



Trinity Presbyterian Church
Pensacola, Florida

Maundy Thursday April 9, 2020

6:00 PM

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship:

I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

**My soul makes its boast in the LORD;
let the humble hear and be glad.**

O magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together.

Call to Confession:

We confess our need for a Savior.
We offer honest confession,
in faith and trust in our Lord,
knowing that God hears our voice and heals our brokenness.

Prayer of Confession:

**Merciful God, Christ our Savior came in humility and self-giving love.
He took a servant's role and showed us how to be his disciples.
We confess we haven't fulfilled our role according to his example.
Instead of humility, we've acted with pride. Instead of sacrifice, we've acted with greed.
Our love has been weak and timid.
And yet, O Lord, you continue to reach out to us in love.
Lead us, once again, to be your faithful disciples.
Forgive us, O Lord, and may your grace overflow in our lives, all to the praise of your great name.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon:

There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.
Believe this and live in the power of the Holy Spirit
Amen.

Prayer of Illumination

Scripture: John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Homily

Hymn "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

Prayers of the People:

God of love, we thank you that we do not need to question your love for us.
You made your love known by sending your only Son into the world that we might live through him.
You first loved us and sent Christ to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.
Amid change, seasons of darkness, and episodes of despair, make our hearts remember that your love is not a fiction but is the solid foundation for our lives.

Amen.

Christ our Lord, you have not left us confused about how we are to live.
You told your first disciples, and tell each of us, that we are to love one another as you have loved us.
Help us put away those excuses we use to avoid showing love.
Overcome our fears that keep us from extending love.
Strengthen us to do the things we might think impossible.

Amen.

God of love, you sent your Son into this world, not because it was well, but because it was sick.
We know that Christ has overcome the world, but there is still evil, pain, and sin.
We pray for those who've been abused and those who abuse themselves. Ease their burdens and help them to know and experience your never-ending, perfect love.
We pray for those who've been betrayed and let down by those closest to them. We know Christ is the faithful friend, so may those who've experienced the pain of a broken relationship receive the perfect friendship of Christ.

Amen.

Christ our Lord, there is much in our world right now we wish we could fix.
Life has been unsettled, and we wonder when things will return to normal.
Help us, O Lord, to see these days as opportunities to grow and mature as servants.
Give us peace about the things we cannot change.
Grant us focus and endurance to do the things that befit us as disciples of the one who came to serve.

Hear us, as we offer the prayer, our Master and Lord taught us....[Lord's Prayer] **Amen.**

Charge

Benediction

Brian C. Yount
Maundy Thursday Homily
John 13:1-17, 31-35
4.9.2020

The Unhurried Servant-King (vv. 1-5)

We've all had those nights where we can't, no matter the effort, quiet our racing minds. We're weighed down by something, distracted by some impending event, unable to focus or rest. Jesus, on the other hand, knowing that his "hour" had come, his betrayal just around the corner, was different. He wasn't distracted or distant, anxious or agitated. On the eve of his departure, Jesus was still loving his own. John tells us he "loved them to the end."

That's a wonderful phrase, isn't it? "He loved them to the end." His departure and return to the Father were at hand. He was ready to go, yet Jesus didn't forget the ones he loved. But it's more than that, Jesus not only didn't forget, but his love for his disciples would reach its goal. It wouldn't come up short, because Jesus' love takes him all the way to the cross where the plan salvation was finished. And what's astounding, as we learn in verse 2, the devil himself was right there, among Jesus' inner circle, trying to keep Christ and his love from reaching the goal. But it was Satan, not the love of Christ that failed.

And when Jesus gets up from the table, takes off his outer robe and ties a towel around himself, we are getting a preview, a little picture, of how Satan will ultimately be defeated. You see, Satan was defeated because the King donned the garments of a lowly servant who served these sinful, cowardly, broken men. The King became the Servant. The Master, the Lord served the inferiors. Jesus assumed the lower place. He was still the King, but a King who served the very least.

The Surprise and Scandal of Grace (vv. 6-11)

This is the surprise and scandal of grace. And while Peter doesn't understand what Jesus is doing, in a way he does. He knows that Masters' don't wash feet; superiors don't stoop down to serve their inferiors. And Peter, as John records it in the Greek, uses the strongest language possible when he says, "You will never wash my feet?" Maybe he thinks he's protecting Jesus' reputation. Perhaps, he's embarrassed that his Teacher and Lord would demean himself like this.

Whatever the reason, Peter seems to think he can have a say in how his relationship with Jesus will work. He wants to call the shots. But grace puts an end to us calling the shots. That's why Jesus corrects him, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Peter had to quit putting up a fight. He had to give up trying to relate to Jesus on his terms. That's the only way to understand and receive grace. You must come to terms with the truth that a relationship with Christ is always a gift. It is always built on grace and runs on grace.

The trouble though is we forget. We try to run on something else. We set up other conditions. That's what Peter was doing when he responded, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and head!" And maybe it seemed pious in his mind, but what Peter was really doing was dictating once again how Jesus was to deal with him. The thing that kept getting in the way for Peter was *Peter*. He kept interjecting his opinion about what was proper and necessary. And so often that is true of us. We keep telling Christ how we'd like to be received and treated and dealt with. We like to offer up our standards and procedures. We've got to get ourselves out of the way in order to grasp grace. The point is to stop interrupting and let Jesus tell us what we need and how we receive it.

And that's what Jesus does in verse 10 when he says that the "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean." You see, Peter initially made too little of the foot washing, but then he made too much of it. First, he opposed it, then, he wanted to add to it. But all along, it wasn't the foot washing that made Peter and the others "entirely clean." That is the work of Jesus' sin-atoning death on the cross. Without the cross, we would never be clean, but because the cross is God's finished and perfect work, we never need to add to it or fear that somehow it couldn't atone for all our sins. The cross reveals what we need and also how we are united to Christ.

The New Rule of Life (vv. 12-17)

And so, while we can never take away or add to the perfection of Christ and his cross, that doesn't mean there isn't work to be done. Jesus, by his demonstration, is giving the disciples a new rule of life. Feet need to be washed. And this work of "washing feet" isn't just one thing. It's a pattern for how we live. And one thing it certainly means that disciples do not allow what is viewed as insignificant, inferior, or demeaning to stand in the way of serving one another, because love knows of no menial work. And at least one thing more, this new way of life means we are to help one another with sin. The whole body is cleansed because of Christ, yet in this life we still sin. That's why we need others to come along, not to atone for our sins, but as one writer puts it, "pour into our wounds the balm of the Gospel." This is love, the willingness to lower oneself in order to bear one another's burdens. And you can't bear a burden by keeping your distance. You have to come right alongside someone and get very close, just as Jesus did when he kneeled to wash the disciples' feet. No one can wash someone's feet by standing above them.

A Mission of Love, A Witness of Love (vv. 31-35)

And so, when it comes to fulfilling the new commandment the key is that you let Jesus love you. You see, there's no other way into following Jesus than being loved by him. Ultimately, you can't make it as a disciple through your dogged determination or charismatic personality or smarts. The only way to carry on is the same way we begin: Jesus loved us from all eternity and went to the very end, into the utter darkness, to pay for our sins, so we could receive every good thing that was ruined and lost because of sin.

Jesus loved us to the end. That's how we are to love one another. Not halfheartedly. Not only when it's convenient. Not according to the latest definition of love. We love all the way to the end, and we can never approach the end apart from putting on the servant's clothing. And isn't that what the world needs to see? Disciples in the garb of a servant. Disciples taking the lowest place. Disciples going to the ends of the world with love of Jesus Christ.

You see, Satan had no answer, no response, no counter when he learned that Christ's victory was the cross. If the Son of God would willingly take the place of condemned, wretched sinners, Satan knew he couldn't win. Satan learned that God's love for the world would go to the very end, all the way to Golgotha. And there, the rebel angel was bested by the obedient Son.

Remember, Jesus loves to the end. He loves you perfectly, completely, eternally. And sometimes, like Peter, we put up a fight. We get things turned around. But what does Christ do? He keeps on loving, all the way to the end.

Let him love you this evening. Let him tell you what you need. And let him show you what he's done for you. And then, after you've been refreshed and washed again in his love, rise and get up from where you are to love to the end as well. Amen.