

Wicker Park Lutheran Church

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Tonight is about legacy. Jesus knew that his death was imminent. He knew that he'd been given only days to live. So, Jesus made very clear how he wanted to be remembered.

It's not uncommon for individuals and their loved ones to spend time thinking about one's legacy in the moments around death. In our world, human legacy is often communicated through photographs, memorial gifts, or written stories like an obituary. Well-known or wealthy individuals commission statues, put their name on a building project, or are memorialized with a plaque. These are ways for their legacy to live on after their bodily presence is absent.

Yet, Jesus emphasized a different type of legacy. As we read, "Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." You see, Jesus chose for his legacy to be love. It was love that got up, took a towel, and washed the disciples' feet. In the beginning of John, it was love that turned water into wine. It was love that offered a Samaritan woman living water. It was love that healed on the Sabbath, it was love fed the five thousand, it was love that cured a man born blind, and it was love that raised Lazarus. You see, the legacy that Jesus chose to leave was not one built of stone or gold, his legacy was not found in a multi-million-dollar

endowment, and it was not revealed in passing along generational wealth. No. Jesus chose to leave a legacy of love.

And so, it's fitting that Jesus gathered around a table. His final supper was where he gathered those whom he loved. Those who had been with him, and often misunderstood him. Those who would betray him and literally sell him out. It was to those people that Jesus wanted to pass along his legacy of love. So, around that table he recalled stories. Over a meal, he shared best practices for navigating difficult situations and gave a playbook for fostering peace. It was at the table, where he would use words to explain his actions to best communicate his legacy of love.

Siblings, as we journey in these Three Days, the question given to us tonight is one of legacy. It's about knowing Jesus through his loving legacy. And, it's an invitation to ask ourselves the question, "How do we want to be known?" Then, we are encouraged to follow Christ's example. To allow being "right" to be secondary to relationship. To permit social norms to yield to grace and understanding. To allow love to be our legacy. Amen.