

Dear Friends,

I have been to Maundy Thursday services where I have had my feet washed. The thought that someone was going to handle and pay attention to my feet made me a little uncomfortable. So, before I left home, I did a bit of work on them first. I did my best to make them as clean and presentable as possible. That is, I washed them, before someone else did. That might not quite be the point, but I think you will understand how I felt.

You may do something similar with your self. It can feel pretty vulnerable when you place your self in the hands of another, when you allow yourself to be seen and known just as you are, warts and all. Rather, we may prefer to carefully present ourselves, to show the world a face that we think will be acceptable.

Maybe the story of the foot washing holds these two together. The feet can be seen as a symbol for the self, and the care of Jesus for the feet can be seen as the care of Jesus for each individual.

Jesus knew who he was, "That the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God." Nevertheless, at supper with his friends, he took off the authority of his teacher's cloak and put on a servant's towel. He poured out water, as on the next day he would pour out his life upon the cross. He knelt down with each of his friends and took their feet in his hands.

Imagine Jesus bowing before you and doing the same with your feet. You may feel sensitive about them. You may wish that they were more presentable. But he takes them just as they are. In the same way, Jesus takes you in his hands, just as you are, with total acceptance.

He washes their feet. And, he washes you with forgiveness. He cleanses you, bringing out the radiance of your strong beauty, enabling the image and likeness of God in which you are created to shine.

He takes the towel and wipes their feet. The Greek word for wipe is *ekmassein*. It's the word from which we get our word massage. Jesus massages their feet, releasing the tension and the stress. And he massages you, restoring your soul, bringing you back to life again, setting you free.

Then, he puts on again the authority of his teacher's cloak. He says, "I have given you a pattern, that you also should do as I have done to you." Jesus calls you to love, just as he loves, with total acceptance, endless acts of forgiveness, and by helping each other to flourish.

God bless you,

Tony