

We've got a lot going on, this day -- this week. So just two thoughts that came up for me about Maundy Thursday, that I hope will make you uneasy:

The first thought is that we forget what it means to be followers of Jesus not just sometimes but regularly. We forget who saves us, and why we are saved. I sometimes forget how we are saved and I do things that are totally contrary to the example Jesus gives us.

I forget --and I don't think I'm alone in this -- I forget that Jesus demonstrated that it is not the things and the methods of this world that will make a difference in lives... It is washing feet, and allowing your feet to be washed. That's what makes differences in lives...

But in the press of time, with all the things that need to be done, here and elsewhere; perhaps in frustration, perhaps in desperation, I sometimes rely too heavily on the things of this world: word processing, computerized mailing, planning and scheduling tools from other disciplines, and in the midst of all the technique and technology, I forget how I am saved, and who saves me. It sometimes takes time and struggle and prayer to recover that and sometimes that happens in the middle of five-sermon weeks. We all do that though, in different ways. At one time or another. We make the mistake of using money, or place, or method, or even the ability or presence of another person to try and achieve our salvation without God's help. And we inevitably fail.

We have evidence enough that the world is not saved by any of those things -- nor are we saved by any of those things. As a matter of fact, even the most respectable of those kinds of things, power, money, technique and technology represent our downfall if we look to them for our salvation.

Our salvation has been given to us out of the love of God -- given to us through Jesus Christ. And it's spread among us through simple acts of selfless service, like washing feet, or through even more selfless acts --like having your feet washed. It is manifested and empowered by other simple things. Like the bread and the wine on the altar...

But we forget. I forget, you forget, we all forget what it means to be a follower of Jesus, and in the process, our lives get torn apart -- dismembered. That's one of the many reasons we go to church -- to re-member -- to put it all back together again. And we put it all back together again by telling the story of who Jesus was and what he did, and in some instances, we remember by actually acting out those things: Baptizing in his name, eating the bread, drinking the wine, washing feet, and having our feet washed -- serving and being served.

The second thought is a corollary to the first -- perhaps because it's just as easy to forget. If we know that the quality of life we yearn for can't be obtained through all the things the world recommends, then our logic would dictate that all we need to do is just rush right out there and serve everyone we meet (*perhaps with a checklist*) and if we did that, we'd be OK. Some of us here have been unfortunate enough to discover the fallacy of that, and I know some of you (*even more unfortunate, yet*) have been on the receiving end of such frenetic care.

The fact is this: Salvation -- the quality of life we yearn for -- the rich, full life of being a follower of Christ implies selfless service, and it implies also -- being served. Because if you haven't been served, you have no service of worth to offer. Jesus said, "Unless I wash you, you have no part in me." And what we do is pass on that model of service, one to another.

By the way, The word Maundy Thursday is taken from the Latin word, "Mandatum" or commandment. And the lessons highlight a couple of Jesus' -- not requests -- but **COMMANDMENTS**.

In His name.

Amen.