

Lent 2021 – I Wonder.....

Week 2 – Humility

This week we are exploring Humility, looking at Jesus washing the disciple's feet. The reading is from John's Gospel.



Jesus Washes Feet

13 Jesus knew that the night before Passover would be his last night on earth before leaving this world to return to the Father's side. All throughout his time with his disciples, Jesus had demonstrated a deep and tender love for them. And now he longed to show them the full measure of his love,² Before their evening meal had begun, the accuser had already planted betrayal into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

³ Now Jesus was fully aware that the Father had placed all things under his control, for he had come from God and was about to go back to be with him. ⁴ So he got up from the meal and took off his outer robe, and took a towel and wrapped it around his waist. ⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' dirty feet and dry them with his towel.

⁶ But when Jesus got to Simon Peter, he objected and said, "I can't let you wash my dirty feet—you're my Lord!"

⁷ Jesus replied, "You don't understand yet the meaning of what I'm doing, but soon it will be clear to you."^[d]

⁸ Peter looked at Jesus and said, "You'll never wash my dirty feet—never!"

"But Peter, if you don't allow me to wash your feet," Jesus responded, "then you will not be able to share life with me."

⁹ So Peter said, "Lord, in that case, don't just wash my feet, wash my hands and my head too!"

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “You are already clean. You’ve been washed completely and you just need your feet to be cleansed—but that can’t be said of all of you.” For Jesus knew which one was about to betray him, ¹¹ and that’s why he told them that not all of them were clean.

¹² After washing their feet, he put his robe on and returned to his place at the table.^[e] “Do you understand what I just did?” Jesus said. ¹³ “You’ve called me your teacher and lord, and you’re right, for that’s who I am. ^{14–15} So if I’m your teacher and lord and have just washed your dirty feet, then you should follow the example that I’ve set for you and wash one another’s dirty feet. Now do for each other what I have just done for you. ¹⁶ I speak to you timeless truth: a servant is not superior to his master, and an apostle is never greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ So now put into practice what I have done for you, and you will experience a life of happiness enriched with untold blessings!”

From The Passion Translation.

A Time for Reflection

Choose a time, when you are can sit quietly, without interruption. It might help, just for a few moments, to turn off any gadgets that are not needed (mobile phones etc) so that they do not become a distraction. Make sure that the temperature and ventilation of the room is neither too hot or cold, to avoid the temptation of your mind wandering. Make sure that you are sitting comfortably, with legs uncrossed, as relaxed as you can be. For some, it is helpful to consciously relax each part of the body in turn, either from head to feet, or the reverse way round.

As you prepare to listen to or read the words below, lay your hands palm down on your lap and as you do so, bring to mind, any anxieties of the day, or worries for tomorrow, any cross words or frustrations, or anything that might prevent you from listening to God. When you have released everything to Him, turn your palms up to show your readiness and openness to receive from Him.

You might like to do some simple breathing exercises – breathing in, holding your breath for a few seconds and then breathing out.

For others, Centering Prayer can be a useful tool. This simply means choosing a short phrase or single word such as, Abba, Come Lord Jesus, Jesus is Lord, Shalom, Peace..... so that if your mind wanders, you can bring it back by thinking of that one word or phrase.

Alternatively, it can help to use the sense of hearing, being aware of the gentle tick of a clock in the room, or the sound of birdsong outside to focus on.

If you are listening to the audio version, please pause if you need more time to reflect.

<https://1drv.ms/u/s!AmMjDOz5X7aDg4cQggtxKFIWV-nPYA?e=3BGmFE>

Imagine you are in the room with the disciples and Jesus. Take a look around you. What can you see? Maybe, you can hear the buzz of friendly conversation and banter in the background. Maybe, there are undertones of unspoken anxieties of what was to come.

The smell of herbs and aromatic scents fill your nostrils. Perhaps you are feeling hungry and tired. The day might have been long and quite wearying. The sight of the ready prepared table, so inviting. Maybe you are one of the disciples or an onlooker. You see Jesus beckoning everyone to take their place for the meal.

At the thought of food and wine and a chance to talk about the day's events, there is a comfortable atmosphere in the room. As the meal gets under way, all continues in much the same way as normal, but suddenly there is a slight inkling of something strange and unusual happening. Jesus is getting up from His place at the table and taking off His outer garments. What is going on? Jesus is now standing in His undergarments or tunic, and wrapping a towel around his waist. He looks more like the servant who would normally look after us. What is He doing? Jesus proceeds to fill a basin with water and is going to the first of the disciples, beginning to wash their feet.

Take a moment to take in the scene before you.

Before you know it, Jesus is coming to you. As He kneels before you, perhaps you find yourself studying the carpet beneath your feet. If so, then Jesus gently lifts your head until your eyes meet, or maybe you are able, to meet Jesus' gaze. Stay in the moment.

I wonder what His eyes are saying to you and how that leaves you feeling?

Gently, Jesus lifts one foot, followed by the other, takes the water, and begins to wash the dust from the road, off your feet. Taking the towel from around his waist, He carefully and lovingly pats them until they are dry, before moving on to the next person. Again, stay in the moment for as long as you wish to.

I wonder how you have reacted to Jesus washing your feet?

At a lower level of consciousness, you may be aware of Simon Peter taking Jesus to task about having his feet washed, and of the reply that Jesus makes. Maybe there are questions around that conversation that you want to talk to Jesus about, now, or perhaps at a later time. If you have questions to ask now, stay with Him for a while longer.

*When you are ready, bring yourself back into the present time, **thanking Jesus** for all that He has shown or said to you.*

Through this whole passage, Jesus shows the disciples and us too, the extent of His love. No doubt the disciples would have been horrified to see their Lord taking on the role of the servant, and perhaps for Peter, this was too much to bear.

For the disciples this may well have been an embarrassing event, but Jesus uses it to teach them more about the love of God and as an example of what they are to do in the future.

In what ways can we show the love God has for us through our interactions with others?

Sometimes it can be difficult to receive little acts of kindness from others and sometimes we might feel a little embarrassed to give a small gift, perhaps to someone we don't know so well. I wonder if it makes a difference if we are doing it for Jesus? If so, why?

Maybe you have been to a Service or Small group where there has been an opportunity to either wash another's feet or have your own feet washed. If you haven't, try to imagine your response. No doubt, like me, if you have known in advance that this was likely to happen, then with the availability of water on tap, a shower or bath before hand, makes for a more comfortable feeling. Not quite the point! When being caught out, I have found that once you are over the shock, gone through all the blemishes on your feet in your mind, the corns, hard skin etc. wondered just how dirty your feet might actually be, put all these things aside and allowed someone to wash your feet, it is quite a humbling and loving experience. In the same way, to wash another's feet is an honour.

Let us worship Jesus by listening and watching the video below. "Love each other, one another" by Graham Kendrick.

<https://youtu.be/IBvtydd8kqw>

A Prayer point for this week

Picking up on the point of the availability of water, please pray for those in our world, for whom water is not a given.

For the effects on the homeless, for the refugees and the poor especially during this pandemic

Pray too, for our environment, our use of the world's resources, water, in particular. Amen



A Floral arrangement by Chloe Winsor – Easter 2015

Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you through the flowers, reflections in the bowl, the towel and the perfume bottle laid in the centre.

Something to do?

Herbs were used in the Passover meal so, if you have an old washing up bowl that is not in use, why not drill some holes in the bottom of it for drainage, fill with soil and plant up with herbs, and place in a suitable spot in the garden. A living reminder!

Final Prayer :

Lord Jesus, You began Your life living amongst us, in the humble surroundings of a stable, and, as the time drew near for You to give Your life for us on the cross, You humbled Yourself and took on the role of a servant, to wash the dirt from the feet of the Disciples. Such love, such devotion.

We live in relative comfort in this part of the world, water, food and shelter readily available. Forgive us when we take these things for granted, help us to appreciate what we have and not gloss over the little things that seem unimportant.

I wonder what would happen if we were to be more like You? If we were to put our pride to one side and carry out the tasks that You might ask us to do. Would we feel vulnerable or unsure?

Help us Lord, we pray, to love others as You love us. Amen