

LENT: A PILGRIMAGE WITH JESUS TO THE CROSS

Today is the 2nd Sunday of Lent. On our Lenten pilgrimage, we will encounter several of the moments of Jesus on his way to the Cross, and in these moments we will be challenged by our Lord and those he interacted with in ways that will search our hearts and focus our minds on life with the Savior.

Today we spend time with the Lord and his disciples as he teaches them yet again the lesson of humility. Peter, of course, seems the most resistant of them in taking this lesson to heart – and much more humbling lies ahead for Peter in the hours that follow.

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT: John 13:1-17 – Jesus washes the feet of his disciples.

13 Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end. ² It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³ Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. ⁴ So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, ⁵ and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

⁶ When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷ Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will."

⁸ "No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me."

⁹ Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!"

¹⁰ Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you." ¹¹ For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."

¹² After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? ¹³ You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. ¹⁴ And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. ¹⁵ I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.

Meditation by Rebecca Pousette –, Vancouver.

It was a solemn night: weariness rested heavily on the shoulders of the man we had come to call Lord. We did not know the events that were about to take place. Reclining at the table, I wondered at this man's identity. A Messiah who walked on water and touched the eyes of sinners. He was not the king we had expected, but he was a king I could follow: a healer, commander of the wind and the waves, someone who carried the power of God within him.

As the food was passed around, he got up, and took off his outer robe. Kneeling down, he began to wash our feet. Silent embarrassment and shock filled the room: embarrassment that one of us had not thought to wash his feet, and shock that this man had taken on the job of a household slave. As he

moved closer towards me, thoughts of my failures and unworthiness filled my head, followed by shame and then pride. I had to protest.

His response was firm, full of relentless love: unless I let him wash me, I could have no part with him. The full extent of his words did not become clear until later, but they shook me. He was like no leader I had ever known. This king did not demand my action, sacrifice or obedience. He first wanted my heart, dark, prideful, and selfish as it was. He wanted the gentler and more difficult thing: to take my heart and make it clean and right. As he took my dirty feet into his hands, my shame and pride broke as I felt the weight of his accepting love. A love that covered sin, and made broken things whole.

Lord, come and wash us.

Questions inviting response:

1. As you walked with Jesus this past week, where have your feet become dirty? What is the Master washing off of your feet?
2. Jesus tells Peter that because he has given his life to the Master, he does not need a bath – only his feet need washing.
 - Where in your life has the enemy persuaded you that you are dirty from head to toe?
 - Take a moment and thank Jesus for saving you – for bathing you from head to toe in his grace. Commit your heart again to the Master as you journey with him this week.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,

Thank you for cleansing me through your death and resurrection. Thank you that I am washed, that I am completely saved, and that I am no longer condemned. I embrace your love and grace today, and welcome you washing my feet, recognizing that sin will dirty me, but never remove me from you.

May I learn to live freely in all things, and may I also wash the feet of those I encounter. Amen.