to us? In gratitude and loyalty, let us commit ourselves again to follow in the steps of the Psalmist: to lift up the cup of salvation, for us that means, to share in the Holy Communion regularly; and to pay our vows to the Lord in the presence of his people, for us that means to obey his commandment to love one another, even those who are hard to love, and to humble ourselves to minister to others as Jesus did.

We shall say with the Psalmist, *we will call on him as long as we live*, and, by being with him in his saving death, we shall come to share in his glorious resurrection. Through re-living the Easter story in faith, let us learn to love God, as God loves us, and to extend that extravagant love to our neighbours, whoever and wherever they are. It's not always easy, but neither was the Cross. #

Jewish Passover song *da-yei-nu* (that would be enough).



If He brought us out of E -gypt, if He brought us out of E -gypt



If He brought us out of E -gypt, da -yei - nu



(Chorus) Da - da - yei - nu, da - da - yei - nu, da - da - yei - nu, da -



yei - nu da - yei - nu da - yei - nu. yei - nu da - yei - nu.



If He saved us from our s -- in if He saved us from our s -- in



If He saved us from our s -- in da -yei - nu

Chorus 1/2



If He gave us e -ter - nal life , If He gave us e -ter - nal life ,



If He gave us e -ter - nal life , da -yei - nu

chorus 3

