Mark 14:12-26  Maunday Thursday  March 31, 1988

We are going to have two offerings tonight. I was talking with a group of pastors and one of them explained that one offering is not nearly as effective as two. People hold back, I do, I assume you do too.

Just do you do not get the idea that this second offering is not for you, I am going to ask you to bring it forward. Up front where everyone can see. Now I know that that will be uncomfortable for some of you, but this offering is very important. Not that our regular passing the plate down the rows offering is not important also, but this second offering is more important still. You see, that first offering is what you can spare, what you can give up without affecting your life all that much. O, it costs you, but you are very much the same person whether you give it or whether you keep it.

But this second offering tonight, I want that to be different. I want you to dig deep, I want you to offer all you can give up, even more than you think you can. You won't be the same if you do.

Now if you looked in your bulletin this evening, maybe you are wondering where this second offering is going to take place. It's not listed. Maybe I'm just joking. I'm not. I want you all to bring it.

Did I tell you? The second offering is not a money offering. Here is what I want you to bring.

Bring here, to the altar everything you want Jesus to take with him to the cross. Bring everything that you want to be crucified with Jesus. When you come to the altar and hold out your hand, give to Christ your offering, even let him take it upon himself as you receive the body and blood of your Lord in return.

Bring your fears. Your fears for yourself, and for tomorrow. Bring your fears for those you love, those fears that can keep your eyes from closing when all you want is sleep. Bring your fears of the darkness, and
of robbers and violence. Fears of failure, of being laughed at, Search
deeply, offer all your fears to Christ, that he may bear them on the cross.

Bring your loneliness. Make of it an offering. All the unkind words that
have hurt you, the deeds that others have done to gain power an advantage over
you, all that has wounded you, bring here to this altar.

Bring your sin, great and small. Bring the thoughts you've never told
anyone about, the deeds done when no one was looking. Bring those words that
slipped out without a thought, bring bitterness and pettiness and jealousy,
bring guilt. Let go of them, offer them to your Lord who will silence them
with death.

Bring your pride. And vanity. Bring those secret trophies for which
you honor yourself. Bring everything that makes you think you stand above
another, especially your good deeds. Bring them, hand them over, be done with
them.

Most of all, bring what pride becomes when it turns sour. Bring despair.
Christ can bear it, but you can't.

Offer all of these to Christ. He will take them and in return, give you
his body and his blood, his own life given to free you from all of these.
He will give you a new beginning, a fresh start, life. Faith.

Yes bring your second offering, this evening, every time you come to
this altar, let Christ take it, bear it, and make you free!

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him
grieved, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our
transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, upon him was the chastisement
that made us whole and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have
gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord has laid
on him the iniquity of us all.