

John 13:1-11

It's one thing for a person to say he is a Christian. It's another thing to actually be a Christian. And being a Christian has everything to do with Jesus. Not how you feel about Him, but what He does for you.

In the Upper Room Jesus was washing His disciples' feet. He came to Peter and heard these words, "You will never wash my feet, Lord." It's not that Peter's feet didn't need washing. Walking all day in sandals on dusty roads, no one sat down to the table with clean feet. I'm sure his feet smelled as bad as all the others. Peter just did not want Jesus to do for him what should have been the job of a servant.

Nor do we. We have trouble asking for help. We have trouble accepting charity. Most of us were raised with the ethic, "don't ask someone else to do for you what you can do for yourself." We don't want to be a bother to others. Even when we need the help, we hate to ask for it. This independent spirit may actually work in society, but it does not work with God.

Peter figured he could take care of washing his own feet, or just eat with dirty feet. But he was not about to have Jesus do for him what was the job of the lowest servant. But Jesus told Peter the words we need to hear, "If I do not wash your feet, you have no part with Me."

To have a part with Jesus, to belong to Him, to be a Christian is all about what Jesus does for you. Jesus may be your Creator, your God. He may be the One to whom you pray, the One whom you praise and adore, but unless Jesus is your Servant, you have no part with Him. Call Jesus what you will. Believe what you want about Him. It means nothing unless He gets down beneath your feet and serves you.

You and I, like Peter and the other disciples, are gathered here tonight to dine with Jesus. He may be your God, your King, your Master...but He is here tonight to be your Servant, your Slave. Your feet may be clean, but your heart, like mine, is filthy, and your life, like mine, is a mess. You and I need to be cleansed. We need to be forgiven. And it must come from Jesus. "Unless I wash you (cleanse you, forgive you), you have no part with Me."

As you come to His Table this evening, Jesus comes to each of you not to wash your feet, but to wash your heart, your mind, your life. He comes to forgive your sins. He comes to serve you, giving to you His own flesh and blood; to cleanse your guilty stains; to remove from you every wrong so that you stand in the presence of God clean and spotless, pure and holy.

Are you a Christian? Do you have a part with Jesus? Yes, because of what Jesus does for you here. Because He feeds you, He serves you, He gives to you the life He won for you on Calvary's cross.

Are you and I able to reject Jesus? Are we able to reject what He does for us and gives to us? Yes. Judas was also there with Peter and the others that night. Jesus washed his feet too. He served Judas too. But then He said, "Not all of you are clean." Judas was not acting in a Christian manner. He was sinning in his heart. He was rejecting Jesus because he was intent on betraying Him. His feet may have been clean, but his heart was filthy because he was not sorry for his sins.

How do we avoid the sin of Judas? How do we avoid the sin of unbelief, of hardening our heart to what Jesus gives? Truthfully, we would all go the way of Judas were it not for the mercy of God. We

are weak, but He is your strength. We are darkness, but He is your light. We would reject Him, but He accepts you. We would deny Him and betray Him, but He forgives you. The way to avoid the sin of Judas lies in the mercy of God. Trust Him. Trust your Lord. Trust Him not because He is an awesome God, but because He gets down beneath your feet to serve you. He suffered and died for you. He baptized you into His own death and resurrection. He feeds you with His own body and blood. Trust in Jesus because more than anything else that He is, He is your Servant, your Slave who does for you what you cannot do for yourself. He takes your sin away. He cleanses your guilty heart. He gives you faith in Him. He keeps you within His heart of mercy toward you.

Tonight He shows you His merciful heart. He shows it and gives it to you. "Take eat...take drink" He says. "This is My body...My blood given and shed for you for the remission of your sins." He knows that your heart, like mine, would reject Him. So He gives you His. He knows that your blood, like mine, would run cold against Him. So he gives you His blood. He knows that your flesh, like mine, would continue in sin. So He gives His flesh to you.

You are who you are--a forgiven child of God, a Christian, a believer in Christ--for one reason...because Jesus, out of mercy toward you, lays aside His garments of glory and comes to you as a Servant--your Servant--and He forgives you. Amen.