

Maundy Thursday, March 24

Our Lord, knowing that the time of his death is near, and filled with heaviness of heart, nevertheless picks up the towel to serve those for whom he will soon die.

The Prayer of Confession

*You have taken me up and thrown me down.
My days are like an evening shadow;
I wither away like grass.*

Psalm 102:10b-11

The Gospel Reading

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. During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." 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." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean." 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.

John 13:1-15

The Psalm of Response

*For my days pass away like smoke,
and my bones burn like a furnace.
My heart is struck down like grass and has withered;
I forget to eat my bread.
Because of my loud groaning
my bones cling to my flesh.
I am like a desert owl of the wilderness,
like an owl of the waste places.*

Psalm 102:3-6

The Meditation for the Day – of Wonder

When we see salvation whole,
its every single part
is found in Christ,
And so we must beware
lest we derive the smallest drop
from somewhere else.

For if we seek salvation, the very name of Jesus
teaches us
that he possesses it.

If other Spirit-given gifts are sought –
in his anointing they are found:
strength – in his reign;
and purity – in his conception;
and tenderness – expressed in his nativity,
in which in all respects like us he was,
than he might learn to feel our pain.

Redemption when we seek it, is in his passion found;
acquittal – in his condemnation lies;
and freedom from the curse – in his own cross is given.

If satisfaction for our sins we seek – we'll find it in his sacrifice,
and cleansing in his blood.

If reconciliation now we need,
for this he descended into hell.

To overcome our sins we need to know
that in his tomb they're laid.

Then newness of our life – his resurrection brings
and immortality as well comes also with that gift.

And if we also long to find
inheritance in heaven's reign,
his entry there secures it now
with our protection, safety, too, and blessings that abound
– all flowing from his royal throne.

The sum of all is this:

For those who seek
this treasure-trove of blessings of all kinds,
in no one else can they be found
than him,
for all are given
in Christ alone.

John Calvin,
trans. Sinclair Ferguson

The Closing Psalm

*Hear my prayer, O LORD;
let my cry come to you!
Do not hide your face from me
in the day of my distress!
Incline your ear to me;
answer me speedily in the day when I call!*

Psalm 102:1-2