

John 13:3-11 Ash Wednesday at Immanuel, Mercedes February 17, 2021
Were You There When They Saw Him Wash Their Feet

INTRO: If you walk on an unpaved road barefoot on in sandals, your feet will get dirty. A ritual of hospitality: Hebrew host delegated the chore to the lowliest servant. Jesus removed His robe, tied on a towel, and washed the feet of His reclining disciples. (I. the symbolism of Jesus' actions; II. reasons why He did what He did; III. how we apply to ourselves what Jesus did)

I. THE SYMBOLISM OF JESUS' ACTIONS (justification doctrine!)

A. It showed His State of Humiliation

1. v.3 – came from God and was going to God (John finally 'got it')
2. servant's apron, task; who was host here? Who was lowliest?
3. difficult for Peter to accept his Lord humbling Himself (v.8)
4. we **are** there; seeing Him humble Himself for you and for me
5. we also sin like Peter by wanting Him to do it **our** way (a def. of sin!) *GOD DOES NOT TEMPT JAMES: OWN DESIRES*

B. Jesus washes **us** in holy baptism

1. by His initiative, invitation, institution; His act, not ours
2. not unlike a baby, unable to bathe himself; out of love and mercy
3. baptism contains symbolism of total cleansing (v.10 completely)
4. Acts 2:38 Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins... (not remission of **previous** sins...) *AS JESUS ALSO PREACHED*

C. We are clean, but need continued cleansing (a conundrum?)

1. a saint, through baptism and subsequent faith
2. though still also a sinner by nature; sinful ('simul' doctrine)
3. also picking up sins by walking in this world
4. hence this penitential season, to reflect upon need for cleansing
5. nevertheless cleansed, assuredly as those twelve disciples
6. by baptism, received by faith

II. THREE REASONS WHY JESUS WASHED THE DISCIPLES FEET

A. He was fulfilling His mission on earth *BAPTISM TEMPTATION*

1. God had predetermined the time and place and persons
2. after many generations and prophecies and promises

3. Jesus had arranged events and avoided premature arrest (Mine hour...)
4. now only a matter of hour(s) to betrayal, arrest, trials, crucifixion
5. Jesus did all this from the motive of love; even washed Judas' feet!
6. **agapay** (Greek) = love as in giving, sacrificing, serving, washing

B. Jesus' disciples needed cleansing

1. Isaiah prophesied a Messiah to be a suffering servant
2. washing feet was ~~X~~ servant role
3. Jesus called it an example, not a sacrament (contra popes)
4. exemplifying His entire activity of serving, obeying Father *RESISTING SATAN*
5. something symbolic also in the act of **cleansing**
6. point missed by Peter: "don't wash me" = self-reliant; self-justifying
7. if cleansed by Jesus, only then is one completely clean
8. John 1:8-9 ...blood of Jesus Christ His Con cleanses us from all sin

C. Jesus is setting an example for His disciples

1. v.15 – I have given you an example (came from God to serve)
2. service can only be done by those cleansed, who love God
3. motivation must be love, not merit for self
4. love will, in fact, **want** to give, to serve; so accept another's service to you
5. and since Jesus is not here in person, we need someone else to serve
6. because we want to be like Him (to imitate Him is to show you love Him)

III. SOME WAYS WE FOLLOW JESUS' EXAMPLE

A. We ought first to humble ourselves

1. anyone who would not, makes himself greater than Jesus
2. yes, we were there, no more humble than Peter
3. are we more intelligent or informed than those twelve
4. wanting honor above others; critical of others
5. 'dirty feet' also in sinning against one another
6. humble self again tonight before God in confession of sins, sin

B. We want to serve and love sacrificially

1. thank God Jesus did it perfectly for our salvation, our forgiveness
2. this moves us to want to do something for Him

3. maybe not feet; washing dishes for spouse
4. foot-washing suggests a service requiring a minimum of talent
5. changing diaper; wiping runny nose; feeding elderly
6. if I have to tell you what to do, it's not done from God-pleasing love
7. my Dad said at table to watch and see what and when to pass food
8. an **attitude** of serving another, serves Jesus, if from faith and love

TRUSTING OBEDIENCE
LIKE ABRAHAM

CONCLUSION: Such acts do not earn us forgiveness; Jesus has done that once, for all. Jesus, being God, humbled Himself by coming down from heaven, becoming man, washing His disciples' feet, and redeeming the world. As you believe this, then by faith, you are there with the twelve disciples when they saw Him wash their feet. You have been washed, also. And you have seen Jesus' example of humble, loving service for you. Amen.