

## Maundy Thursday 11

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April 21, 2011

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer.  
Amen.

We believe and confess that Jesus is Lord for us, that he came and lived so we might know the love of God for us. We gather this day at the beginning of these three days of remembrance focusing on the final hours of our Saviors life before his death and his life giving acts for our sake.

These days are different and maybe a little unexpected within the life of our worship. If for no other reason they stand out because of what they represent, the betrayal, the arrest, the beating, the condemnation and the suffering of Jesus. It is the unexpected that often causes us to scratch our heads and take notice. You know that is true in your life as well. If I asked you to tell me about an event, a memorable moment in life from the last week or last month what would you say? Would you tell me the why or the reason behind the event or just the event itself?

Most likely you would speak about the event, tell me of the things that stood out mostly due to the unexpected nature of the acts. About three years ago in the middle of worship as I started my sermon, I stopped and made each one of you move to a different place in the sanctuary. It has been a while since someone has mentioned it, but for a long time I would get comments about that sermon or worship experience. I doubt any of the members who commented to me remember the reason or the purpose of making you move, but you remember the move.

John records in his account of the last supper that Jesus did an unexpected thing. Jesus got up from the table, taking a pan of water he washed the feet of his disciples. Here their leader, their teacher, the most important person in the room performs the duties of the least important person in the household. It is the unexpected actions of Jesus which catch the disciples off guard.

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I am a practical guy and want the things I do to have meaning and purpose not just a symbolic act. So foot washing has not been something I ever got excited about and still don't. Maybe it is because I do not like people messing with my feet. Yet I have come to understand the powerful way it can touch people in their lives, for both the ones who are doing the washing and for the one having their feet washed.

Our worldview has changed, so as we read this account of this unusual act we think it is both some ancient custom and one that no longer has any relevance in our world. Maybe that is the unexpectedness we need this night to catch our attention. But before I go on, I am inviting a couple of our LCM students to come speak about their trip to Nashville and their experience of washing the feet of the homeless.

Brent & Katie or Ali to speak.

The group I use for the high school mission trips have a foot washing ceremony at the end of the week of serving. It is a reflective time as the week winds down to look back at the lives touched, the people we have served and the unexpected ways in which our lives were changed. A moment at the end of a week of service where the servers are served, a time of connecting with the Jesus moments experienced in the days of caring for others and recognizing the face of Christ in those we met.

So if this opportunity has been given meaning as I wash the feet of others I reflect on the times of service, on how I have seen Christ at work in the lives of the people who touch my life every day. How it is in the ordinary times as we serve when we are treated to the unexpected moments when Jesus is present with us.

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One of the places Jesus is present with us is when we gather here around his table for this simple, ordinary meal of bread and wine. Here as we come around the table we gather as the body of Christ here where he has promised to meet us. We gather not just in memory of him but for a meal where we are fed, nourished, strengthened and called by name. Here we take time to reflect upon the unexpected servant-hood of our Lord then we are sent out to do unexpected ordinary acts that show we are his disciples. We go to serve the poor and needy, we go seeking to see the image of God in everyone we meet. As we go Christ is walking beside us giving witness of God's love to the world. We go proclaiming the Good News that our Savior on this night set the example for us in the unexpected washing of feet, in the sharing of a meal and in the giving of his life for our sake and for the sake of the world.

AMEN

T.G.B.T.G.

*Pastor Michael*