

Easter Study 1: Foot washing

John 13 - Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

13 Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 2 The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, 4 got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. 5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' 7 Jesus answered, '**You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand.**' 8 Peter said to him, 'You will never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, '**Unless I wash you, you have no share with me.**' 9 Simon Peter said to him, 'Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!' 10 Jesus said to him, '**One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean.** And you are clean, though not all of you.' 11 For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, 'Not all of you are clean.'

12 After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. 14 **So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.** 15 **For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.** 16 Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. 17 **If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.** 18 I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfil the scripture, "The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me." 19 I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he. 20 Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.'

Yancey - The Jesus I never knew - p191 - Jesus asked us to do three things:

1. Baptize others
2. Remember the Last Supper
3. Wash each others' feet

Why do we not do the latter?

We do, sort of - history - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feet_washing

In the Coptic Orthodox Church the service is performed by the parish priest, not just by a bishop... He blesses the water for the foot washing with the cross, and he washes the feet of the entire congregation.

Danger of confusion with baptism in early church - Augustine - became separated as Thursday, led to Maundy Thursday - <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15557b.htm>

Mennonites recommend it - <http://www.mennolink.org/doc/cof/art.13.html>

Early Christians also washed hands before prayer - parallel with Islamic practices here, and they also wash their own feet before daily prayer! - Controversy at a US airport over provision of facilities - http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=55488

Scholarly analysis at <http://www.nd.edu/~jneyrey1/footwash.htm> - used as support for primacy of Peter

Foot washing was **usually done by a slave**, or if no slave then by yourself; necessary because of the state of the roads (dust, dung, slops) - very demeaning. The lowest does it - not the highest!

Other readings:

John 12:3 - Mary Anoints Jesus

3 Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, **anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them** with her hair.

Mark 10:41-45 - who is greatest?

41 When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. 42 So Jesus called them and said to them, '**You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them.** 43 **But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant,** 44 **and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.** 45 **For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'**

Genesis 18:4

18The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre.... 3He said, 'My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. 4**Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet**, and rest yourselves under the tree.

Genesis 19:2

2He [Lot] said, 'Please, my lords, turn aside to your servant's house and spend the night, and **wash your feet**; then you can rise early and go on your way.'

Genesis 24:32

32So the man came into the house; and Laban unloaded the camels, and gave him straw and fodder for the camels, and **water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him**.

Genesis 43:24

24When the steward had brought the men into Joseph's house, and given them water, and **they had washed their feet**, and when he had given their donkeys fodder, ...

Understanding 1: Humility

Philippians 2

2If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, 2make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but **in humility regard others as better than yourselves**. 4Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. 5Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

6who, though he was in the form of God,

did not regard equality with God

as something to be exploited,

7but emptied himself,

taking the form of a slave,

being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

8 **he humbled himself**

and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

9Therefore God also highly exalted him

and gave him the name

that is above every name,

10so that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bend,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11and every tongue should confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.

Understanding 2: Cleansing and Service

Foot washing and Baptism – At Baptism we become part of the 'Already/Not Yet' nature of the Kingdom of God – through faith and repentance we are acceptable to God because of what Jesus has done on the cross. BUT we are still in the world, even if not of it – so we are repeatedly tainted by contact, and need to retain our holiness not by becoming separate, but by doing the will of God in the world, and then receiving further cleansing.

8 ... Unless I wash you, you have no share with me

10Jesus said to him, '**One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean.**

Jesus takes our filth on to himself. "Unless you are willing to let me wash away your moral filth, you may not have fellowship with me." <http://www.xenos.org/teachings/topical/upperroom/gary/urd13-1.htm>
The ongoing defiling effect of being in the world is removed by Jesus.

Then '**wash the feet of others' (v14)** - serve others, not self (contrary to modern world), and you will be **blessed** (v17; *makarios* =happy, fulfilled).