

Maundy Thursday
St. John 13:1-15
April 17th, 2025
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Ye Are Clean

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Sermon Text:

“+ Jesus saith to him, ‘He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.’ For He knew him that should betray Him; therefore said He, ‘Ye are not all clean.’”

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

We thank Thee, O Lord + Jesus Christ, the Savior of all men, that Thou hast given Thyself into death for us to make atonement for our sins, and hast also left us an example of mutual service by humbly washing Thy disciples’ feet; we heartily beseech Thee, govern and direct our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit that we may in true faith firmly cling to Thee as our Savior, faithfully serve our neighbor with works of love, and obtain eternal salvation through Thy merit, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dear friends, this week began with our Lord + Jesus being anointed with oil by Mary, sister of Lazarus. Chronologically, this took place last Saturday, six days before the Passover. In the Book of Moses, commonly called Exodus, we learn that the Jews were to choose the Passover Lamb on the tenth day of the month. It would be sacrificed on the fourteenth day of the month. The choosing of the Passover Lamb was done by Mary on Saturday, six days before the Passover, when she anointed Him with very precious pure nard.

The events of today’s Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. John take place after twilight, when the Passover Lamb would be sacrificed. The Jews count days from evening to evening, from dusk to twilight, not like we do from midnight to midnight. Therefore, these events for us occur on a Thursday, but for the Jews all of these events would be on a Friday, the sixth day of creation. This Friday that the Lord and His Apostles are in the Upper Room is the fourteenth day of the month. It is the day of the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb. Our Lord + Jesus has been chosen as the sinless, spotless Lamb of the Lord God. He will be sacrificed on the tree of the cross on this Friday.

Therefore, our Lord knowing that the hour of His departure had come, that the time of His glorification had come, shows His love for His own. He shows that He loves them to the end. Love is not expressed in a haughty, or prideful, attitude. Love never seeks its own will. When someone is worried about what they are getting out of the relationship, and not what they are putting into it, then true love does not exist. Love always seeks the benefit of the other person. Love is humble, and places itself below the other person. Here is what our Lord + Jesus does for His Apostles in this narrative from St. John.

The Apostles were not showing love for each other. Sts. Peter and John had made all the preparations for the Passover which the Lord + Jesus had given them instruction. But there was one preparation that was overlooked. There was no servant to wash their feet when they gathered for the Passover meal. They then argued with one another about who was the greatest, and by virtue, who was the least, the one who should play the servant and wash the other Apostles feet. No one wanted the job. Not one of the Apostles believed he was lowly enough to do such a servile and menial task. Our Lord has to teach them how to be truly loving toward each other. In order for the Apostles to be loving toward each other, they must not seek to be the greatest among them, but the least. For true love produces a spirit of lowliness and servitude.

Our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, has been chosen as the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the whole world. He does this by humbling Himself to endure pain and suffering. He humbles Himself to be sacrificed on a tree. He is hanged on a tree as an accursed person. He is hanged as one who is guilty of crimes worthy of death, even though He has committed no such crime. In this is true love shown. He did not just die for those who love and adore Him, but He died for even those who rebuke and reject Him. He does what is necessary for all mankind's salvation regardless of whether they rejoice in this act or not. Our Lord's sacrifice as the Paschal Lamb upon the tree of the holy cross is truly a picture of love. For, it shows the humility and the attitude of a servant that flows from love.

Our Lord tells the Apostles that they should wash each other's feet. There are those who take this quite literally and even have foot-washing ceremonies on this night. But our Lord here is talking symbolically. He is encouraging His Apostles to have a clean heart. A clean heart is one that is filled with love. It does not seek its own but the benefit of other people. This love for one another is a fruit of the washing that we all have received. We were washed in the waters of Holy Baptism. The Lord + Jesus Himself washed us with water and the Word. He placed the Triune Name upon us. We were therefore buried with Him in His death, so that we also are raised again in His resurrection. He has clothed us with His own righteousness in the waters of Holy Baptism, so that we bear His righteousness, and all of our sins are covered over.

We are now clean. We have hearts that have been purified by the Lord to love one another even as He has loved us. Therefore, my dear friends, let us love one another as our Lord + Jesus has loved us. Let us humble ourselves and confess our sins. For all who come to this holy house come here not to lord their great righteousness before other people. But we come because we have learned that we are poor, miserable sinners in need of the Lord God's grace and mercy. We are a band of sinners looking for the mercy and grace of our Lord + Jesus. Let us then share in that mercy bestowed upon us not only in the waters of Holy Baptism, not only in the words of the Absolution, or the pure preaching of the Gospel, but in the gift that our Lord + Jesus institutes for the use of the Church this night. Let us gather around this altar, as brothers and sisters in Christ, who in humble recognition of our sinful condition, join together to receive the loving gift our Lord's true and substantial Body and Blood given in bread and wine. For we are all one bread and one body, even as we are partakers of this one bread, and drink of this one cup.

This is the meal which our Lord + Jesus institutes this night. It is a meal which reveals our Lord's love for us poor, miserable sinners. He offers up His life in our place. He takes upon Himself our punishment. He dies so that we might live. The Passover Lamb was chosen six days ago with the anointing done by Mary. She prepared our Lord + Jesus for the day of His burying. Even though we celebrate this day as a Thursday, being after twilight, a new Friday has come. This is the day of our Lord's crucifixion and death. It is the day upon which He will be crucified and buried.

In His death we have been baptized. He has washed us and made us clean. All those who are clean and washed in the waters of baptism, share in this meal of our Lord's Body and Blood given in bread and wine. For all those who have been baptized have been buried with the Christ. Their sins

have been drowned and cleansed away forever. This is why we daily continue to wash ourselves in the waters of our Holy Baptism. By daily contrition and repentance—by daily confession of our sins—in faith we arise as new creations, desiring to daily live lives worthy of repentance.

Repentant hearts do not seek their own glory, but they seek the benefit and honor of others. In this we show love for one another. Let us therefore humble ourselves in loving service for each other. Let us readily do good for one another, and let us readily forgive each other's sins. For this is how those who are clean behave toward one another. Not like the Apostles who sought to be the greatest of the whole band of Apostles.

Our Lord has given us an example. He has sacrificed Himself for us and for all mankind. Let us sacrifice our will for our brother in Christ. Let us show our love for one another by comforting one another in our sins and transgressions. For we all seek the mercy and forgiveness of our Lord. We find this mercy and forgiveness given to us in the means of grace. Our Lord forgives us our sins in the waters of Holy Baptism, and He feeds and sustains us in the faith created through Holy Baptism to carry us through life into our eternal reward in Heaven. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord + Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same + Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ + Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!