

Maundy Thursday
April 1, 2021

God's Love Is Shown

Selfless Love

John 13:1-17, 34-35

Not sure if you knew it or not, but that is what the word Maundy, not Monday, Maundy means. It is a Latin word for command, and it has to do with Jesus' command, "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

We see the most thorough account of all this in the Gospel of John. We can just imagine John recounting this years later, yet remembering it as if it had just happened the day before. Wouldn't you? If you were in that room with Jesus and you experienced all of that life changing stuff that night, the washing of the feet, the Last Supper, the praying in the garden, and the arrest of Jesus; wouldn't that be one of, if not the, most influential and memorable nights of your life, maybe only second to Good Friday, or Resurrection Day.

His recounting of it is so very vivid, it makes us feel as if we are there experiencing it ourselves. It is so vivid and so detailed that it takes John three chapters to get through all Jesus taught and did in that upper room. NO other Gospel has nearly as many of the words of Jesus from that upper room. It is fascinating. It would be a good thing for you to go home and read chapters 13-17 as part of your Maundy Thursday devotion tonight.

Let's go back to that night for a few moments. The disciples and Jesus had just gathered in the upper room to celebrate the Passover like they had probably done the last three years together. There was nothing out of the ordinary, except for the demeanor and the purposefulness of Jesus. He knew what was coming, and still, he was able to keep it together for his buddies.

He took off his outer garment, wrapped a towel around his waist, then he got a basin of water and began to wash his disciples' feet and wipe them with the towel. Just think about that for a second. Here is the creator of the universe, in human form, kneeling on the ground, washing the dirty, stinky feet of the disciples. That's our God! That's your God and my God. He gets down in the dirt and stink with us. He doesn't just hover over us. He doesn't just give us wise and pithy sayings from afar. He doesn't just fill us with platitudes and then leave us to flounder. He goes through it all with us!

New parents know this kind of love as they change diapers and wake up for middle of the night feedings. As a child grows, that love grows along with it. There are years of homework, struggles for power, and the pain of discipline. Parents of adult children don't stop that down and dirty love, as they go through struggles of many kinds. The parents of an addicted child really understand this down in the dirt kind of love, as they sit with him in the emergency room for the seemingly hundredth time.

This is the kind of selfless love that the Lord Jesus is showing his disciples, including us. He tells us that he is doing this to give us an example of how we are to be toward others. He never wants Christians to get so full of themselves or so arrogant in their righteousness, that they forget how Jesus himself has gone down to the depths of our sinfulness to completely clean us. Christ shows humility so that we remember to always remain humble.

The other reason, which he tells Peter, is to show us that he is the one who must wash us clean of our sinfulness when he says, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." He is showing us how he "stoops down" from heaven to come down to us and to wash our souls clean from all the filth, muck, and mire of sin.

The only way you and I can go to the Father is if the Lord Jesus washes us with His blood and his righteousness. And he does! He never hesitated or

flinched in doing everything it took for us to become clean. He did it all! He suffered the punishment we could not endure. He died the death we could not die. He suffered the hell we could not bear. He is the servant of all servants! He is the God who washes feet!

In our sinful world today, it is hard for us to recognize this kind of love. Too often humans have trouble thinking beyond themselves and what they are going to get out of their service. We see a lot of selfish people, including ourselves, who look the other way when it comes to serving the real, desperate needs of others. We run out of energy and even suffer compassion fatigue as the needs of this world become too great. Where our compassion and selfless love falls short, our Lord's does not. Where our love is often selfish and self-serving, his is selfless. Ours is imperfect. His is perfect. Praise be to the Lord Jesus for his perfect life-saving selfless love! Where ours ends, Christ's is only beginning.

Still, the Holy Spirit living in us, uses our imperfect love to bring his love to others. As parents selflessly care for their children, they see the love of Christ in them. As we are more and more willing to lay down our lives for our friends, even when it is inconvenient, our friends don't see us, they see Jesus. As Christians throughout the world do acts of mercy for people, our witness is clearly seen as working for Christ and not for ourselves.

Always remember and never forget that it is the Lord's selfless love you are emulating. It is his love that you want others to know about so that they may rejoice before your Father in heaven with you for all eternity. Jesus doesn't so much care what you do, as much as the purpose and the heart with which you do it! Go change diapers. Go clean up yards! Go wash feet! Go slop some hogs. Get down in the dirt for others that they may truly know the real down and dirty, selfless, eternal life saving love of Jesus! Amen.