

The Rev. Amanda Eiman  
Maundy Thursday 2018

Good evening.

Tonight, on this Maundy [Thursday evening](#), I am reminded of a seminary classmate of mine named Jack. In seminary, Jack was a very active person. He was very excitable. He didn't like to sit still for very long.

One afternoon a few of us were speaking casually in the dorm and as often happens in a group of seminary students, one of us made a reference to prayer. Jack, being the active person that he was, sort of jumped up, swung his arms and said you know what "my favorite kind of prayer is a prayer of work".

It was very fitting for Jack to animate his words like that, and we all chuckled, but also I realized his words were so true – out of all the many and varied ways there are to pray, his deepest and most honest kind of prayer was that of *doing* something. His kind of prayer was physical action and acts of service.

I am reminded of my friend Jack and his perspective tonight because tonight, perhaps more than any other night or day of the church year, is all about action. We are washing feet. We are breaking bread. We are stripping the altar, processing to the church. We are waiting, watching, and keeping awake.

We do these things tonight because these actions can be deep prayer for us, and acts of devotion. As we wash one another's feet, we remember and are drawn close to the moment when Christ washed his disciples feet, as we share in the bread and wine, we remember and are drawn close to the sacred meal of the last supper. As we wait with Christ in the dark garden this night, we do so with him, as he waits and prays. He prays for his cup to pass, and maybe we pray about cups that we wish would pass from us, too. And as we do these things, because they are acts of devotion, we are drawn closer and closer in relationship with God.

Thus, as we heard in our readings from Scripture, Jesus tells us,

“Do this in remembrance of me”

“Wash one another’s feet”

“Love one another”

He tells us, do these things and through them, you will know that I am with you, always.

But there is more. As Jesus calls us to these actions, he is also revealing to us the primary way that we are called to live out our Christian life - and that is by being servants to one another and to God.

Now of course sometimes we are living in seasons of our lives when we need to be the one receiving, when we are in need of rest and care and love. And that is what we are called to do in those times, we need to rest and be held.

But many other times we are called to give. So through the washing of the feet, Jesus is reminding us, his followers, that the overall arc of Christian life is not a spectator sport. We are at our best, and engaging God's best, when we are serving one another, when we are living a life of servant ministry. Because when we are servants, we not only know God's grace in *our* lives more fully, but God's love

works through us to help heal and renew the world.

And so as Jesus served, healed, listened, and was a companion to many, so we follow. We are Jesus' hands and feet, voices and hearts. We are empowered by him and the Holy Spirit to serve, to be vessels for healing, to be companions for those in need. We are empowered to feed the hungry, to welcome the stranger, to comfort the afflicted. To use our gifts for service to God's glory. And when we do, when we live in service to one another, the Christian life is lived most fully, and through that life, God transforms the world.

Just think of times when you have been a gift giver, or have blessed someone with your presence, or helped someone in need. In these moments you were God's servant, bringing God's grace and healing to another. And maybe that other has shared with you how you and God have changed their life for the better. Or maybe you have seen the transformation in their life first hand. And you realized that being a witness to and vessel for God's grace and healing is a blessing more powerful than you ever would have had anticipated. And you felt the presence and hands of Christ in your life perhaps even more

powerfully than any blessing that you perceived you were giving.

That's what happens when we live the servant life. Christ shows up in the midst of us - and change and transformation and blessing does not stop with the one receiving the care, God's grace overflows beyond – to us and into all the world. And you and I are part of that world that is being transformed.

And thus, as we hear Jesus say, “If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them”. Just as Christ comes to us and as we know love and blessing and grace from him, we are changed and healed and transformed and blessed as we serve one another. And this change can happen even in times when we didn't think we needed any healing or transformation at all. Questions that we didn't even think we had become answered, empty places within us become filled, and broken places become whole.

So as you and I come this night and all other nights and days, to break bread and serve one another, we are met by Christ in our acts of devotion and service. We come to know the love of God more and

more fully. And we, and the lives of the world, are transformed.

Perhaps this transformation through action what my friend Jack was trying to demonstrate back in seminary. That our actions speak louder than words, and that when we are prayerful servants of one another and of God, God's grace is seen and heard and felt and known in the life of the entire world.

So, Jesus tells us,

Do this in remembrance of me.

Wash each other's feet.

Serve one another.

May the Spirit empower us to answer this call, follow Christ's blessed example, and participate in the transformation of the world, this night and always. Amen.