

Journey to Easter - Thursday, April 1 (Day 44)

Maundy Thursday John 13:1–17, 31b–35 NIV

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Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him,^[a] God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

"My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come.

Awesome Mystery

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Discussion

I think we remember tactile things better—as in touches and tastes. It was Maundy Thursday—an evening for eating the Passover Seder together, for foot-washing, for marking foreheads with soot. As each person stood before me, I traced a cross on their foreheads with old palm branches burned and mixed with holy oil. As I looked each person in the eye, I said "Remember, (name), that you are dust and to dust you shall return." It was stunning to do this because I realized that some among this number would die and be buried before the next Maundy Thursday service. One year that number included my beloved mother-in-law, Gertrude.

That is why memory is so important. It ties us to the past, binds us together in the present, and prepares us for the future in whatever form it will take. How could we live without the hope that memory instills?

Today's Prayer

For all the saints who from their labors rest, we give you thanks today, gracious Lord. Blessed be the memory, witness, and example of such an amazing cloud of witnesses! Thank you for the gift of living well—and dying well. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Source: Luther Seminary – St. Paul, MN 2021 Lenten Devotional "Awesome Mystery"

Image: Submitted by June and Hardy Pickett, "This small cross was given to Dad, (Hiley A Orndorff) by Pastor Skarsken at his 80th Birthday Party at St Paul's January 9 1987" {Image below}

Awesome Mystery

