

MAUNDY THURSDAY 2020

Pray:

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight: O Lord my strength and my redeemer. Amen



The washing of the disciples' feet is one of the most memorable incidents in Bible. It happened on the night of Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion – and it was a very intense time in Jesus' human life. His public ministry had ended. Jesus now turns his full attention to his disciples. I'd like you to imagine with me this situation for a moment. In that culture – 2000 years ago – the most demeaning task around was to be asked to wash the guest's feet. This was usually the job done by the lowest of slaves. It was necessary because people wore sandals & did most of their travel by foot. They walked along trails that were not only dusty but also cluttered with garbage as well. I'm sure that guests arrived with more than dust on their feet. It was a common courtesy for the host to have his slave

wash the guest's feet as they entered the house. Jesus had sent Peter & John to prepare for their meal together. The food had been cooked. The table had been set. And I'm sure the disciples thought this matter had be taken care of as well. It hadn't! As Jesus and the disciples enter the room they see towel & water basin in the corner. They do not see a slave to wash their feet. Perhaps some of them pause as they enter the room, wondering where the servant was—maybe wondering why Peter and John had not taken care of this important detail. As they recline at the table, each disciple probably feels a little uncomfortable. “Somebody ought to at least wash Jesus' feet. But—if I do that, where will that put me on the social pecking order? I would be at the **BOTTOM** of the heap. If I volunteer, it will become a tradition, and I'll get stuck with that job from now on – this is, after all, the Anglican Church! I think I'll just wait – maybe somebody else will do it. “Somebody needs to take care of the nursery, but I'm not called to that ministry! Somebody needs to clean the bathrooms, who – did somebody say

KFC? I think maybe each disciple was hoping one of others would volunteer. Each one may have begun to JUSTIFY in own mind why it was not his job to do it. “I did it last time—its Matthew’s turn—he hasn’t done it in long time.” “Peter and John were supposed to take care of all this – Jesus had asked them to do so. One of those guys ought to take care of it.” “I came to enjoy a time with the Lord – and now we’ve got this problem.” John is thinking –“Look I’m over here leaning next to Jesus, I’m in spiritual intimacy. Jesus doesn’t want me to leave him and help you.” Peter maybe thinking: “Don’t these turkeys know the call of God on my life? Don’t they see the gift of leadership I have? I just wish they would remember that I’m the one who answered Jesus’ Question: Who do you say that I am?” I got the revelation: ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.’ I’m moving in the Spirit – don’t disturb that. Don’t you remember the prophecy Jesus gave me on that occasion? I wish these people would pay attention to what God’s doing in me. If they had, they would be over

here right now washing mine and Jesus' feet." We don't know all the specifics and I'm certainly taking some liberties – but we do know that nobody rose to the occasion – except – Jesus. Let's have a look at:

What Jesus Did!

What Jesus Knew! And

What Jesus Taught!

What did Jesus do? In verses 4 & 5 it says this: ⁴(Jesus) got 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. I think maybe a few jaws dropped when he did that. Rather than begin with a lecture – Jesus gave them an EXAMPLE. Perhaps one of the most important things I've learned about ministry is that people would much rather see you and me show them how, than to tell them what they're doing wrong. If they can see us do it, they will listen to what we've got to say. But if we can't do it or won't do it – they won't pay much attention to us telling them to do it or how

to do it.

I suspect all the disciples knew something was wrong. But Jesus did something about it. ⁴(Jesus) got 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. Then, in verses 12 to 17, ¹²After 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. This goes way beyond just washing dirty, smelly feet – it's about a personal transformation of our character and thinking. It's about becoming something. It's about becoming a servant like Jesus. ¹⁵For I have set

you an example – that you also should do as I have done to you. If our experience in God is only about us, only about us getting our needs met, we've missed something along the way. The greatest human tragedy is for a person to never receive Christ and his mercy. The second greatest tragedy is that a person would experience Christ, experience his love, experience his grace – but never translate that into service to others. There are depths in God only found in the process of service to others. It's paradoxical. The natural mind cannot reason it out. But it is truly more blessed to give than to receive. The blessing, the joy, the happiness, is not found in talking about it or hearing about it. It is found in actually doing it. Is there a need we can meet? Is there someone near us who needs their feet washed – some practical service that could make that person's burden lighter?



We will soon enjoy the Holy Eucharist together. Eucharist and service are one and the same. Those who share at Christ's table must also kneel at one another's

feet. Following Jesus means humble service of all our brothers and sisters.



Lord Jesus, you are in our midst as one who serves. May all who have become members of your body by Baptism follow your example of self-giving service so that the world will come to believe. We pray this in the most precious name of Jesus. Amen.