

**Tweed Heads - Easter Thursday
Order of Service - 20.3.08**

Welcome
MP 9 “All glory, laud and honour”

**Reading: Mark 11:1 -19 (Page 1003) (Reader -
Prayer - Coming into the house of prayer**

**Reading: Mark 12:13 - 34 (Page 1004) (Reader -
Hymn MP1 “A new commandment”**

**Reading: Mark 13:1- 37 (Page 1006) (Reader -
Prayer - For readiness when Jesus returns**

**Reading: Mark 14: 1-26 (Page 1007) (Reader -
The Lord’s Supper**

Ever since we were children, our parents were training us for the real world, the adult world, the world where we would have to fend for ourselves and stand up on our own two feet.

So our parents, rightly taught us of the need to work hard, to not accept charity, to take responsibility for a situation, to show initiative, that it is better to give than receive.

And they were right, weren't they? People with their hands out, have their growth stifled. People who don't work for a living, easily become lazy. People born with a silver spoon in their mouth, often don't appreciate what they have. People who always rely on others, make a rod for their own backs because they become too reliant on others and never get anywhere by themselves.

But here in the eve of his death, Jesus is saying to us, “Take, take.”

“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take it; this is my body.” Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it.”

Here is the exception to the rule. Here is the anomaly to that good advice. Take the bread, take the wine, take the salvation that I offer to you as a free gift.

Yes it is better to give than receive, but with God there is nothing that I can give him that He needs. There is nothing that he requires from me, that I can do. My sinfulness, my self centredness have poisoned even my best actions.

So all I can do is to be willing to take what God offers me.

God is offering us his perfection, disguised as a piece of bread. He is offering us the bread of life. Take it, and he will dwell within you and so whenever God looks at you he will see His Son Jesus within you.

God is offering us forgiveness, disguised at a cup of grape juice. It symbolises Jesus blood shed for your sins, so that our blackened heart, can be washed with the red blood of Jesus and by a miracle that OMO doesn't understand we will become as white and as pure as snow.

Take, if you are spiritually hungry. Take if you are thirsty for eternal life. Take, if you want God at the centre of your lives. And the miracle is, that if you do take in this one circumstance, you will learn afresh what it is to give, to give your life to God, to give your life in service to others. Take. It truly is an offer too good to refuse.

For *"While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body, which is broken for you, do this in remembrance of me.."*

Pass the Bread.

Take eat in remembrance that Christ died for you and be thankful.

Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for many, for the forgiveness of sins, do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me."

Pass the Cup

Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you & be thankful.

MP712 "Turn your eyes upon Jesus"

**Reading Mark 14:43 -72 (Page 1008) (Reader -
Talk**

The Kiss. Its one of the great signs of intimacy, isn't it? I know the Eskimos have the rubbing of their noses together. Other cultures value running your

hands through your loved ones hair. And for many holding hands is still pretty good. But nothing is quite like the kiss.

When I was growing up, my parents weren't touchy, feely type people and so I was rarely kissed. But you would turn on the TV and especially when you got a bit older and the hormones started pumping you started looking forward to your first kiss. And if I remember correctly my first kiss was actually in Church! For every Christmas eve, our Church would have a service that started at 11pm. And when the hand struck 12 o'clock, our minister would always wish us a happy Christmas and tell us to turn to the person next to us and give them a kiss.

And so there was much jostling of positions every Christmas Eve as you tried to sit next to someone that you had your eye on. And on Christmas Eve, I managed to secure the seat next to Tracey Stevens and so there it was my first kiss.

The kiss, a great sign of intimacy, but in Mark's gospel, Judas uses the kiss as a sign of betrayal. He had pre arranged with the mob, that the man that I kiss is the one you are to arrest. And so he goes up to Jesus and says, "Rabbi" and kissed him."

Something that was meant to bring these two men together, actually widened the gulf between them. Something that was meant to show love, actually spoke volumes about rejection. Something that should have communicated respect, shouted betrayal.

Judas had lost faith in His Rabbi. Judas had thought that Jesus would bring in a political kingdom but he was only interested in a spiritual kingdom. Judas had thought that he would defeat the Romans and Jesus wanted to defeat sin. Judas had thought that he could be an important person to the people around him and Jesus had encouraged him instead to take up the basin and the towel and serve others rather than get others to serve him.

And so it ends with a kiss. How sad, how incredibly sad. Because the kiss leads to the injustice of the Sanhedrin. Onto the disowning of Peter. Onto the indifference of the Roman Governor, Pilate. Onto the brutality of the Roman soldiers. Onto the mocking of the people. Onto the horror of the cross. But it all started with a kiss. It started with a sign of affection, of devotion, of commitment.

We wouldn't make that mistake tonight would we? We wouldn't come to Church tonight and sing our hymns of praise, pray our prayers of devotion,

take up the bread and wine of thankfulness and then completely forget Jesus would we? We wouldn't put forward an outward show of devotion, yet on the inside have a heart that is unmoved by what Easter really signifies? We wouldn't just see Jesus as our Saviour, without making Jesus our Lord, our boss, the most important thing in our life, would we?

We would hate to betray our Lord with a kiss, wouldn't we? We would hate to acknowledge with our lips that Jesus is our Rabbi and then never follow our Rabbi's teaching. We would hate to be involved in a show, in mock religion, in a farce.

Well its too late, a lot of what we do is a farce, me included. On the outside looking holy, but on the inside, rotten. On the surface, having it all together, but deep inside full of doubt, confusion, guilt, sin.

But friends that is why Jesus died for us. Not because we were good, but to make us good. Not because we were without sin, but to cleanse us from sin. Not because we were worthy of God's grace, but because we weren't worthy of God's grace and yet God wanted to shower us with his grace anyway.

That is why Easter is so important. It shows us that our best acts are like filthy rags. It reminds us of the depth of emotion that god goes through in sending his one and only son to bring us back to himself. It speaks to us again about how we need Jesus, because we can't do it all by ourselves. And then it sends us on our way, with the Spirit of Jesus, the power of Jesus, the wisdom of Jesus, the victory of Jesus so that we are equipped and ready for anything this world throws at us.

Judas betrays. Peter disowns. The soldiers blaspheme. And Jesus on the cross says, *Father forgive them for they know not what they do*. We ignore. We get carried away with excess. We have a foot in both camps, in God's camp as well as the world's camp. And Jesus says to us, *Father forgive them for they know not what they do*.

Friends, Easter is the high point of the year. Easter is a time when we can set aside some time and think again about our Christian life and where we are with the Lord. But make sure that after you have done that you don't just come up with words or platitudes or good intentions. But with faith in Jesus. Trust in the Father. Reliance on the Spirit. And a determination to take up the cross and follow Jesus wherever he would lead.

MP465 "Meekness and Majesty"

Closing Prayer