

Maundy Thursday – Vicar Anderson sermon
St. John 13:1-15 “Jesus says, “I have washed you, you are clean!”
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In Nomine Iesu

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Lord Jesus Christ, who when You were about to institute Your Holy Sacrament at the Last Supper washed the feet of the apostles, and taught us by Your example the grace of humility: Cleanse us, we beseech You, from all stain of sin, that we may be worthy partakers of Your holy mysteries; who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (Parish Prayers, ed. Frank Colquhoun, p. 68)

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (Rom. 1:7, etc.)

The sermon text for today is taken from the 13th chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. We read selected verses in Jesus' name:

When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.

These are Your words, heavenly Father. Sanctify us by Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen. (Joh. 17:17)

In Christ Jesus, who continued to teach His disciples even hours before His death, who continues to teach and provides for you, dear fellow redeemed:

My mother has a sign in her house that says, “Dust is a country collectable.” As much as we try to keep our houses clean of that country collectable, we see that it doesn’t take much for our houses to continue to be dirty. Not only can our houses be dirty, but around here our cars can get dirty. When our houses, cars, and whatever else get dirty, then usually we must take the time to attempt to clean them. This is a chore that no one really wants to do and most of the time we wait until the last minute. In our text we see the humility of our Savior. Jesus takes time from the Passover meal to wash His disciples' feet. This humble act shows how much He loved His disciples; it also shows how much He loves us. Jesus says, “I have washed you; you are clean!

Earlier in the week on Palm Sunday, Jesus' rode into Jerusalem. He has done His teaching of the people in the temple. He has rested and now is with His disciples for one more gathering. Jesus instructed His disciples to have a room prepared so that they might eat the Passover meal. Now during the supper, Jesus does something that would have been out of the ordinary. He takes off His outer garment, wraps His waist with a towel, and then He begins to wash His disciple's feet. A task that would have been done by a servant or a slave. As Jesus washes their feet, in our text He explains why He does it. This explanation is applied directly to us.

Jesus said to [Peter], "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. Peter at first doesn't want the Lord to wash him. He thinks that Jesus is degrading Himself. Jesus says if He doesn't wash Peter's feet then Peter can have no share with him. Jesus also points out that He knows and sees all. He says, "Not all of you are clean." Judas currently has fallen into complete unbelief. He is only thinking about how he can betray Jesus. Jesus washed his feet and gave him bread. Jesus is giving him opportunities to come back but Judas does not take them. The devil then enters his heart. The Upper Room activity on this Maundy Thursday points out the actions of Peter and Judas and why we need to be washed. We need to be washed daily because of our sins. We have inherited our sin from our first parents. We must be washed clean because of our sins, but we are unable to do so on our own.

Jesus tells us that He wants to wash us clean. Like Peter, we can tell Jesus that we don't want His washing. Most of the time the sins that we commit, we want to do it. Why would we want Jesus to wash something away that we enjoy doing? He wants to do it. He wants us clean. Most people want Jesus to only help them out on their terms.

There are many dangers when we stay persistent in our sins. Jesus warns us of this in the text. *Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."* The biggest danger is that the devil comes into our heart, and we live in unbelief. The devil's goal is to lead people astray. This unbelief happens because of our choices to give up on God. The devil wants that separation. This is not what Jesus wants but we can give up on Him.

Our text for today reveals the amount of Jesus' love. *"Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end."* He loved His disciples to the end, and we know that He loves us until the end. As Jesus teaches the love that He has for us, we see how much love we lack at times. Jesus tells us to do for others as He has done for us. But we know how often we have failed to love as we should.

Jesus teaches and shows His disciples how they are to love each other. He washes their feet. This was the job of a servant, a slave. He washes their feet, but more importantly, He washes them completely with His blood. Jesus is bringing the gospel out with the washing of His disciple's feet. Their sins are washed away by His power. The sins that they have committed to this point and the sins that they are going to commit. They are all washed away by Christ.

Jesus knows that He is going back to the Father. The plan is being carried out, Jesus' great love for you. Jesus is not only washing His disciple's feet clean, but He is also going to die for them. He told them earlier, *"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many"* (Mark 10:45). He loves you and He was willing to die for your sins. He knew His time on earth was up. He would have to go back to His Father. He also knew what it would take for Him to go back. Jesus knew that He would suffer and die. He did it for you. He became a servant and died for you.

Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection saves you because He could serve you perfectly. He obeyed God the Father and He knew what kind of sacrifice was needed. Jesus doesn't lead people astray; He is the way, the truth, and the life. He washes away the sins that are easy to

quit, and the sins that are hard to shake. He cleanses you with His blood. You received these gifts from Christ through your baptism. You died and rose with Christ because of this washing. This washing stays with you. Jesus then gave the Lord's Supper. He proclaims to you that you are forgiven by His body and blood.

Jesus invites you to often go to the Lord's Supper. He taught it to you saying that it brings you forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. You are clean by faith in Him, but you will continually sin. Jesus tells you to eat and drink often in remembrance of Him. This is your medicine here on earth. He brings you comfort and strength for the days ahead.

As the sacrament provides us with comfort and strength, it also is Jesus' last will and testament. By Christians taking the sacrament, we are proclaiming Jesus' death and resurrection until He comes again. Knowing that our sins are forgiven, it doesn't mean that we are perfect. We will still give in to sin. It is the Holy Spirit who works faith in our hearts to receive His forgiveness and the Holy Spirit creates fruits of faith. It is through the Holy Spirit that we serve others with a good heart, having their best interests in mind.

As you keep your Savior in front of you, knowing what He has done for you, He teaches you love for one another. *"If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you."* Who would have thought we could learn so much from a simple washing of feet? This is great humility that came with a price. Jesus gave His life as a ransom for many. That is the undeserved love that you receive. Jesus also gave you His medicine to remind you about this foot washing, and to give you the strength to make it through the week. His Supper is a gift that He wants you to receive often. It shows you that even those who are clean by faith continually need to be cleansed. You will give in to sin. But the Lord's Supper gives you forgiveness. You take it for your comfort and strength. Through it you pronounce the Lord's death and resurrection until He comes again. Amen.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.

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