

Maundy Thursday
St. John 13:1-15
April 2nd, 2026
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Know Ye What I Have Done to You?

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments, and sat down again, He said unto them, ‘Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me, “Teacher,” and, “Lord:” and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you.”

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, when our Lord + Jesus says, “If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you,” there are those who take His words literally. There are churches this night that will have foot-washing ceremonies. As if this is the thing that our Lord wants us to imitate; as if this was the example that He was leaving to the Apostles. But our Lord is not instituting a new custom—a new rite—that the Church should follow. No, our Lord is giving us an example of His humility and His forgiveness towards us.

There are a lot of similarities with this Gospel reading from the Apostle St. John for this evening, and the one which we hear on Christmas Eve from the first chapter of St. John. There, St. John talks about the incarnation of our Lord. He says that “He came unto *His own*, and they that were *His own* received him not.” Here, St. John writes that “having loved *His own* that were in the world, He loved them unto the end.” There, He loved “His own” by putting aside His divinity and taking upon Himself our flesh. Here, He puts aside His garments, and wraps Himself in a linen towel. There, He is born into our flesh after putting aside His divinity. Here, He puts aside His garments and wraps Himself in a linen towel signifying His death. He humbles Himself by setting aside His divinity to bear our flesh. He humbles Himself “to the end,” that is, “to His death” so that we might have forgiveness of our sins. He loves us from the beginning of His earthly life, to the end, that He might earn for us the forgiveness of our sins. He loves us by humbling Himself to win forgiveness for us.

This is the example that our Lord + Jesus gives us tonight. He gives us an example of His

humility and forgiveness. He shows us how to be humble. He humbled Himself by setting aside His very own divinity. He humbled Himself by washing His Apostles' feet. He humbled Himself by suffering and dying upon the tree of the holy cross. Every action of the Lord is as a servant. As we heard our Lord say in last night's Gospel, "Who is greater, he who sits at meat, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at meat? But I am here in the midst of you as one that serves." Our Lord serves us by offering us the forgiveness of our sins. We serve one another by offering each the forgiveness of sins. For forgiveness is our greatest need.

We need forgiveness from our Lord God for all of our many sins and iniquities. He offers this forgiveness to us in His Gospel proclamation, and in His Blessed Sacraments. Both Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper are referenced in the lection for this evening. The illusions to Holy Baptism are evident in the washing of the Apostles' feet. Our Lord says that the Apostles were "already clean" referencing their baptisms by St. John the Baptist. Holy Baptism washes away the guilt of sin, but we still remain sinners. This is why daily, through contrition and repentance, we must drown the Old Adam—we must daily confess our sins—so that the new life begun in us in our Holy Baptism may be continued until in heaven, all stain of sin is fully washed away from us. Daily we ask our Lord to wash us free from all our sins and iniquities. Daily through contrition He washes us clean and free from sin.

Our Lord + Jesus also offers us forgiveness of sins in His Holy Supper. In this meal, He offers us His true and substantial Body and Blood, given in, with, and under the bread and wine for the remission of all our sins. This is what St. Paul writes about the Sacrament in the Epistle for tonight from his First Epistle to the Church at Corinth. He mentions both the Body and Blood, and both the bread and the cup. If we do not discern the Sacrament in this way, that we receive both Body and Blood, and bread and wine, we receive it in an unworthy manner to our detriment. For our Lord is not offering us simply a light meal of bread and wine. He is not offering a symbolic gesture of goodwill. No, He is offering the very Body and Blood which He offered upon the tree of the holy cross for our transgressions. Our Lord is giving us in this meal the remission of all our sins.

This is the example that our Lord + Jesus gives to His Apostles. It is the example He leaves to us. For in His humility, He brings to us forgiveness of all our sins. We do not deserve it, but He offers it to us out of His great love for us. We in turn should show this same humility and forgiveness toward one another. Just as our sins have been forgiven by the Lord + Jesus. We should forgive and do good to one another. Just as our Lord + Jesus humbled Himself before His Apostles, even though He was their Master and Teacher, we also should humble ourselves and serve our brothers in Christ by forgiving them of all their sins toward us.

Our Lord + Jesus created the heavens and the earth, and all that are in them both visible and invisible. He created us. And yet, He humbles Himself by laying aside His divinity—He empties Himself of His divinity—in order that He might redeem us from sin and death, in order that He might earn for us forgiveness from all our sins. This is the love that He shows for His Apostles, and for us. This is the love that He has for them. Out of His great love for His creation, He is willing to love them to the end; to love them into death, so that we might have live eternal. This is the example that our Lord + Jesus wishes to show His Apostles this night. This is what He wishes to teach these men who argued amongst themselves who was the greatest. That we should wash each other's feet.

This is not to be understood literally, as some churches do, but it is to be understood that as our Lord + Jesus showed great humility and forgiveness, we also should show great humility and forgiveness toward one another. For brothers that live together in unity it is pleasant and good as Psalm 133 says. And that unity and fellowship is expressed in no greater way than when we gather together at this altar to receive our Lord's Body and Blood in bread and wine. For as we receive forgiveness from our Lord and Savior, we are also united in humble forgiveness for each other. Here at this rail, we set aside our petty disagreements, and only desire unity and forgiveness with one another. In this way,

we wash one another's feet. When we readily forgive our neighbors sins and trespasses, we are washing them clean of their sins. Likewise, they will also readily look past our sins and trespasses.

For, my dear friends, our Lord + Jesus has set us an example of humility and forgiveness. He humbled Himself by setting aside His divinity in order that He might win for us forgiveness. Let us also humble ourselves and forgive each other, so that we may live in love and unity. 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 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!