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Music: <introductory music>

Rebecca: Hello and welcome to Mind the Gap, a commentary podcast about all those verses that get left out of the readings in the Revised Common Lectionary. I am one of your hosts, Becca. My pronouns are she/her. I'm a Lutheran pastor in New York, and I've been serving in parish ministry for six years.

Annemarie: And I'm your other host, Annemarie. My pronouns are she/her. I'm a Lutheran pastor in New Jersey, and I've been serving in parish ministry in the ELCA for 16 years.

Rebecca: You know how the lectionary pericopes occasionally skip over a handful of verses in the middle of a passage? We are putting those pieces back into the readings so that we can hear them in their entirety and give ourselves a chance to explore what they mean altogether...

Annemarie: ...how the exclusion of those verses does or doesn't change things, and what (if any) wisdom we can gain for our preaching by minding that gap.

Music: <introductory music>

Rebecca: Before we continue, we're going to start off as always by saying thank you to those who have financially supported us: Lee and Kim who have tipped us on Ko-Fi, and David, Jennifer, Weta, Jerry, Melissa and Liz on Patreon. As a reminder, there's a variety of Patreon levels that you get to choose from. The \$3 a month Trinitarians, the \$7 a month Sabbath Nappers, and the \$12 a month Disciples. And there's more after that, but those are mostly just for jokes. But we are very, very grateful for the support that others have given to this project. We enjoy making it. We're glad that you enjoy listening to it. And we have two scripture texts from Maundy Thursday to get to, so we're going to jump in and start by asking one another what's on your mind. So Annemarie, I'd love to know and what's on your mind for this week?

Annemarie: Well, today was a really good mail day for me. Actually, this week has been a good mail day. I love a mail week where I get two of those boxes that books come in. Those special mailing things that I get from especially bookshop, will always send me those things. So I got, the book I'm most excited about is a new kid's book. I love a kid's book by Matthew Paul Turner, and it's called *You Will Always Belong*. He is a great author of children's books and it is, I am yet to read it. I can't wait. I literally just got it today. So I love his books. I use his books often for children's sermons. I give them as gifts to the kids in my life. Anything written by Matthew Paul Turner is a go-to for me because he always manages to tell an inclusive story that uses such really some really good theology that is bite-size and fun to hear and to see in the illustrators he collaborates with for our young people and parents come back to me over and over again and just tell me how much they love when I read his books. So Rebecca, because I am dying to know Rebecca—

Rebecca: Yeah, I'm sure. <laughter> what

Annemarie: —what is on—don't question how much I want to hear! What is on your mind?

Rebecca: On my mind is a project that I've been intending to do since I moved into my new home but haven't gotten to just because life. So I'm putting together very small little gifts with

a tag that has my contact information and this weekend I'm hoping to just go around and introduce myself to all of the neighbors formally. Just knock on the door, say hi, here's my name, here's my phone number if you ever need anything. I feel like knowing our neighbors is really important and is not a skill that we're taught and a lot of things just about our busyness and everything else are always pulling our attention away instead of building community in your immediate vicinity. And I was telling one of my friends about my plans to do that and they kind of said like, oh, well really, they should be welcoming you to the neighborhood.

And a couple of them have, I have met a couple of them here and there through things, but I also just really think that if there's something that you wish was going on, just be the person that does the thing. Whether or not, oh, technically they should do it, or why didn't XYZ happen when this person brought it up or something. If there's something that you think would be cool, just do the thing. Whether that's reaching out to friends and planning a get together, whether that's in church and there is a ministry idea or meeting your neighbors, I think we, or I'll speak for myself, get caught up sometimes in thinking that wouldn't it be nice and leaning on the idea that it's someone else should be doing it. If you have capacity, just do the thing. So that's on my mind and what I'm trying to live into currently.

Annemarie: I'm so glad that I asked because I am so glad that you reminded me of that. I've lived in my house for a year tomorrow and I definitely should have done that. So I feel like I will.

Rebecca: Happy Anniversary!

Annemarie: Hey, thanks!

Rebecca: Yeah, what a good time. And what a chance to remember that there's always a fresh start. It's not too late to do something like that. I feel like that's part of what baptism teaches us and what my faith teaches me is that there's never a time when there can't be a fresh start.

Annemarie: Amen.

Rebecca: Amen. We do actually have a double episode today. We have a psalm and a reading from the gospel, so let's go ahead and start reading the psalm together.

Music: <piano music>

Rebecca: The psalm for Maundy Thursday is Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19...

Annemarie: ...meaning the gap we are exploring is Psalm 116:3-11. I will be reading the assigned verses....

Rebecca: ...and I will be reading the verses that are left out of the lectionary.

Annemarie: ¹ I love the Lord, because he has heard
my voice and my supplications.
² Because he inclined his ear to me,
therefore I will call on him as long as I live.

Rebecca: ³ The snares of death encompassed me;
 the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;
 I suffered distress and anguish.
⁴ Then I called on the name of the Lord:
 ‘O Lord, I pray, save my life!’
⁵ Gracious is the Lord, and righteous;
 our God is merciful.
⁶ The Lord protects the simple;
 when I was brought low, he saved me.
⁷ Return, O my soul, to your rest,
 for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.

⁸ For you have delivered my soul from death,
 my eyes from tears,
 my feet from stumbling.
⁹ I walk before the Lord
 in the land of the living.
¹⁰ I kept my faith, even when I said,
 ‘I am greatly afflicted’;
¹¹ I said in my consternation,
 ‘Everyone is a liar.’

Annemarie: ¹² What shall I return to the Lord
 for all his bounty to me?
¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation
 and call on the name of the Lord,
¹⁴ I will pay my vows to the Lord
 in the presence of all his people.
¹⁵ Precious in the sight of the Lord
 is the death of his faithful ones.
¹⁶ O Lord, I am your servant;
 I am your servant, the child of your serving-maid.
 You have loosed my bonds.
¹⁷ I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice
 and call on the name of the Lord.
¹⁸ I will pay my vows to the Lord
 in the presence of all his people,
¹⁹ in the courts of the house of the Lord,
 in your midst, O Jerusalem.
Praise the Lord!

Music: <piano music>

Rebecca: So doing these holidays, these holy days where the scripture is the same every year, like we just redid our Ash Wednesday episode, is kind of fun to go back to texts we've already done. We've gone back and forth on those when they've come up for this project. Sometimes we have said, "Hey, we covered this at this other week and here's this episode," and part of that is because these are such obscure readings and all that kind of thing, but I was really brought back to the last time we read these together and appreciated the chance to hear them in a new way. Again, I was caught this time on how

verse four features this phrase saved my life and the way it echoes the cries of hosanna on Palm Sunday. That verse, of course is in the gap. Then in the assigned verse at the very end of the psalm, we have "Praise the Lord," which is hallelujah in the Hebrew. And we have hallelujah showing up. Even when we refrain from that word through Lent, it's like it sneaks in there because we were translating it into the English here, but I thought that it captured that movement from Palm Sunday into Easter well. We have that echo of Hosanna and then later on into hallelujah.

Annemarie: I would also point out that in verse 12, the "what shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me?" return to the Lord is our refrain during Lent. It's what we say, it's the gospel acclamation if you're using the ELW or another liturgical hymnal, and this is very much in line with the themes of what we've been doing during Lent and now as you've said, during Holy Week, as we come up on this Maundy Thursday, there is just real wonderful echoes of some of the things we've been singing about and thinking about and the practices we've been trying to instill in our lives on behalf of ourselves and one another. So I think that's really a neat connection, especially the Hosanna, the save my life. Lord, save us.

Rebecca: And I should say specifically, so I went, we all know not a Hebrew scholar, and it's not exactly hosanna. I guess there's another word that essentially means the same thing, deliver me, my life, save me, save my life. So technically it is not hosanna, but especially since we're translating into English anyway, we capture that same essence.

Annemarie: I find it—what's funny is I don't remember this. I didn't go back and listen and I don't, but that's not new for me. I don't remember lots of things.

Rebecca: Relatable.

Annemarie: Thanks, old brain. But when I was reading this, especially with the gap that we have for the gospel that we're going to talk about soon and it being on Mon Thursday where we really kind of immerse ourselves into the story and the drama of what's happening to Jesus and the disciples, I found it really fascinating that this would be not part of the liturgy for that day. The practical side of me says a longer Psalm just elongates an already long service. We're not doing a vigil this year, so this will probably be our longest service of Holy Week because we're going to do individual absolution and foot washing and communion. So there's a lot of movement, there's a lot of drama, and at the same time, the pastor, the spiritual leader in me thinks it's really important for us to name some of the things that we are fearful of or that threaten us and that we are working so hard to instill these practices and this life of faith around in a world that is broken and that Jesus sitting with his disciples will kind of encounter that too, not kind of, he will encounter that brokenness and how it is that we get in touch with that in a very visceral kind of day where the worship is intentionally tactile and it's just very visceral in its feelings and in the ways that we experience it.

I guess I wish this was part of the whole of Psalm for that day, but at the same time, I don't know if it adds anything to what is already happening to make the other argument at the same time.

Rebecca: Sure. In verse seven, there is one thing in the gap that is the only place it happens in the Psalm, so it stood out to me this year as I was reading through it, the way verse seven

switches into the second person for just this single sentence, the psalmist is speaking to their own self rather than to the Lord or to an audience, and I think that could hold interesting holi or liturgical possibilities. I don't know exactly what that would look like and it could be really vulnerable, but what would it look like for a sermon to hold a piece where we address ourselves or what could a creative sermon that is taking the perspective of a character from the Monday Thursday drama like Jesus or Peter or Judas, what would it look like to have an interlude in there where they are speaking to themselves the way? Verse seven, for just this brief moment, the Psalmist says, return, oh my soul to your rest for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you, which is an example of some really beautiful reassuring and a moment of faith in God. Would it sound the same if it was from one of these characters on Monday, Thursday night? Would it sound the same coming from us? I just feel like that stood out linguistically and could hold creative opportunities.

Annemarie: It's entirely fascinating that the Psalmist in the midst of all this refers to themselves and our buddy Jerome talks about this too and says that the person, the psalmist sorry, is reassuring his soul that it is safe to return after his terrifying experience, and that's referring to the idea that people used to believe that they could be scared so that their spirit left them and when they were back to their right feelings, the spirit had returned as if the spirit got scared too and left. I love that there's this sense of, it's almost like resurrection, right? It's almost like being alive. That's really cool.

Rebecca: Have you ever done a sermon from a character's point of view or anything creative like that? I haven't done one that way. I did one once, which was a series of letters from me to the characters in the gospel reading, but I've never kind of stepped into someone else's point of view like that.

Annemarie: I haven't. I've heard other people do it and it's been really powerful. I think I've always been worried about getting it right in my own mind, not to give too much away about my own brain, but I care deeply about making sure things are right and correct, and I think I would worry that if I got one thing wrong, it just derails all of it for myself. I don't think there are plenty of people out there that do it and do it really, really well and creatively and beautifully. It's just not a place that I find myself able to put myself, but again, when I've heard people do it or I've heard reflections based on someone else's experience and even read books that are meant to be the perspective of a different point of view, I really appreciated it because having more perspectives to a situation that we tend to know really well can help us see things new. Yeah, for sure.

Rebecca: Well, since we're already starting to think about characters and the narrative of Monday, Thursday, how about we move on and we listen together to the gospel for the night?

Music: <piano music>

Annemarie: The gospel reading for Maundy Thursday is John 13:1-17, 31b-35...

Rebecca: ...meaning the gap we are exploring is John 13:18-31a. I will be reading the assigned verses....

Annemarie: ...and I will be reading the verses that are left out of the lectionary.

Rebecca: ¹Now before the festival of the Passover, 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. ²The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. ⁵Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. ⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' ⁷Jesus answered, 'You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' ⁸Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.' ⁹Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' ¹⁰Jesus said to him, 'One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you.' ¹¹For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

¹² After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

Annemarie: ¹⁸I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the scripture, "The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me." ¹⁹I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he. ²⁰Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.'

²¹ After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, 'Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.' ²²The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. ²³One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining next to him; ²⁴Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. ²⁵So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, 'Lord, who is it?' ²⁶Jesus answered, 'It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.' So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, 'Do quickly what you are going to do.' ²⁸Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, 'Buy what we need for the festival'; or, that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

³¹ When he had gone out, Jesus said,

Rebecca: 'Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³²If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, "Where I am going, you cannot come." ³⁴I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love

one another. ³⁵By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

Music: <piano music>

Annemarie: We were reading it and my mind and my, I would argue even some of my heart was already going to Maundy Thursday. I was already in that place of listening to the story and hearing what Jesus is doing and the voices in the disciples. I don't know. There's just something about those days that put me into a place head and heart that is different than the rest of the year.

Rebecca: I was struck all over again by really how disturbing it is to have this reverse Eucharist where the bread is what causes Satan to enter into Judas. When we receive the bread and wine, we are receiving Jesus into our very bodies, and it's so, I don't know, it's just disturbing to me. It hits me to read this again in the context of Maundy Thursday and think about that moment and what it says about the depth of it all. I looked up the reference in verse 18 where Jesus says, this is to fulfill the scripture, the one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me. It's a reference to Psalm 41 verse nine, which is, it feels very topical for that night. It's just kind of about the feeling of betrayal from someone that you thought was a friend. It reminds us that returning to the Psalms and returning to scripture in these moments of hardship isn't just something that we are encouraged to do, but is something that Jesus was actively doing even through the events of Holy Week. Not only here, but on the cross itself.

Annemarie: Exactly. This is another place where just as in the Psalm, I understand why we don't have this as much because it kind of elongates the reading. I'm not sure it adds anything to the day as far as it being Monday, Thursday. It does add more to the drama, right? It does add more to what is happening and some more of those details that we don't get in other gospels. John is all the gospels have a meal like this, but this is not, it's very, all the things I read getting ready for this said, this is not the last Supper the way that other gospels have the last supper, and it has to do with the time of day that it's happening. It has to do with that. There's no words of institution here, but there is foot washing, which is a pretty big sign of community and the way that Jesus loves on his disciples, and so to have the extra piece of this meal, I can see why taking it out means that it doesn't, it reduces confusion about the last supper and about the meal that they're having here.

At the same time, it could be an opportunity. I do enjoy taking preaching to the point of helping people see and hear better why scripture is not a monolith. That scripture has a lot of different sources, that it speaks to itself as we like to say in this podcast a lot, and that the writers and the places where these accounts come from are all divine. They are all spirit inspired and at the same time, they can convey different ways of hearing how it is God lives and moves and has being in the world. And so this part of the drama where some people know what's happening and others don't and how their faith in what Jesus has been doing up to this point keeps them there and keeps them thinking the whole time that it is in fact God who is going to win here it is in fact God who is going to come out and that if they stay with Jesus, they too will receive that as well.

It's not easy to hear because we don't hear it that often. We really never get this in the lectionary as far as I know. We don't have a chance to, it's not part of the Bri of Life discourse, even though it's about bread, but we get in the summer, and so I think it

could be an opportunity for expanding how we see scripture and how we see Jesus in these moments in his very last days before the crucifixion at the same time. Does it help the day? Does it help Monday, Thursday? Does it help move that along too?

Rebecca: I guess mean my hot take about Monday, Thursday for a while now has been that it's a little too packed with symbolism. I struggle to somehow craft a service or a sermon that gives all of it, its due, and obviously you don't have to do everything every year, but I like the gap because it keeps us focused on meal and the implications of that and don't get foot washing. I say this to colleagues all the time, I just don't get foot washing. I don't love it, liturgically. I don't have a piety and an appreciation for it. So if I can in any way lean more on meal and food and Eucharist and Jesus's presence and forgiveness and grace, that's where I tend to go. So I think that's probably also partly why I respond pretty strongly to the gap because it lets me move back into that area that I'm comfortable with as opposed to the foot washing.

Annemarie: Oh, I see. So I went to a university in a place that I'm not going to say, and because my friends make fun of me for talking about my alma mater. However, I am grateful that I was also in theology classes with Deaconess students. Deaconess are Pan Lutheran, so it means the Lutheran Deaconess Association is based at the university that I attended, Valparaiso University and I, that is one of their signature. It's not their signature. It's the sign of their office. It's the sign of their, and this is not in criticism of you. No, totally get it. Yeah. But I learned from Deaconess, I love Deaconess. They are really well-trained. They are amazing women who do all kinds of ministry. They do roster of ministry and lay ministry, and some of them became pastors and all kinds of things. I have a deep appreciation for them, but I learned quickly though how they embrace foot washing as a means of service and humility, and at the same time, they also see it as this opportunity for connection with people and how they interpret how they are called to serve the church.

It's a very specific thing. Not every lay person feels that they need to be a deaconess. It's a very diagonal ministry thing, but I'm grateful that I had a chance to be in classes and experience life together with Deaconess. I don't think there's a wrong way to do Monday, Thursday. I don't think that the command is not about whether you wash feet or have a meal. The command, the mandatum is about loving our neighbor. It's about showing love toward our neighbor in a way that says, this is what God is about, and both of those do that. And so I think that's really helpful.

Rebecca: I love that, and I love that you're bringing us to this. It's a conversation about vocation. We all have different callings and vocations in different ways. The fact that I, maybe this is part of why I'm not a deacon, but the fact that others are drawn to that and find that deep symbolism, that's what it's about, right? One of the other things we say on the podcast, God is never just one thing, right? That's right. Monday, Thursday doesn't have to just be one thing. Rebecca, maybe that's my thing to remember this year, and I spoke to myself in the second person, just like that piece of the psalm right there. So I maybe there's something about this gospel reading in the gap that kind of invites us to talk about different vocations with our people. Maybe it's a chance to talk about word and service and word and sacrament. I could see that being a meaningful direction to go in as well, particularly because of this new commandment and how it is the same commandment lived out in different expressions.

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Annemarie: I totally agree. If you're using the gap be, I would also say that perhaps don't say that Judas vocation is—

Rebecca: No, no, no, no.

Annemarie: Oh, I don't think you're suggesting that. I'm just saying there's a bit of a moment here where we want to be clear about, and I think there's two mentions here. There's a mention of the devil and there's a mention of Satan in all of this passage of John, and this is really about Jesus defeating those ideas. They're not there so that we can blame something they're there so that we can hear what Jesus is up against and what Jesus is going to win against. But I think sometimes we wrap Judas up into this package that only says one thing, and I think that Judas, just like any of us, can be more than one thing. We know that Judas is not the only disciple who struggles. We know that Judas is not the only one to ask questions, and I don't think there's any sin, a disciple commits that's worse than the other. I would just hesitate if you're going to add this back in, just make sure that you don't vilify Judas in a way that makes him seem somewhat more sinful than anyone else, because Judas is just as sinful as the rest of us. Any of us could be. Judas

Rebecca: And Judas is included in the foot washing. Part of what we lose when we take the gap out is we don't get that reminder that he's there for this too, and in the synoptics, Judas is there for the meal in the role that the meal has in those gospels. So this is also an opportunity to remember that Jesus washed Judas feet too.

Annemarie: Indeed.

Music: <outro music>

Rebecca: Thank you so much for listening to our conversation this week. We hope that by minding the gap, you heard something that gave you a new insight, appreciation, or question about scripture.

Annemarie: Now, your job is to find us @MindtheGapRCL on Instagram. Visit our website, mindthegaprcl.com, and if you really love us, support us using Ko-fi or Patreon. Share us with all your friends and colleagues.

Rebecca: Blessings on your preaching friends. And may the word of God dwell in you richly.

Music: <outro music>