

Devotion for the Fourth Monday of Easter

Psalm 96

Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth.

Sing to the Lord, praise His name; proclaim His salvation day after day.

Declare His glory among the nations, His marvellous deeds among all peoples.

For great is the Lord and worthy of praise; He is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens!

Splendour and majesty are before Him; strength and glory are in His sanctuary.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; bring an offering and come into His courts.

Worship the Lord in the splendour of His holiness; tremble before Him, all the earth.

Say among the nations, 'The Lord reigns.' The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; He will judge the peoples with equity.

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it;

Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the tress of the forest will sing for joy;

They will sing before the Lord, for He comes, He comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in truth.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen

Old Testament Reading: Leviticus 9:1-24 *The Lord affirms the Priesthood of Aaron*

New Testament Reading: John 13:1-57 *Jesus celebrates Passover with the disciples*

Serving by Receiving

Foot washing, the forgotten sacrament! Well, not quite a sacrament, but it certainly has been forgotten in the rituals of most churches. When was the last time you had your feet washed in church? Would you take part, if it was offered? Jesus washed the disciple's feet and left them speechless. Only Peter spoke up and he protested. He said, "*You shall never wash my feet!*" Jesus said, "*If I do not wash you, you have no share in me.*" Although it was a common practice in the ancient near east, most people today would feel uncomfortable at having someone wash their feet.

Peter was not uncomfortable having his feet washed. He was uncomfortable having Jesus wash his feet! Jesus made a powerful statement washing His disciple's feet. Masters never washed their servant's feet! Teachers never washed their student's feet! In doing this Jesus was setting an example. What do think that example is? Most of us would say, He wants us to wash each other's feet in serving others. And He does want us to serve each other! But there are two sides to service which are equally important; giving and receiving. Peter was rebuked, not because he refused to serve. He was rebuked, because He refused to be served!

It's easier to serve than it is to be served. The one who serves is strong and the one served is weak. We want to be strong, not weak. When someone washes our feet, we are being served. We want to serve, not be served! To receive service is to acknowledge our weakness. Perhaps that's why foot washing never quite caught on in the ritual life of the church in the same way as singing or praying. Maybe that's why so many people would rather die than have someone help them to the toilet, wash and bathe them. We want to be strong in giving, not weak in receiving.

Giving and receiving care are both part of our lives as Christians. Those who care the most are those who are most able to receive care. Those who are most able to receive care are those most able to care for others. Jesus blesses us to receive His love in our weakness. He blesses to share His love with others in their weakness. He blesses us to serve others, by allowing them to care for us in our needs. "*If I then, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you should do as I have done to you.*" We do as He has done, both in offering ourselves to care for others and offering ourselves to be cared for by others.

“OH, BLESS THE LORD, MY SOUL” (Public Domain)

**Oh, bless the Lord, my soul! Let all in me combine.
To aid my tongue to bless his name, whose favour is divine.**

**Oh, bless the Lord, my soul. Nor let his mercies lie.
Forgotten in unthankfulness. And without praises die.**

**The Lord forgives my sins. And he relieves my pain;
The Lord has healed my sicknesses. And made me whole again.**

**He crowns my life with love. He ransoms from the grave;
He that redeemed my soul from hell, has sovereign power to save.**

**He fills the poor with good; He gives the sufferers rest;
The Lord has judgements for the proud, Relief for those oppressed.**

**His works and laws and ways, He made through Moses known.
But showed the world his loving heart, In Christ, his only Son.**

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for the service of your life, by which you who were strong became weak that in you, we who are weak may be made strong. In the weakness of your cross, we are made strong in forgiveness and empowered to eternal life. Bless us to care for others in their weakness with the power of your love. Bless us to empower others, by allowing them to care for us in our weakness. In your name. Amen

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven.

Hallowed be Thy name.

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory,

Forever and ever. Amen

The Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Benediction

Psalm 139:16

“Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.”