

Saturday 6th April



A Costly Meal

We are now deeply into the period of Lent, and there are many things that we could think about during this time. I think it is interesting to consider the different meals that Jesus shares during the next few weeks. We start with the meal that Jesus shares with his friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus, during which Mary anoints his feet with costly perfume and wipes them with her hair.

Many focus on the roles of Mary and Martha during this story, as well as the other instance when Jesus eats with them, but let's consider the meal itself. Jesus and his friends are in great danger, which gets stronger the closer he gets to Jerusalem. Jesus is wanted by the authorities; by opening their home, Mary, Martha and Lazarus are acting with great courage – they too could get caught up in the events to come. They stand by Jesus and offer costly hospitality, even though it is dangerous for them to do so.

How many of us show such courage, such costly devotion to Jesus? Many of us may have given something up during Lent – but is it really costly to us? Is it courageous? Does it get us out of our comfort zone? Lent isn't about taking an easy journey with Jesus: it's about the costly, the uncomfortable. Like the meal that Mary, Martha and Lazarus held for Jesus and the disciples. How has Lent pushed us beyond our comfort zone? What cost has it asked of us?

There are many hymns which focus on the cost of discipleship, of following Christ. A traditional hymn would be 'Take my life and let it be' by Frances Havergal (*Singing the Faith* 566), asking God to use the gifts we possess. A more recent hymn which looks at the cost of discipleship and the humility of serving, though it mainly focuses on Jesus washing feet at a meal, is 'All the room was hushed and still' by Graham Kendrick (*Singing the Faith* 266).

Lord Jesus,
We thank you for the period of Lent,
for the sacrifices you made,
the lessons that guide our path
We recognise the dangers and challenges that
faced you on the road to Jerusalem.
We are thankful for those who supported you along the way,
stepping out in faith, being brave, offering costly devotion
Help us in the remaining weeks of Lent to step out in faith,
to remember the cost of following you.
Give us strength and courage
as we face the challenges ahead.
Amen