

The words that I just shared with you from John's version of the last supper tell part of the story about what happened to Jesus on the evening of that first "Maundy Thursday." We know that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. We know the story about how Jesus washed His disciple's feet, and how Judas picked up and left the room to go out and betray Him for 30 pieces of silver. We know of the commandment that Jesus gives to love one another.

When you look at it - Jesus had a lot to say and a lot to teach that evening. John dedicates five chapters; almost ¼ of the entire book to describing what happened and what was said during these last few hours in the Upper Room and in the Garden of Gethsemane. I think of these hours as a last minute cram course that Jesus provided the disciples. It had to feel to them like trying to take a drink from a fire hydrant. Jesus taught them about his betrayal and death, about how their grief would turn into joy, about their continuing mission in his name. It must have been an intensely emotional time for all of them.

As Jesus experienced each of these events that evening and up through the Cross on Good Friday as He pressed on, faced evil, persevered, and fulfilled Scripture and His Father's will I wonder what Jesus' thinking? What do **WE** think about when we face suffering and unfair treatment, or wickedness? What do **we** think about when we are weak or afraid or sick or tired or depressed or angry? Or

when we feel like we are carrying someone else's heavy load on our shoulders? Do we think about God? If we do, are our thoughts about God complimentary? Do we think God is fair? Do we lose patience with God? Do we harbor doubts or resentment toward God? Do you ever wonder what God's meaning and purpose is for your life?

Last year the BBC conducted a poll where they asked 10 thousand people in ten different countries what they thought about God. The poll was titled: "*What The World Thinks of God.*" Wouldn't it be great if we could conduct a follow-up poll titled: "*What God Thinks of The World.*" But I'm afraid that if we could prove that we conducted an interview with God, not too many people would even care? In their book, *The Godbearing Life*, the authors claim, and I tend to agree, that we live in a world today that has lost its collective sense of AWE. For most people today, believing in God is not the issue – 85% of Americans claim they believe in God. The REAL issue is believing that God matters in our lives.

How many people would be willing to change, if what God said, went against what they wanted? How many people choose "God" over the multitude of other options that we have today? We know what most people think about God, but is there a way to find out what God thinks of us, wants for us, desires for us?, Yep,

there is, we already have a record of What God Thinks About the World - that's you and me - and story is recorded right here [HOLD UP BIBLE].

The central messages of the entire Bible is this: **God is thinking about you, all the time**. Starting all the way back with Adam and Eve, and through Noah & his family. With the calling of Abraham and Sarah and God's rescue of the Israelites through Moses. With the giving of the Ten Commandments and the promise of the Messiah, all the way through the Old Testament history, all the Prophets and all of God's miracles and words, we see one recurring theme; God is always thinking of YOU. Culminating with the birth of the Jesus – God is thinking about you.

So, if God is indeed thinking about us, what does God think when God thinks about us? Well, Take a look at Jesus – take a look at the events of this night. He didn't look forward to the Cross. The Bible says that Jesus "*endured*" it. What kept Jesus going on his journey to the cross? What kept Jesus on task? Was it the support of the disciples? No. Was it that Jesus somehow perfected mind over matter? No. Was it that Jesus had a supernatural pain tolerance? No. Was it just the sheer tenacity of Jesus character? No. What kept Jesus on task? What kept Him going? Jesus was committed to a goal larger than himself. Jesus faces evil, so that we can face eternity. Jesus climbs to the cross, so that we can claim heaven. Jesus feels the press of evil, so that we can feel the presence of His Spirit, and the power

of His love. Simply put, the bottom line is: Throughout all of creation, up to and including this very night, God is thinking of only of you and God is thinking only of me.

There in the upper room, Jesus said, *“Take and eat, take and drink, this is my body and my blood given for you, for the forgiveness of sins.”* Jesus was thinking of you. Jesus made a way for you and me, to receive the forgiveness of sins, to find a way in this crazy mixed-up world, to find the healing, repair and recovery from the brokenness that we suffer from so much of the time because of the mortar shells of our own sin that keep exploding in our lives.

On that night Jesus prayed, *“My prayer is not for (these disciples) alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message.”* (John 17:20) Jesus reached through the centuries, across the thousands of miles and the generations as he projected his thoughts right here to Messiah Church this evening. And He said, *“before I step out and go to the Cross I’m thinking of you. And what I am about to do I’m thinking of you and what your soul needs, how much forgiveness you need, and what you life needs so that you can be whole.”* Jesus prayed, *“Father help me to do this for them.”* In the Garden, after they ate, when Jesus said, *“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death* (Matt.26:38) and when He prayed and His sweat was like drops of blood, (Luke 22:44), Jesus

said to His Father, “. . .if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” (Matt. 26:39) In that moment, Jesus was thinking of God and fulfilling God’s will **and Jesus was thinking of you**. As the disciples slept when Jesus needed them the most, as Judas betrayed him with a kiss, as Peter drew his sword and finally as everybody ran away and deserted Jesus, Jesus could have turned his back and walked away too. He could have packed it in – threw up his hands in disgust and quit – if he had wanted to. Think of all the “outs” Jesus could have taken? He could have said, “Nuts with this” “*is this the kind of appreciation I get around here for what I am doing?*” But that is not what Jesus said or did, because he was thinking of you.

Jesus said to the soldiers who came to capture Him, “*Am I leading a rebellion that you have come with swords and clubs?*” (Luke 22:52) Let me tell you, Jesus could have led a rebellion if he wanted to. But when Peter draws his sword, He says, “*Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?*” (John 18:11); and Jesus said, “*Don’t you think – if I wanted to - that I could ask my Father to give me 72,000 angels and he would deploy them and set up a perimeter right here to defend me? But if I did that, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled, that say this must happen to me?*” (Matt. 26:53) In other words, Jesus says, “*I am thinking of you, and*

*the salvation rescue mission of the world, get out of the way Peter this must be done.”*

This may all be a bit too overwhelming to comprehend tonight. I know that I can't fully understand it some times. Why did Jesus do it? I know what my seminary education tells me, to fulfill prophecy. But there is something more here something personal. Why did Jesus do it? Because He thought of me and he thought of you. Our lives – yours and mine – were traded for the life of God's only Son. **You** are the only treasure God considered valuable enough for God to mobilize a rescue operation to save. **You** are worth dying for. No matter how much it seems that God loves others God couldn't possibly love anyone else more than He loves **you**.

God makes no promises that we will always “feel” loved, and He doesn't promise that our circumstances in life will make it “obvious” that you are loved. God simply promises, we are loved! No matter how much it seems that God couldn't forgive you he couldn't possibly forgive anyone else more than He forgives you. God can't find a person on the entire planet, more forgiven than you. If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it. If God had a wallet, your photo would be in it. He sends you flowers every spring, and a sunrise every morning. You are God's masterpiece. Not all masterpieces are recognized by

people. Sometimes, it takes years for others to appreciate their true beauty. But that doesn't mean that the beauty wasn't there in the first place because God put the masterpiece in you from the start. The Bible says, "*Jesus made himself nothing... He humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.*"

(Philippians 2:7-8) At that one moment in time, all history stopped and pointed to a single hill outside of Jerusalem, where God appointed a Savior for the all of creation. And now, God's face lights up when God looks at you. No one can take your place in God's heart. Why? Because God always thinks of you.

Tomorrow night, the service continues and we will hear and we will see exactly how much God thinks of us and what God is willing to do, so that we would never be required to spend one second away from God's loving presence in our lives.