

# Sermon for Maundy Thursday, April 6, 2023

## “Still Washing Feet”

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Beloved People of God, grace to you and peace in the name of Jesus.

Has anyone washed your feet lately in either a literal or metaphorical sense?

I've been hearing lots of foot washing stories lately. Recently, one woman came to Bible Study full of gratitude for the public health nurse who had just trimmed her toenails with such care and kindness. A man who just moved to town was glad to find an affordable pedicure place in Waukon to get help with his feet.

I've heard about great physical therapists, massage therapists, acupuncturists, chiropractors and even hair stylists. A good haircut with a nice scalp rub can do wonders for your soul.

Last week I watched two Good Shepherd members receive quilts of valor for their military service. The quilts are given to those who've been touched by war as a way to wrap their bodies in love and care. As Glenn Nelson and Ed Hover were presented the quilts by Marie Freerking and wrapped in them by family and friends, it felt like a foot washing.

When have your feet been washed? Call to mind someone who has used gentle touch to tend you. Call to mind someone who has cared for you by doing something that was not so pleasant for them. Imagine a nurse aide, a kind waitress, a custodian, a friend, a loved one tending you. Call a face to mind if you can. That face is the face of God. The God of the universe has come in the flesh, in Jesus, to wash our feet. And Jesus is still washing feet through the people all around us, often through the people that the world overlooks. Jesus kneels before you washing your smelly feet. Jesus rubs your scalp, wraps you in a quilt, makes your bed at the hospital, picks you up from the airport, does your laundry.

Jesus does this for us not because we deserve this care, not because we tip generously or have good insurance. Jesus washed Judas' feet knowing Judas would betray him. Jesus washed Peter's feet knowing that Peter would deny him. Jesus kneels before us in love because this is who God is, this is what God does.

God is love and God cannot be stopped from loving us. God commands us to love, so that God's love can be made more visible, more tangible in this world. Yet it is so hard for us to love. When we've been betrayed or abused, when we're afraid, when relationships are fraying, when we're overlooked – it is so hard to love. Jesus knows this. So, he does more than wash our feet. Jesus also feeds us with his very being, his being that is pure love and mercy and forgiveness. He pours out his love in ways we can touch and take into our own beings.

Fed by this love, we can love, we can forgive, we can show mercy, we can wash feet.

Fed by this love, we can also trust that God can do what we cannot. God can heal, God can restore, God can bring new life.

Let's take a moment for silent prayer.