

feb 21

a foot washing

"after that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded." john 13:5

ah, a good old foot washing. i would suppose a few churches still do them on occasion. i have never had my feet washed - at least not in the symbolic sense. there have been caretakers and friends who have washed my feet; out of need though.

there's something humbling about caring for someone else's feet. i remember a story from many years ago. it went something like this. there was a conference or something held by a spiritual leader and many notable religious persons attended. the leader of the conference happened to be one of the last to go to bed. as he walked down the hall to his room, he noticed a lot of the attendees had left their shoes outside the door to be tended to before the next day's meeting. it seems this was the custom in some places for visitor's footwear to be attended overnight.

the leader didn't say a word. he just gathered up the shoes that were waiting and spent most of the night making them presentable for the next day. he didn't want anyone to be offended. he was aware of the custom and knew people's heart did not mean offense. since there was no one designated here to perform this service, he just quietly assumed it himself.

our Lord and Savior, the creator of the universe taught us a great lesson of humility here. "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself." john 13:3-4 He then proceeded to wash the disciples' feet. of course we all know peter's reaction as he asked for a whole bath.

Jesus said: "if I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." john 13:8 Jesus is washing us all everyday. yes, and many of us go out and get dirty all over again; like the pig returning again to wallow in the mud. He just keeps washing and we just keep getting muddy. we play in the mud. we wallow in the mud. yes, sin has it's pleasures and temptations.

i had occasion to wash the feet of a saint one time. my mentor and dear friend came over one evening with her heart agitated and worried about pressing obligations. we talked for awhile. we laughed together. we cried together. we watched an old bill cosby sitcom which had a good lesson in it. (neither of us, at the time, had any discernment of things in his heart.)

i knew all along what was in my mind and heart to do. fulfill the scriptures. "do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so." prov 3:27 then at one point during the evening, moved by the Holy Spirit, i quietly got up, went into the kitchen, and prepared a tub of water and a towel. when i returned, i got on my knees, began to remove her shoes and wash her feet.

i don't know that a word passed between us; at least not one that i can remember. we both knew this was not me doing this act - it was our Lord Himself ministering to her spiritual needs. He's there. He's always there. and He's always ready to carry the burden we try incessantly to carry ourselves.

it was a special moment; one i will always remember and treasure. before she left that night, just as Jesus has tended to her spiritual needs, i was blessed to be able to tend to her physical ones. we live in a physical world and certain needs must be met. we operate in a spiritual realm where all things are possible. the spirit realm is dominate over the physical but that doesn't belittle the physical needs.

"now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. for by it the elders obtained a good testimony. by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible." heb 11:1-3

faith has brought us to this point. faith will get us through all that lays ahead and faith will get us home. don't ever give up on the power of faith.